

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2019

Kapiti - Mana Forest & Bird



Photo This Photo is of Queen Elizabeth Park's peatlands after a weather event

Editor: Russell Bell, Email russelljamesbell@gmail.com. Phone 0212266047. Your feedback on this newsletter would be most welcome, as would a contribution to future newsletters.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday 25th October at 7.30 pm in the Paraparaumu Library room. Dr Phillipa Crisp will talk about the Greater Wellington Regional Council's publication *Forests of the Wellington Region*, telling the background to the mapping, what was found and how it can be used. This shows the different forest types and where they were. From this information, we have received a detailed map of Queen Elizabeth Park showing where Kahikatea/Pukatea forest existed before the land was cleared. That will guide our planting efforts. Non members are also welcome to attend.

Contents

Chairmans Report - Speaking out
Help wanted by your branch
Conservation News Wainui Stream
Expressway
Talk to MFE's Fresh Water Policy meeting
What is this?

Local Restoration Group
Changes to the Waikanae River track
Environmental adverts
Branch contacts
Local Conservation and Restoration groups

Chairman's Report

There are many conservation topics that are worthy of your support. Local ones are

- Convincing Greater Wellington Regional Council to stop farming the 200 hectares of

peatlands that are in Queen Elizabeth Park and rewet and restore them as wetlands.

- Supporting the Wainuiwhenua proposal for a potential huge park at the southern end of Kapiti, including Paekakariki and Raumati escarpments, Whareroa farm, Queen Elizabeth Park, and Perkins Farm. Perkins farm is currently owned by NZTA but will be not wanted by them in a few years time.
- Contributing expertise to saving the biodiversity assets of Plimmerton Farms as the farm is turned into a residential area.
- Making submissions to some of the many subjects that are asking for public opinion such as the Fresh water policy, KCDC's Open Space, and Preservation of valuable soil types.

Help wanted by your branch

There are a few things we need to keep the branch running smoothly. They are

- Committee Member There now are only 6 people on the committee so if anyone is willing to join, please contact me.
- Run a tea roster We need a person to keep the tea roster. I asked for people to manage the meeting tea arrangements and five people have volunteered. Naturally enough some can do Waikanae but not Paraparaumu and other have agreed to do a limited number. That means we need someone who can make sure that the arrangements are OK for each meeting. You do not have to attend and of course we welcome more helpers.

Conservation News

Wainui Stream in Paekakariki is the best stream for native fish in Kapiti. Te Puka Stream alongside Wainui was going to be wrecked by the building of Transmission Gully so it's 4000 native fish were caught and relocated to Wainui Stream.

Wainui Stream passes through the Transmission Gully Expressway and twin 3 x 2.5m box culverts were to provide passage for it. Properly constructed especially at their outfalls, these culverts would have allowed for the passage of native fish going to and from the

To win, or at least influence these in a Forest and Bird direction, means we must make noise, with our voices, with our submissions and with the few times we can vote.

This can be as simple as sharing the idea with friends and neighbours or maybe if you met with a group for morning coffee. I am always surprised to find that someone knows and talks to someone else and before you know it, the community is supportive.

In just talking about local environmental and conservation ideas, you are supporting Forest and Bird.

- Monthly computer work We need a person who can undertake a small amount of work on computer that occurs monthly. (1) Initiating emails to the branch. Central office keeps membership up to date, so you would have to download membership list before sending each email but the emails go from Central Office so it does not take your data. (2) Uploading our newsletter to our web site and keeping the speaker details and website up to date. You would not have to be on the committee to do this, so if you were more tech savvy than most of us, it should be easy!!!!

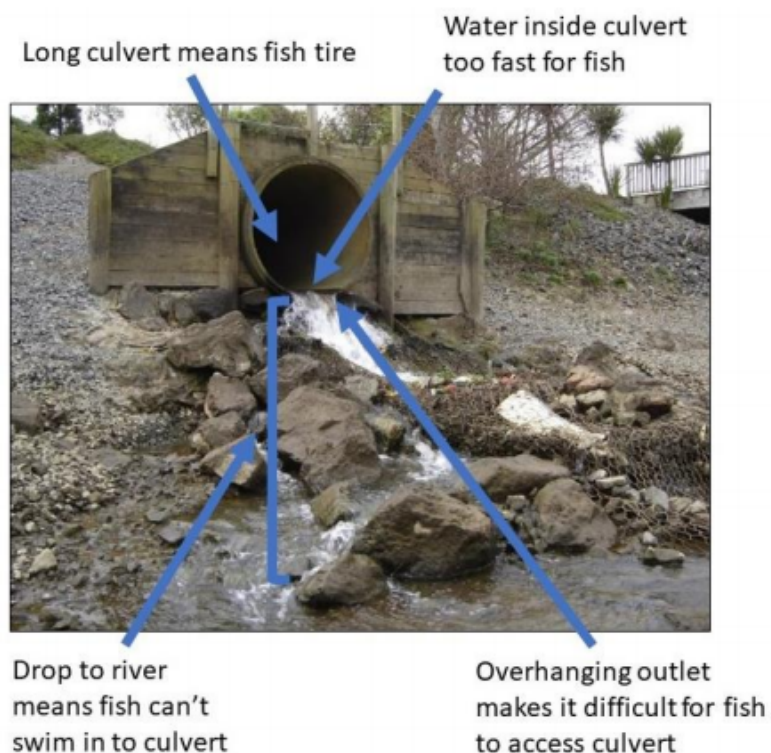


Figure 2-1: Example of a culvert that impedes fish movements.

sea to complete their life cycles. The picture above shows the features to avoid to create good fish passage.

It appears that somewhere in the construction process, the culverts were replaced by three 900 mm plastic pipes that are 96 metres long. Long smooth pipes allow water to move too fast for too long for fish to swim the distance. Lips (see photo alongside) before the pipes also cause problems.

So the fish from Te Puka stream have been placed in Wainui stream, and a fish obstacle has been placed downstream. Out of the frying pan, into the fire. If this situation remains, Wainui Stream will not continue to be our best native fish stream. Greater Wellington (who I seem to have to complain about a lot) say *The triple barrel culvert installed in Wainui Stream under the new alignment has been certified as temporary only at this stage due to unresolved design requirements relating to fish passage in Wainui Stream.*

I am not sure what this means. I have some difficulty imagining the three pipes being replaced, can you?

Considering that the NIWA fish passage guidelines were developed for DOC last year, you would think that this sort of thing would be consigned to history. We have many fish passage issues on our rivers and streams. They all cost ratepayers money to fix. We should not be creating new ones. We could fight it but that is what we pay GWRC rates for. They should take this up.



Penny Gaylor

Please take this up on Forest and Bird's, Andy's and other groups who care about our native fish behalf. It is happening on your watch in your electorate.

Talk delivered to MFE's Fresh Water Policy meeting in Wellington 13/9/19

During my life, we have created a biodiversity crisis, we have poisoned our rivers and streams that once I drank from, we have drained and converted most of the swamps one that I spent many hours in and we have caused the climate to create daily emergencies somewhere on the planet.

I am not happy about this state of affairs, nor about our efforts to mitigate climate change.

Just 20 kilometres from where I live, I identified 85 hectares of wetlands. Old peatlands that are drained and farmed. The vegetation was a combination of native rushes, reeds and grass. During heavy rain events, I could almost see the wetland struggling to re-emerge. But it was progressively being converted to higher production farmland.

We named it the Raumati wetland and started campaigning to save it. So far forty-eight hectares has been retired from farming.

Slightly further south, I was lucky to be given a bit of a free hand in a seven-hectare rush filled peat paddock. After some study a drain was blocked forcing the water to again pass through the peat. Carex and other native wetland species self-re-introduced. Pasture grasses have declined. We planted some natives because the seed source had long since gone. The wetland is reemerging. The wet conditions have not allowed the establishment of gorse and blackberry. They are not wetland plants. The water leaving the wetland is shiny slightly stained brown.

Peatlands like these need to be rewetted by blocking the drains because drained, the dry peat oxidises to carbon dioxide. They are carbon dioxide emitters for most of the year. If rewetted, they would be carbon sinks. And of course, the wetland cannot flourish until the hydrology is restored.

If that was done for the full 85 hectares of the Raumati wetland, the Wellington region would have a new regionally significant wetland, it would also be a significant carbon sink and the aquatic values of the Whareroa stream would improve instead of declining as they have for the last 4 years.

But wait, there's more

Raumati wetland is within Queen Elizabeth Park. It was once canoed through by Maori and was part of what early Europeans called the Great Swamp. As I became more familiar with the park, I realised that there is an additional 100 or so hectares of flat peaty land that was previously wetland now fully converted to pasture and cropping. The additional area will be harder to turn around but so is climate change, water quality and the loss of biodiversity.

The parks governing legislation supports restoration. This is a recreation reserve under the Reserves Act and the wetland is an historic, biological and geological feature with native flora and fauna. Features with

these qualities should be protected under the Act.

The issues that I and others continue to fight are these.

- *Conversion of wetlands to pasture and cropping in a recreation reserve using herbicide and insecticide combinations.*
- *Specifically targeting native vegetation, rushes, with a poison weed wiper in the reserve*
- *Consequent decline of aquatic health and native fish in the Whareroa Stream.*
- *Acknowledgement of our Maori and European history*
- *Acceptance that re-blocking the drains and rewetting the peat is critical to restore the wetlands and create a carbon sink.*
- *Acceptance that sufficient rewetting will inhibit gorse and blackberry over most of the flat areas.*

I took on this fight because I thought it was winnable under the current legislation. Meanwhile I saw other wetlands not in reserves progressively converted, their water cleaning and retention and climatic value lost, and their life-supporting values destroyed. There was no legislation to protect them. I hope the new Fresh Water Policy secures the rest of the Raumati wetland and Whareroa Stream and any others that remain.

It was a bit nerve racking because the audience was large and unknown to me. After the talk, I was interviewed by RNZ and the interview with the contribution of others was aired on Morning Report on Friday 20/9/19. Thomas Nash, a candidate for Greater Wellington agreed with me that the peatlands should be a carbon sink and wetlands. He has decided to make it an election issue. On Sunday 21/9/19 90 people walked through the wetland area and learned about opportunities and opposition and on 25/09/19 an opinion piece was published in the Dominion Post. We will see what happens.

What is this?

This strange object is mounted on the sides of an expressway bridge over the road to Nga Manu and the Kakariki Stream. It is constructed of strong coiled wire, then laced with willow. When I first saw this, without the willow, it looked like a security device. But actually it is a device to allow fern birds, which were recorded during the Kapiti expressway construction, to move from where they were recorded to a large new wetland created to offset wetlands lost in construction. It was considered that they would not migrate under the bridge without such a device. Similar constructions have been used in Europe to allow mainly small native mammals to cross busy roads. They generally hang on a catenary wire between bush canopies. So it's a bird tunnel. Let's hope it works, and there are fernbirds to use it. Have a look when you next visit Nga Manu (maybe to see the kiwis See below)



Restoration Contribution To Kapiti and Mana

The restoration group this month features the the Stuart Park Restoration Project in Titahi Bay.

With spectacular views out to Kapiti, Mana and the South Island as well as down onto Titahi Bay beach, Stuart Park is a very scenic place to volunteer. In 2014, local John Hornblow decided the gorse had had free reign for long enough and with fellow Titahi Bay residents has been clearing tracks and planting native plants to restore the tawa/kohekohe forest and, on the more exposed sites, to re-establish coastal species. With more than 10,000 plants contributed in 5 years, this project was the 2016 winner of the Heritage and Environment Category of Wellington Airport Regional Community Award. Find out more here: <https://www.naturespace.org.nz/groups/stuart-park-restoration-project> .



Changes to part of the Waikanae River Track

Walking the Waikanae River. What a pleasure. You may have noticed that the river is cutting into part of the south bank and undermining the access road. The road has been blocked off and walkers now have to walk on a track through the bush to pass this area. Greater Wellington River Control has decided that where it can, it will let the river shift about and shift access roading to suit. It seems to me this is a great step forward. The river will be allowed to meander to the extent that is

possible, rather than be confined by rock walls and willows, as we have where there are houses to protect. This should produce a more natural river over time. It is also likely to save ratepayers money.

Many you will know that DoC chose the Waikanae River as one of its rivers that could be restored from the mountains to the sea. This means that it will get much more DoC attention and some serious money spent to restore it.

Environmental Adverts

Pharazyn Reserve. Volunteers also needed at Pharazyn Reserve, Waikanae Beach. Contact Noel Sundgren sundgrennz@hotmail.com, 022 353 4436

Nga Manu Kiwi Viewing These night time events are amazing. Visitors are so close to the kiwis. No glass between you and them. We heard them call and much more. It was great. Phone +64 (0)4 293 4131 to book.

Branch Committee Contacts

Chair: Russell Bell Phone: Mobile 021 2266047 Email: russelljbell@gmail.com
Secretary: Irene Thomas Phone: 04 293 6490
Mobile: 021 1802545 Email: thomasi@xtra.co.nz
Sue Boyde Phone: 04 902 0858 Email: sm.boyde@gmail.com

Pene Burton Bell. Telephone 04 972 5081
Treasurer: Peter Kentish. Telephone 04 298 1265 Email PK2003_595@hotmail.com
Tony Ward. Telephone 04 293 7203 Email kotareg@xtra.co.nz

Other Kapiti Coast Conservation and Restoration Organisations

Friends of the Waikanae river. Russell Bell 0212266047

Nga Manu Nature Reserve. Matu Booth. 04 293 4131. admin@ngamanu.co.nz

Nga Urora Escarpment Group, Peter Kentish. 04 298 1255 PK2003_595@hotmail.com

Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park. Russell Bell. 0212266047 russelljamesbell@gmail.com

Kapiti Environment Restoration and Maintenance Trust, Tony Ward. 04 293 7203. Email kotareg@xtra.co.nz

Kaitawa Reserve and Outdoor Classroom. Tony Ward. 042937203. kotareg@xtra.co.nz
Waimanu Lagoons Care Group. Dennis Thomas 04 293 6490

Waimeha Restoration Group. Pryor Rowland pryorrowland@gmail.com.

Kapiti Coast Biodiversity Project Project@Kapitibiodiversity

Whareroa Guardians Community Trust Trust@Whareroaguardsians

Pharazyn Reserve Noel Sundgren 0223534436 sundgrennz@hotmail.com

We are adding to this list, so if you are in a group that people can add their expertise to, let us know