



No. 56 Autumn 2011 ISSN 1170-3172

CANOPY

Newsletter of the New Zealand Native Forests Restoration Trust

PATRON: Sir Paul Reeves, ONZ, GCMG, GCVO, QSO

PO Box 80-007, Green Bay, Waitakere 0643
www.nznfrt.org.nz

Looking Forward

This copy of Canopy looks both forward and back. We look backwards as the Native Forests Restoration Trust has now marked 30 years of existence and also because New Zealand recently lost two of the country's greatest names in conservation, to whom we pay tribute in this issue. We look forwards to ensure that such legacies are upheld and these past efforts continued and expanded.

Honorary Rangers

The Trust's Honorary Rangers do a great job in looking after our reserves, scattered as they are in various locations from the Far North to Wellington (and not forgetting Mangarakau at the top of the South Island). It was with particular regret that we received the news that Terry Higginson, the Ranger of the Puhoi Far North Reserve to which he has devoted a huge amount of time and energy, wished to stand down. Terry's position has meant much work on boundaries and fencing, with straying stock a recurrent problem, in addition to pest control and other issues that are part of the responsibility the job entails. Besides thanking Terry for all he has done as Ranger, we appreciate his recommendation of a successor who we hope to introduce in a future issue of Canopy.

For his part, Terry enjoyed his time with the Trust; he remains a staunch supporter and will be on hand with his knowledge of the area if the need arises.

The Trustees

Colleen Newton, Chair, Grey Lynn, Auckland
Arthur Cowan, Rewarewa, Otorohanga
Jim Dart, Point Chevalier, Auckland
Geoff Davidson, Oratia, Auckland
Brian Davis, Parnell, Auckland
Rosemary Davison, Otorohanga
Roy Dench, Ohaupo
Jocelyn Dutton, Parnell, Auckland
Hugh Graham, Takapuna, Auckland
Owen Lewis, Point Chevalier, Auckland
Helen Lindsay, Motueka
Malcolm MacKenzie, Otorohanga
Guy Nash, Mount Albert, Auckland
Tim Oliver, Cambridge
Tim Porteous, Wellington
Jenny Rattenbury, Wellington
Michael Taylor, Orakei, Auckland



The Trust's 30th Birthday Party

The Trust's 30th Birthday Celebrations took place on 30/10/2010 at the Unitec campus, Auckland. Over 100 friends, supporters and volunteers gathered at the venue, Oakridge House, where the lunch was held. Arrivals were welcomed and name-tagged by Guy & Gloria Nash and Anne Davis and then moved into the hall which buzzed with conversation as our guests met, mingled and looked at the displays. These included maps and photos of our reserves, panels of pictures showing past events and Trust gatherings, and a selection of Geoff Moon's superb bird photographs kindly brought along by Lynette Moon and her companion, Ros Rothschild. Students of nature could examine the results of entomological research at the Kaipara wetland by Rosemary Gilbert who was on hand to discuss this project. Some fine drawings of native trees and scenes at Rangitoto Station and Waipoua were much admired. These pictures, the work of Shirley Smith, Kathryn Smits and Pat Cowan, are part of the Trust's archive and will be shown in forthcoming issues of Canopy.

In due course we were summoned to share a light lunch - inevitably rather a crush given the number present. Afterwards a pair of very interesting and informative talks with Powerpoint presentations by Gary Taylor and Geoff Davidson were the highlight of the day. Gary selected several apt cases from the work of the Environmental Defence Society, while Geoff gave an overview of the Trust's present reserves and future targets. Another speaker was Gordon Ell, a past President of Forest & Bird, who expressed good wishes to the Trust on behalf of supporters.

The gathering was declared a great success and something which should be a regular feature in the life of the Trust.

For more information about the Trust, visit our website: www.nznfrt.org.nz

Bring back the birds to Rangitoto Station



"Bring back the Birds" was the title chosen in conjunction with the QEII National Trust for projects to be sponsored by the Hamilton firm MWH New Zealand Ltd, part of an international civil engineering company. When considering the applications, the judging panel looked at the project's impact on New Zealand's biodiversity, how the project would raise the profile of MWH & the QEII Trust with clients, the potential for MWH people to be involved and the geographical spread.

We were successful in obtaining \$2500 for the purchase of DOC 200 predator traps, bait stations and several month's bait supply for Rangitoto Station.

At the end of February, MWH staff and other volunteers transported the gear from Hamilton to the Station and spent half a day laying it out. It was a totally new experience for some people and they are keen to return with more time to enjoy the Station and the neighbouring Mangatutu forest.

These traps and bait stations are in addition to a small number already in place and will improve the protection for the significant fernbird population and assist other species to colonise the Station as the grassland is replaced by regenerating forest.

The Trust's progress at Rangitoto Station received excellent publicity in *The Whangarei Report* of Nov 18, 2010. Writing under the heading '**Dawn chorus well worth the early start to day**' Gerry Brackenbury described how rising at 5 a.m. he was rewarded with the awe-inspiring experience of bellbirds and tui singing their hearts out. Later his small group tramped through the mature tawa forest dotted with giant totara, rimu and kahikatea trees. Large tree fuchsia in flower were attracting the tuis which in turn drew the attention of a native falcon, while robins and a kaka brought the thick forest to life. A final treat was to keep company with red admiral butterflies on the drive out. Gerry's article concludes "we can thank the Native Forests Restoration Trust for their commitment to that unwritten social contract that says let us leave this place so much richer than when we found it."

Let us now praise famous men

This year has seen the loss of two major figures in conservation.

John Morton, who was for many years Professor of Zoology at Auckland University, will also be remembered for his dedication to nature conservation and his involvement in public affairs at both local and national levels.

In various capacities, including council member of Forest & Bird, Prof Morton was deeply involved in the campaigns to save NZ native forests from logging. These were the battles of the 1970s and early 1980s at Whirinaki, Waitutu, Westland and Pureora that led to the formation of NZ NFRT. Always ready to take up his pen against the sword (or chainsaw), John Morton produced with John Ogden & Tony Hughes *To Save a Forest 'Whirinaki'* at a crucial moment. Other scholarly works have become natural history classics, notably 'Morton & Miller' *The New Zealand Seashore*. Later came *A Natural History of Auckland* illustrated with Ron Cometti's paintings - a landmark publication of 1993 where, aside from his coastal chapters, John Morton co-wrote the sections on Rainforest, Scrub and Shore Vegetation with Ewen Cameron, and Streams, Lakes and Swamps with Maureen Lewis.

This work made a big contribution to the network of regional parks, in part by inspiring Mike Lee before his term at the helm of the Regional Council.

John was a man of powerful religious conviction, with a deep love of this country to which his forebears came in 1863. His stature and the high regard in which he was held - both as person and exemplar - was demonstrated by the large gathering at his funeral service in St Mary's Church of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Parnell, where many of those present placed kauri twigs on the plain pine box coffin.

Don Merton, who died in April from cancer, grew up in Gisborne to enter the Wildlife Service as a trainee, then moved to DoC when conservation agencies were amalgamated in 1987. A wonderful celebration of his life took place in Tauranga. Besides a wealth of tributes, this included the safe departure of his coffin by helicopter. Don Merton's amazing rescue of the black robin from the brink of extinction and his most recent work to ensure the survival of the kakapo parrot are well known. A less-familiar episode of his long career concerns the kiwis on Ponui Island of the Hauraki Gulf where they continue to flourish. This transfer in 1966 of 13 birds, all except one from Little Barrier Island, is part of the chain of far-sighted efforts, harking back to the kakapo transfers by Richard Henry, that are a hallmark of New Zealand conservation.

Waikato Opportunity

Canopies 54 & 55 made mention of a potential purchase of a native bush reserve on the road to Raglan. In late 2010 we had almost reached the stage where all that was required to conclude the agreement was the signatures of both parties. Unfortunately progress on the negotiations was interrupted when two of the vendors became ill and during the next few months both died. We have resumed the negotiations with the executor of their wills and are optimistic we can conclude the agreement in the near future.

The block is 200 hectares of moderately mature tawa/rimu/rewarewa forest on steep hill slopes facing southwest. An area of about 50 hectares can be revegetated and we anticipate there will be a rapid establishment of native species due to the adjacent seed sources. During our inspection we saw the potential of the existing 300 hectares of farmland that makes up the balance of the property. Although unable at this time to commit ourselves to its acquisition we certainly see it as an excellent extension in the future.

We look forward to working with the Waikato Regional Council to establish a reserve in the area.



An example of the delightful artwork drawn for the Trust by Shirley Smith for use in early issues of Canopy

Marie Neverman Reserve Extension

Success! Following our appeal last year, the purchase to extend our Marie Neverman Wetland Reserve at Tupare on the South Kaipara Peninsula has gone ahead. The appeal was successful in raising over \$60,000 towards the price of \$225,000 for the additional 113 hectares. **Thank you very much to all those supporters who contributed.**

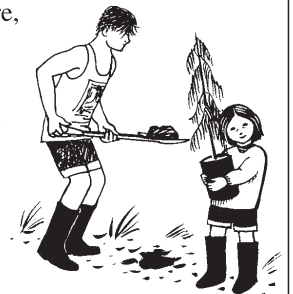
The work of restoration has continued over the summer and autumn months with a particular focus on the elimination of pampas by a local contractor, Westscape, engaged by the Trust. This weed control protects the kowhai and ngaio groves that are developing well in raised 'gallery' areas of the reserve. Around the paddock of the property three stiles have been constructed, using as the pattern an easy-to-climb stile at Miranda en route to the bird-watching hide. These stiles provide access to the bush clad slopes where we are aiming to replenish the ageing groves of kanuka. Plants for this purpose are being grown from local seed at the Kaipara Landcare nursery. Maintaining the quality of the wetland is also of the utmost importance. With this in mind the Trust sought the help of an experienced ecologist,

Dr Keith Thompson, who recently spent a day at Tupare with Geoff Davidson and Michael Taylor. Keith Thompson's hydrological report will be of particular value in implementing aspects of the management plan (described in Canopy 54).

Tree planting and some weeding

will take place in the Marie Neverman Reserve at Tupare, in association with members of South Kaipara Landcare, on Saturday, 25 June, meeting at 1pm.

For more details and to take part, please contact Sharen Graham, tel: 09 817 5537 or 027 611 2531 email: sharen.graham@ihug.co.nz



Not only Forests ...

The Trust's primary objective is to encourage and undertake restoration of degraded or destroyed New Zealand indigenous habitats and plant communities. A further object is to educate members of the public and the authorities of restorative and protective acts that will serve conservation interests. One way in which we do this is by making submissions to government when the need arises, as occurred recently over the Resource Management Amendment Bill and its Clause 52. Put into effect, this clause would allow the uncontrolled destruction of urban trees. The Trust's submission sought the deletion of this clause and pointed out the consequences of removing urban trees, which were listed as follows:

- The loss of environmental values that attract tourists to New Zealand
- The loss of purification that combats air pollution
- Increased erosion and leaching on coastal and riparian properties
- The absorption of carbon from the atmosphere is lost at a time when this protection is badly needed
- The amenity values of trees in the city are lost to the whole community for private advantage
- The loss of the moderating effect of trees in attracting rainfall and yet reducing damage from heavy rain
- The reduction of the health, enjoyment, and well-being of citizens
- The loss of important bird habitat
- The loss of shade and shelter and privacy.

Finally the trust's submission pointed out that it is undemocratic to deprive urban councils of the right to define and control the character of their own urban areas.

Congratulations to the Oratia Church Trust on receiving a grant of \$5000 from the ASB Charitable Trusts for the maintenance of their 1.5 hectare remnant of native bush. NZ NFRT had written in support of this West Auckland community initiative.



Two letters by Trustee Arthur Cowan

Supporters will applaud the following letters written to his local newspaper by Arthur Cowan:

How to Destroy a National Treasure - The Mokau Dam Proposal

It is with great pleasure that I read a letter by Rolly Barclay re the Mokau Dam proposal. The public have been ill-informed regarding this disastrous proposal. This wilderness waterway is a national treasure that we can not afford to destroy and I and many others will understand and agree with his statement and suggestions. As a local landowner he is aware of its rarity and value to the community and future generations. Obviously there has been little or no research on the native wildlife existing in this rare environment and the possibility of endangered species has been ignored. The Mokau river is the North Island's best whitebait fishery and it is certain that the Galaxias species will be endangered or reduced. This is a priceless asset and any disturbance is unthinkable.

The correct decision was made by Environment Waikato and the Waipa District Council when first this horrible proposal was brought forward and was rejected and declined by both councils. How about proposing a couple of windmills? This has more merit compared to the destruction of a rare and irreplaceable national treasure.

A B Cowan

Arthur's second letter refers to a project near his home that the Trust was involved with during 2010.

Rewa Rewa School Site Reserve

Last winter the Native Forests Restoration Trust inherited (without even trying), the task of planting native forest on the school reserve site. Our team of locals planted at least two and a half acres of grassland and half an acre of understorey where school children many years ago had planted natives to make a plantation, now grown to 40 feet high. Included in the plant selection were a number of flowering exotics designed to feed tuis, bellbirds and pigeons while waiting for the natives to mature. It was most exciting that these birds were on hand while we were planting. A recent releasing program shows that we have had a remarkable growing season with minimum losses.

The fencing required prior to planting was undertaken by the Otorohanga District Council who have inherited the responsibility for reserves of this kind, we owe them special thanks for this work. This new bush area will be a lasting asset to the Rewa Rewa district.

LOOKING FORWARD

Yes, I should like to give a contribution supporting the work of the Trust.

Here is my tax-deductible donation of \$

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Please make cheques payable to **NZ Native Forests Restoration Trust**
Send to NZ NFRT, PO Box 80007, Green Bay, Waitakere 0643

IF YOU WISH TO KEEP YOUR COPY OF CANOPY INTACT, PLEASE SUPPLY THE ABOVE DETAILS & INDICATE ITS INTENDED PURPOSE WITH YOUR DONATION

Come and stay at

Mangarakau Wetland Field Centre, NW Nelson



Attractive 10 bed lodge situated amid wonderful scenery with walking tracks around the swamp. Close to outstanding natural wilderness areas with access to Kahurangi National Park, Farewell Spit and Te Tai Tapu Marine Reserve. Bring own bedding and food.

For more information and Lodge Bookings:

Ph/fax Jo-Anne Vaughan (03) 525 6031

javn@xtra.co.nz

Come and stay at

Rangitoto Station Reserve



Modern 3-bedroomed house, 34km from Otorohanga, King Country. Well-equipped and ideal for small to medium groups but sleeping space depends on how many workers are there at the time. Camping permitted near the woolshed. Hours of walking tracks through bush or open country with superb views. Many native bird species including kokako, kaka and falcon.

Relax and enjoy the peace and quietness.

House Bookings: Ph. Judy (09) 817-7604 (pte)

jrhanbury@actrix.co.nz



NZ Native Forests Restoration Trust

PO Box 80007

Green Bay

Waitakere 0643

New Zealand
Permit No. 98632

