



canopy 61

Newsletter of the Native Forest Restoration Trust

Summer 2015

Introducing Tim Oliver, newly elected Chairperson of the Native Forest Restoration Trust



Tim Oliver, the new Chair of the Native Forest Restoration Trust, was raised on a Cambridge sheep and beef farm before majoring in Geography and landform development at Waikato University.

Tim worked in academic publishing, and health services research and planning in Sydney until

returning to the land in New Zealand in 1980. He developed a kiwifruit orchard beside Lake Karapiro, converting to organic certification from 1992, and then joining the QEII National Trust part time from 1993-2001.

It was at this point that the strong mentoring influences of Arthur Cowan, Gordon Stephenson and others commenced, building on Tim's powerful childhood conservation lessons. A love of nature and natural places was fostered while playing in bush (later a QEII covenant) near the family homestead, and practising sustainability in the marine and coastal environment through scuba diving. "With no fridge, we only caught what we needed to eat within the next 24 hours!"

There was increasing involvement with NFRT projects through Arthur and his regional QEII field role, which led to Tim becoming a Trustee later in the 1990s. Although Tim retains a business interest in commercial scale beekeeping in NZ and Niue, he no longer represents organic growers in the kiwifruit industry and had been manoeuvring towards retirement in Whitianga in order to have more time to visit family, and to tramp and get back into both bush and ocean.

Thankfully for the Trust, this plan was relegated when the need for greater NFRT involvement arose last June and Tim accepted his nomination as Chairperson. This is the first time that someone outside Auckland has taken the Chair and is only possible through having an effective manager and field staff operating within sound internal policies and systems and utilising modern communications technology.

Tim is now leading the Trust through a time of great change and growth and he looks forward to working with the expanded team to advance the Trust's vision.

NFRT Chairman's Message: The Trust in 2015

As I write to you in late Spring 2015, the Trust has reached the 35 year milestone, and has seen further significant change and development since the previous issue of *Canopy* in 2014. It is sad to report that our much beloved Patron and Founding Trustee, Arthur Cowan, died in November last year, but not until he had confirmation that purchase of our important Ed Hillary Hope Reserve on the road between Hamilton and Raglan had been completed (see articles later in this issue). Pat Cowan remains as Patron, and we thank her sincerely for continuing in this role. Their daughter Rosemary Davison carries the Cowan mantle as a full and active Trustee.

The Trust has continued to grow in terms of reserves owned, and the consequent management required and workload for the voluntary Trustees, but the structures put in place from the 2013 strategic review and future planning exercise have been implemented and are operating well. After 9 years in the chair, and having led NFRT through this phase of reorganisation, Colleen Newton chose in May to step aside and focus again on her personal life and professional career as a barrister in Auckland. The good health of the Trust as we go forward is a fine testament to Colleen's commitment, leadership and guidance, sometimes in the face of very difficult decisions around the restructuring. In taking on the chair she willingly shouldered the load involved at a rather difficult time in the Trust's life, guiding us forward to calmer,

We NEED your Email addresses please!

Like many organisations in New Zealand, we are using the virtual, or online world more and more to communicate with our supporters, and to make more businesses, organisations and people aware of our mission.

With this in mind we would greatly appreciate you helping us to keep our database current with your latest contact details, including email addresses.

We are now able to send your copy of *Canopy* electronically, and email is a great way to keep you up to date with the Trust's events and appeals between newsletters.

We understand that some of our supporters may not use email, or prefer to receive paper copies of *Canopy*, and that is okay by us...but for those of you who would like to receive email communications, or if you have a new phone number please send your name and details to our new administrator, Sue Cameron, at admin@nznfrt.org.nz with 'supporter address details' in the subject line.

native forest
restoration trust

Patron: Pat Cowan
www.nfrt.org.nz

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if still busy, times. The Trustees all hope that Colleen can now pause, reflect on and appreciate NFRT's significant achievements under her leadership. The wider Trust family thanks her for her great personal contribution to our part in enhancing natural values in NZ.

Two other senior Trustees, who have each given more than two decades of voluntary service, have also resigned recently. Our appreciation and gratitude for their immeasurable contribution is great, yet a genuine 'thank you' seems rather inadequate. During this time the Trust grew from a rather small voluntary association to a business with substantial assets and an annual income, employing one full time and three part time staff members. Of course with the growing number of reserves to manage, public support is as crucial as ever to our success. The workload and responsibilities for Trustees have grown commensurately with the organisation and the person most directly impacted was undoubtedly our valued Treasurer Jocelyn Dutton. The strong financial health which the Trust now enjoys is a testament to Jo's many years of careful stewardship of NFRT's financial affairs. The fact that we now feel it necessary to employ a larger accountancy firm after Jo's resignation to handle our work is a measure of the extraordinary amount of professional time and skill Jocelyn voluntarily gave to the Trust's business. We are also indebted to the help given to both Jo and the Trust by Pam & Hugh Corbett who so willingly maintained our data and membership lists.

As we go to press, we have just learned the very sad news that Michael Taylor, who only resigned at the end of May, has died. Michael served as Trustee, Secretary for much of the period and, perhaps most importantly, as *Canopy* editor throughout his time on NFRT. There is a tribute to Michael in this issue. Michael's careful attention to detail and extensive consultation both within and beyond the Trust have been greatly appreciated and have helped ensure a smoothly running body with well established links to the conservation community and the wider public. Michael especially loved visiting and working at Tupare in recent years and it is so sad that we will no longer be able to do that in his company and to receive his sage advice.

We look forward confidently to our future knowing that the Trust today is building on the sure foundations of people like Colleen, Jocelyn and Michael who have held high office and given themselves so wholeheartedly to our work over such a long time. We also really hope that all past trustees will maintain close links with the Trust and its work into the future.

Trustee Hugh Graham has very ably stepped into the role of Acting Treasurer, while we search for a suitable volunteer for this key position. There are tighter financial controls now in place to meet various new legal requirements, and Hugh has developed delegations of authority appropriate for all levels and positions within the organisation. As noted above, an accountancy firm in Cambridge, Accounted4, has now been engaged as the NFRT accountants. One director and one key staff member there are responsible for most of our work, with others available as required.

I am the new Chair of NFRT, and Warwick Brown, a retired property lawyer and businessman from Auckland, has accepted the new position of Deputy Chair. The current Trustees have decided not to appoint additional Trustees until the recent changes have bedded in and we have established the particular skill sets required for NFRT going forward. After 35 years, Geoff Davidson is now the only Founding Trustee still active with NFRT, and he is possibly even more active now than he ever was. Geoff is so widely known in the environmental conservation field that he is regularly contacted about, or directly offered, land for potential purchase or public support campaigns.

Despite the sadness in losing three such important Trustees in quick succession, the Trust is in very good heart and there is abundant positivity as the work of NFRT continues apace. We welcome Sue Cameron, just appointed as part time Administrator to assist Trust Manager Sandy Crichton (see intro to Sue below). The Ed Hillary Hope Reserve has finally been purchased, was officially opened by Peter and Sarah Hillary, and management and restoration with revegetation have commenced. Our second South Island property, the Purple Peak Curry Reserve near Akaroa on Banks Peninsula, was settled in mid-September. Also just completed, is a 38 ha buffer extension to the Puhoi Far North reserve at Honeymoon Valley, Northland. This block

Our New Administrator – Sue Cameron

In August the Trust welcomed Sue Cameron to the newly created role of Trust administrator. Sue takes care of general data entry for the accounting system and supporter database, answers supporter queries and generally ensures that the Trust's administrative functions run smoothly. She also brings extra skills such as gathering of material for newsletters, volunteer recruitment and health and safety management which will be invaluable to the Trust.

Sue formerly helped run a family business for many years and more recently worked in an administrative role at the Department of Conservation at Warkworth. For a time she was the volunteer co-ordinator for the DOC Auckland conservancy where she had a lot of contact with community conservation groups and is very excited about her new role.

As well as working in conservation Sue has also done a lot of voluntary work. She is administrator for the Tamahunga Trappers and is proudly one handle away from being an approved kiwi handler.

In her small amount of leisure time Sue enjoys kayaking, snorkelling and tramping. But most of all she enjoys spending time with family, particularly her two sons and one grandson who all live close by.



contains a small pine plantation, but also some lovely bush with a series of attractive waterfalls and is effectively about 45 ha because a wide paper road is included (see Northern Reserves Manager Chris Wild's report later in this issue).

Trustees are also considering purchases of additional, suitable properties; a major extension to an existing reserve in Taranaki, plus wetland and dune ecosystems in the Far North. Each of these potential purchases will involve partnering with other organisations or individuals for funding and management, with NFRT owning the land and covenanting in perpetuity with QEII. Other much larger properties are on the longer term 'wish list', and we are also now engaging with bee keepers as marginal farm land becomes more attractive for high value manuka and/or kanuka honey production during the transition period to permanent native forest.

Income from carbon credits is allowing planned and more intensive management of our existing reserves, and budgets are being developed accordingly, without being so reliant on intermittent funding from various grant organisations. Much of our management response in the past was reactive to issues, but most can now be planned for in advance.

Unfortunately, our William Upton Hewett memorial forest reserve near Whangarei was seriously damaged by fire in January 2014. The fire was started by a neighbour. It spread from their farm into our bush, of which 55 ha was completely destroyed, some with such heat that the entire ecology and future plant succession have been severely negatively impacted; indeed, entirely altered in parts. Negotiations regarding the insurance claim are ongoing as restoration will be expensive,

requiring intensive weed control for hakea and specific planting to avoid a 70-80 year delay in approaching the pre-fire status quo. Specialist consultancy will be required to establish just what is sufficient and necessary to minimise our ecological and amenity losses over time and to reduce the likelihood of similar damage in a repeat fire scenario, which is well known to have become more likely. This is a real investment that the Trust needs to make to help protect the integrity of our Trust Deed and to meet the responsibilities inherent in the QEII covenant over this land.

A further very exciting development that supporters will be thrilled to learn about is the positive progress being made through DOC for international RAMSAR status, an international convention on wetland protection named for the city in Iran where it was signed in 1971, for the special Mangarakau wetland and adjoining Lake Otuhie and Whanganui Inlet reserves in NW Nelson. This has been driven by Jo-Anne Vaughan and the Friends of Mangarakau with Trustee Helen Lindsay as our liaison. We sincerely thank them for their efforts and negotiations with DOC over the past 10 years and hope and expect that the current application will be successful.

This overview of the current Trust situation has been lengthy because there has been so much activity together with significant changes among personnel and roles.

However, NFRT is not only alive and well, it is proactively moving into its second 35 years.

With sincere appreciation to all our supporters,
Tim Oliver, Chairman, NFRT

Come and stay at Mangarakau Wetland Field Centre, North-west of 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@extra.co.nz



Come and stay at Rangitoto Station Reserve, The King Country

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



Opening of the Ed Hillary Hope Reserve

It was an auspicious start to the day on Saturday 23 May 2015 as the rain gently blessed the early morning rays. Perhaps we would have enjoyed the day more if that was all the rain that fell, but 12 hours later it was still pouring. Not that it dampened the spirits of over 200 NFRT supporters who gathered in a field adjoining Old Mountain Road Waitetuna. It helped that we were sheltering under the expansive marquee provided by Mighty River Power, for which we were immensely grateful.

We arrived at the Old Mountain Road entrance to the Trust's latest addition to our reserve network. Everything was going according to plan, the glow from the bar-b-que hinted at the billy tea and venison sausages to come as tradition dictates, the speakers were preparing their last minute notes, and the shuttle bus was bringing in the supporters from the overflow carpark adjacent to Waitetuna School. There was an occasional holdup as an overly optimistic owner of a two-wheel drive vehicle tried to follow the off road brigade and had to be manually assisted out of the mud.

Inside the marquee it was a warm and welcoming hum that greeted the hardy souls who had braved the weather to this long awaited reserve opening. In fact the Trust was first alerted to the idea of buying it in 2006 when Andrew and Duncan Hope were wanting to subdivide their farm and sell off the bush block. It had long been the desire of the Waikato Regional Council to see the land preserved as the main bush block of their 'Halo Project' to protect all forest blocks within 20 kilometres of Hamilton. By doing so they anticipated that flocks of tui would return to the city centre.

Tim Oliver set the scene and introduced the speakers with Colleen Newton opening the proceedings and welcoming everyone and admiring their dedication on coming out on such a day. Geoff Davidson followed with the background to the

purchase and the process that resulted in an extended reserve. Not just the 200 hectares of bush originally envisaged, but an additional 266 hectares of hill country farmland, ideal for the Trust's purposes of restoration. Some might argue that taking productive farmland out of production is a mistake. But the Trust sees it as an opportunity to increase the area of bush as well as protecting the soils and water of the heads of two tributaries of the Waitetuna Stream catchment. Additionally the Raglan harbour gains as the water will be purer and the harbour will receive less silt with the headwaters protected.

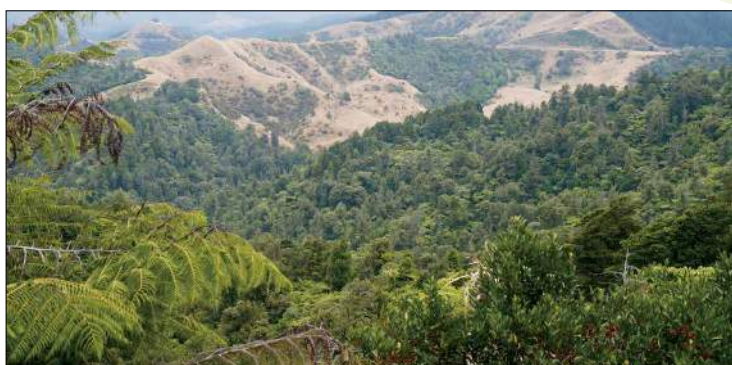
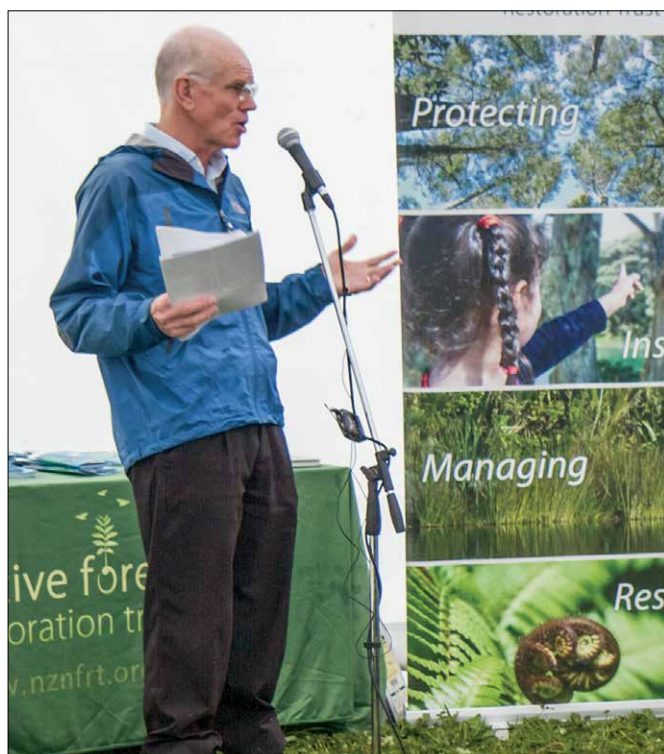
The naming of the reserve as the Ed Hillary Hope Reserve combines the famous name of our patron of 25 years with that of the former land owners, the Hope family, who protected the bush and farmed the land for well over 70 years.

We were delighted that both Peter and Sarah Hillary were able to attend and Peter spoke eloquently of his memories of their father and also of Ed's work in Nepal. Work from which Peter had just returned. He also described the destructive force of the Himalayan earthquake which he experienced in April.

Paula Southgate and Alan Saunders both spoke on behalf of the Waikato Regional Council and their aspirations for the reserve and the Waikato environment generally. Lastly, inspirational Waikato farmer & environmentalist, Gordon Stephenson, spoke of the wider benefits of securing land as reserves and protecting the biodiversity within them.

After that we were all ready for those sausages and billy tea in keeping with the tradition many of us first experienced with Arthur Cowan on tree planting trips to the Rangitoto Station during the 1980s and 90s.

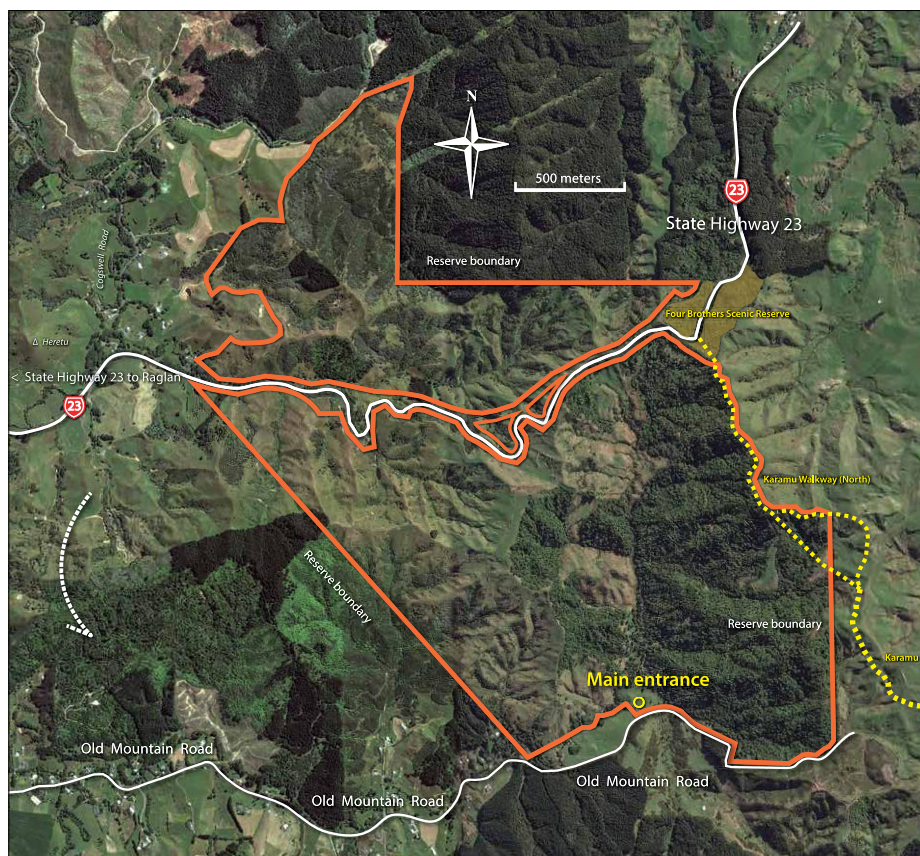
Full credit to those staunch Cowan family and friends who braved the rain and produced the goods despite the torrents



trying to douse the fires. Arthur would have fully approved. We were all heartened to know that days before he died in November 2014 Arthur grinned and gave the 'thumbs up' when told the Ed Hillary Hope Reserve purchase had been finalised. Supporters were so pleased that Pat was well enough to attend, despite the weather.

We all saw the worth of the property as a flagship for restoration processes. An agreement was reached with Comvita to initially plant Waikato provenance Manuka seedlings on around 30 hectares of the land and then to place bee hives nearby to reap the benefit of the miraculous Manuka. Not only are the plants giving health back to the restored landscape, but the by-product of the pollen and nectar they will provide gives health to people both as food and medication. This is very much a new approach for the Trust, designed to replant a large area quickly and give nature a kick start. It'll certainly be interesting in years to come to see how this part of the reserve stacks up against the bulk of the reserve which will now be allowed to naturally regenerate and other parts of the reserve which will be planted by volunteers.

As all the keen surfers among you head to Raglan for the left hand break, keep an eye open for the restoration and revegetation taking place on both sides of the road. The SH23 divides the property in two and the northern half is naturally regenerating and should only need weed control. We hope the keen mountain bikers of Hamilton will assist us in its recovery in exchange for some rugged trails for them to ride. Comvita's planting is south of the highway and may be visible in a few years. In his indomitable way, Arthur in his mid 90s had



begun planting areas of the land years before we got title to it. The fruits of his labour already emerge from the pasture and can be seen from the road summit of SH23. Just as the reserve will be a reminder of all that Ed Hillary did in his life, the plants on the roadside will be a reminder of Arthur and his 'footprint' which extends broadly across the Waikato and well beyond.

Geoff Davidson, Founding Trustee, NFRT





Trust Doubles Number of South Island Reserves

We were very pleased to announce the purchase of our second South Island reserve at the beginning of September. Our latest South Island acquisition, situated above Akaroa at the top of the Grehan Valley on Banks Peninsula, took the Trust's total number of reserves to 29 covering well over 6,500 hectares.

The purchase of the new 192ha Purple Peak Curry Reserve, formerly farmed by the Curry family, was made possible through a three-way funding partnership between the Native Forest Restoration Trust, Christchurch City Council and the Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust. NFRT contributed \$320,000 towards the purchase with the City Council also contributing \$320,000 and the Rod Donald Trust \$160,000.

The reserve will be managed by the Maurice White Native Forest Trust under the watchful eye of Hinewai Reserve manager and renowned botanist Hugh Wilson. MWNFT own and manage neighbouring Hinewai Reserve, which borders the new reserve to the east.

As with all our reserves we have already taken steps to retire the land from farming. The reserve will be actively encouraged

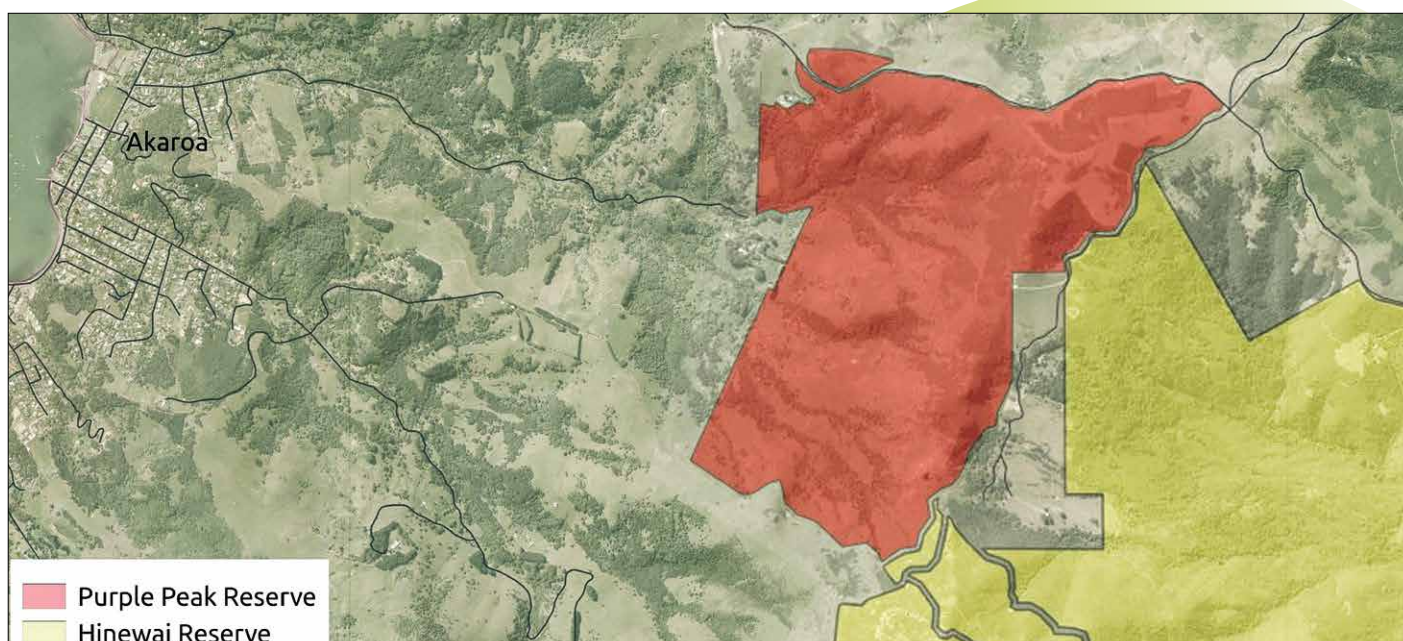
to naturally regenerate into a native forest reserve, protected by QEII open space and City Council covenants. With the removal of stock, we expect regrowth to be rapid with ngaio, narrow-leaved lacebark, ribbonwood and five-finger establishing quickly.

There is already a good amount of natural regeneration in the gullies with a wonderful array of species. Some original trees have even escaped logging; in particular there are one or two large totara, matai, and kahikatea, which are reputedly as big as any on Banks Peninsula! There is also a small skyline beech forest which is unusual for the area.

Thanks to the ongoing assistance of the Rod Donald Trust and the Maurice White Native Forest Trust the reserve will have excellent public access. The reserve will not only be a recreational asset but it will also offer significant protection to Akaroa town's water supply.

None of our work would be possible if it weren't for the ongoing support we receive from like-minded organisations, groups and individuals. In short our supporters are second to none – we thank you for helping us to secure yet another reserve!

The new Purple Peak Curry Reserve will officially open early in 2016.



Local View of Ed Hillary Hope Reserve

It was great news to learn that a new reserve, the Native Forest Restoration Trust's Ed Hillary Hope Reserve, was opening near my home west of Hamilton. In fact, it's only about 5kms as the crow or tui flies... and let's hope the tui and other native birds do fly between the reserve and my land, which borders a gully and creek flowing into the Waipa River system. The restoration of my part of the gully is an ongoing project in itself and local birdlife visits at all times of the year to check it out.

Currently there are kereru, tui, riroriro (grey warblers), tauhou (silver eyes), pikopiko (fantails) and kotare (kingfishers) passing through the gully, as well as rosellas. As yet no korimako (bellbirds) visit the gully although they live on the other side of the hills on the way to Raglan. Maybe the regenerating reserve vegetation will encourage them over the hill. Their call in the dawn chorus would be amazing, not only for me but my neighbours as well.

Encouraging bird life is not the only benefit of the reserve for the local community. Ed Hillary Hope Reserve will enable the protection of the stream ecosystem running alongside Old Mountain Road, near the main entrance. Freshwater fish need all the encouragement we can give them to flourish. This would also be a great asset for families with young children to picnic beside.

Having walking tracks nearer to home will be a bonus as the remnants of native forests in the Waikato are usually an hour's drive away. Now, for me, this protected remnant is only 15 minutes away by road and accessible each week. There is something special about being able to walk a track on a regular basis to notice the changes and developments of the native animals and plants, especially as this track will be open when the Karamu walkway is closed for lambing each spring.

Like many others, I love walking in native bush for enjoyment, using and extending my biological knowledge, huff-and-puff exercise, and all the health benefits that walking outdoors brings, including social benefits as family and friends will be more than tempted to join me in a walk.

The Trust's new Ed Hillary Hope Reserve is a welcome addition to the local landscape and has the potential to be a very special and inspiring place. A place where people can become involved, learn more about native flora and fauna, and a rejuvenating forest ecosystem. I for one can't wait to see the area regenerate and am very much looking forward to bellbirds visiting my gully! Beverley Bell

Environmental Partnering with WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Supporters of the Trust have seen comments in *Canopy*, and elsewhere, for some years past that purchase of the Ed Hillary Hope Reserve on the main road between Hamilton and Raglan was imminent. Well, it has finally happened and there was a fantastic, but very wet, opening function held at the reserve in May this year.

The Ed Hillary Hope Reserve is set to become a flagship reserve for the Native Forest Restoration Trust (NFRT) that will involve major restoration and development. It is an excellent example of achieving goals through partnerships: with local government at both district and regional levels, with the

landowners, with local iwi and conservation groups and with individuals in the wider community. I want to focus on the regional government aspect, where the offer about 9 years ago by Waikato Regional Council (Environment Waikato at that time) to fund the purchase of the existing bush component on Michael Hope's farm, led eventually to a 466 ha purchase of all the remaining farm land. Waikato Regional Council (WRC) contributed \$500,000, or nearly 40% of the total purchase price, with accrued funds from NFRT supporters and benefactors allowing us to pay the balance. This \$500,000 contribution was the cornerstone commitment up front that allowed the Trust to secure the property. Without that initial commitment by Waikato Regional Council to fund this Hamilton Halo area project, and then staff member Kevin Collins protecting the grant, the Ed Hillary Hope reserve would not have eventuated.

Now in its 35th year the Trust finds itself in the fortunate position of being able to contribute to some reserve acquisitions up front. Of course we still have to recover funds through fundraising initiatives to allow us to acquire more land and continue our restoration work. Accompanying this edition of *Canopy* you will find an appeal brochure for Ed Hillary Hope Reserve. Any future donations towards this reserve will be put into restoration work and public access development

Now that the property has been acquired, Waikato District Council is supporting further development projects. Our late Patron, Arthur Cowan, together with Trustee Roy Dench and Les Wells, executor for the Hope Estates, are acknowledged for their joint efforts in bringing this drawn out process to such a positive conclusion.

Hillary Hope is incredibly exciting for the Trust, but there is also high downside risk if we do not get it right, because the reserve is so public, having a tourist and daily commute highway through the middle and with loop walking tracks and picnic stops to be developed.

Trustees are increasingly finding that a 40% guarantee from a partner is sufficient catalyst, especially with larger purchase propositions, to be able to proceed. Many properties are now so expensive, in absolute terms, that we must include significant other funders in order to get the purchase process started. Then tagged contributions from our very generous benefactors can sometimes be used to tip the scales to our advantage. A strong foundation partner can sometimes attract additional, significant donors to the cause, as has been the case with the Purple Peak Curry Reserve on Banks Peninsula, which was acquired in September. With both the Hillary Hope and Purple Peak properties we are working closely with local government staff and reserve managers to develop appropriate long term management plans that will then lead into the detail necessary for the QEII covenant to provide legal protection in perpetuity.

NFRT now has 12 reserves in the greater Waikato region, from the Coromandel Peninsula to Awakino in the southwest – totalling about 2,650 ha. All these reserve purchases involved staff support and encouragement from Waikato Regional Council and, of course, from QEII and Department of Conservation staff. Some, such as the Tui Glen property in the sensitive Waitomo Catchment, also received financial assistance. Tui Glen has now also received regulatory support following damage during exotic plantation logging.

Partnerships extend beyond land purchase and property ownership, with Trustees and supporters joining advisory

committees, assisting with policy development and planning, supporting QEII initiatives, and helping establish and facilitate local Landcare groups (a good example of this partnering can be seen in the pioneering Waitomo Catchment Trust Board and later, with Environment Waikato soil conservation and forestry staff, Okiwiriki, which comprises about 1,500 ha of protected bush on 6 farms at Omaru Falls near Mapiu – south of Te Kuiti).

One final example of our very strong and long standing partnership with Waikato Regional Council involved a complicated and potentially highly damaging public case where Environment Waikato had become committed to challenging a landowner for defying an order not to log his native forest. Although this occurred over 20 years ago, it was a classic confrontation with a lose/lose outcome. Regional Council staff, with whom we already collaborated, approached NFRT and QEII for assistance. Following negotiations with the owner, NFRT purchased the 250 ha block; the owner was happy with the price and was very happy that the bush would remain intact, there was no further need for a court case and so a lose/lose had been turned into a win/win/win for the parties directly involved, with relationships being strengthened. This block was named for our founding chair, Owen Lewis, and is seen by all the visitors on the road up to Rangitoto Station reserve.

We are currently developing regional level Memorandum Of Understanding principles with Waikato Regional Council, and will then have specific management and development plans at the district or reserves level. This will involve even closer association with council staff, who are essential to developing these strong partnerships. When senior councillors are also on board we start to make significant progress towards protecting and improving more of our natural environment for future generations.

Tim Oliver, Chairman, NFRT

A personal appreciation of Arthur Blair Cowan 5 April 1916 – 2 November 2014



Working with Arthur for 35 years on the Native Forest Restoration Trust has been a wonderful experience.

As an inexperienced young man, I was able to watch and learn from Arthur's experience and try to absorb and emulate his common sense, his humility, his passion, and his enduring love of the natural environment. If I could achieve a fraction of his accomplishments, I would consider it a life worth living.

Since the Trust was formed in 1980 the world has had its share of turmoil and stress, but nothing to compare with that of Arthur's youth. A world depression closely followed by a second world war must have shaped his views and taught him to live a

life based on strong principles and an equally strong sense of responsibility for all earth's creatures.

It seems there were two formative periods for the young Arthur: firstly the experience of his parents, Jack & Ella Cowan, who, after the First World War, were farming and struggling to establish a young family in the remote and rugged hinterland of the Wanganui area. Being a pragmatist Arthur's father soon realised the futility of it and moved to the Rewarewa area south of Otorohanga. Therein lay Arthur's first lesson – don't fight nature, work with it. The forest has long since reclaimed that remote corner of Wanganui with the hills, streams, trees and birds all the better for it. It was literally on a road to nowhere.

Life in Rewarewa was undoubtedly tough but the teenage Arthur was able to provide strong support for his father as he grew into the strapping man I met so many years later. However the Second World War interrupted Arthur's life and surely provided him with the second of his life's lessons when in 1939 Arthur enlisted; the following year he was sent with the 2nd Expeditionary forces as an anti-tank gunner to the front. I once, briefly, spoke to Arthur of his war experiences and like most returned servicemen he was reticent but simply shook his head at its incomprehensibility. I am sure the second lesson came along very quickly in Arthur's war years, and judging by his peaceful and humble life thereafter, he may well have resolved that war is futile.

Recently Susan Pepperell wrote, "Inside Stories, NZ prisoners of war remember", a book of interviews with old soldiers, including Arthur and this short account is based on that.

Firstly fighting in Greece the NZ troops retreated to Africa and were fighting in Libya when the battle of Sidi Razegh saw Rommel's tanks outnumber the Allied forces and overrun their position. Arthur was wounded by shrapnel and taken prisoner. He was transferred to Italy where he was imprisoned at Grupignano in Northern Italy, and recuperated from his wounds. There as a sergeant he became a hut leader to "help pass the time" in 'charge' of 97 Aussie diggers. In that role he was in a position to deflect German searches for the inevitable tunnel the POW's started digging. Unluckily the installation of a new ablution block flooded the tunnel foiling the escape attempt. When Italy surrendered in September 1943, many of the Anzac troops were transferred to Stalag VIIIA at Gorlitz east of Dresden. Life was difficult with Red Cross parcels providing the only real nutrition available.

When the Russians advanced in January 1945 the prisoners were force-marched in the middle of winter for 600 km across Europe. 2,000 prisoners with little food provided, having to scavenge or rely on local peasants for food and shelter. Arthur was among those that survived, but his solid build was reduced to 45kg. After American troops liberated the prisoners Arthur spent a short period of recuperation in England, before returning to New Zealand and work on the farm.

Shortly thereafter a broken leg, the result of a tractor accident, meant a stay in Waikato Hospital. There the physiotherapist Pat provided the best care available and perhaps inevitably two such decent people saw the good in each other and were soon married.

His doggedness and commitment to a cause was legendary. Many a time he would turn up to a Trust meeting, sale and purchase agreement in hand. Any effort on my part to play the



Devil's Advocate and question aspects of the purchase were overwhelmed by Arthur's clear determination and understanding of the land's benefit to the wider environment.

Reviewing articles about Arthur, citations accompanying the many awards he received, and several of the obituaries, there were many references to the plantings he made, the environmental works he organised, and the land he secured as reserves. There were many references to his good nature and warm winning smile and gentle, persuasive personality. I accept that all those activities and attributes were the Arthur that the NFR trustees knew and worked with so willingly. But there was so much more that would need to be written to describe all of Arthur's involvements and all facets of his character. Suffice it to agree with Kingsley Field who saw that Arthur's life was like the pebble thrown into a pool, the resultant ripples spreading widely and regularly influencing all those he encountered, including me.

Reviewing photos of Arthur there are three things accompanying him in almost every frame; his long wooden crook, his tam o' shanter hat, and of course Pat. Perhaps that should have read in every photo of Pat there is Arthur with his crook and hat. That's how I will remember them both.

Geoff Davidson, Founding Trustee, NFRT

Michael John Taylor 18 June 1936 – 15 October 2015



Trustees and all who knew him were saddened to learn of Michael's sudden death. Michael had come to New Zealand in 1966 as a lecturer in chemistry at the University of Auckland. He retired thirty years later as an associate professor having enjoyed a full and impressive career of teaching and research. He brought to this country a strong interest in the natural world,

particularly bird life, and he developed a very strong involvement with the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. However it is his dedication and commitment to the Native Forest Restoration Trust that we honour here. He was a supporter from the Trust's inception and became a Trustee soon after his retirement from the University. He was soon elected secretary and filled this office with careful attention to detail. He used his extensive links with wider conservation networks to ensure that NFRT maintained contact with like-minded groups. He was keen, too, to ensure that potential Trustees were invited to consider joining our work with the ever-growing demands on a largely volunteer organisation. Our biggest debt to Michael must surely be in the meticulous care and extensive knowledge that he showed in the editing of our newsletter *Canopy*. He took on this task very soon after becoming a Trustee and was continuing with the preparation of material until shortly before his death. He would seek out writers, edit submissions and if necessary write pieces himself. A collection of some forty issues of *Canopy* ...this is issue no. 61...is testament to his skills and dedication.

Michael was also active in planting and weeding activities and in helping the Trust identify suitable properties for our purchase, care and restoration. Following Miss Marie Neverman's generous bequest in 2007 Michael was particularly active in seeking out a suitable property to honour her memory, leading to the purchase of the reserve on the Tupare Peninsula in the Kaipara Harbour now bearing her name. A generous gift from another supporter and one from Michael himself allowed us to complete this purchase. The generosity with which he gave his time and energies to causes close to his heart was known to many. His financial generosity was known only to those very close to him.

Michael was loved and respected by all who knew him. The outpouring of grief and affection from a very wide circle of friends is ample testimony honouring a life of service and scholarship.

Brian Davis, Trustee, NFRT

A Generous Bequest

When the Restoration Trust had news of Miss Marie Neverman's bequest in 2007 and when we knew that she was keen for us to use it to purchase a property that would provide a sanctuary for birds, Trustee Michael Taylor began an active search for a suitable property. He located the 23-hectare wetland on the Kaipara Harbour that now bears her name, the Marie Neverman Wetland Reserve at Tupare. The reserve was extended a further 113 hectares in 2010. In his forays in the area Michael found that another property sharing access to the wetland was possibly for sale. No immediate moves were made but eventually Michael made the decision to buy the property himself. On visits to our reserve he was able to enjoy his own piece of land and the adjoining lake; he was very actively involved in all our work there combining it with his interests in birding on the South Kaipara Peninsula.

It was an open secret that on his death this new block would be left to the Trust. Sadly that moment has come too soon. We are pleased to acknowledge this very generous bequest and look forward to making arrangements for Trust supporters to visit this rich heritage only an hour from Auckland's Central Business District.

NFRT Trustee Rosemary Davison Cracks the Whip on Waipa River Project

Waipa Rerenoa River Restoration Project focuses on the Waipa River starting at Te Keeti Marae and restoring both sides of the Waipa River upstream for 6km. The Mohoanui Stream is a tributary of the Waipa River and it will also be part of this restoration project. NFRT recently donated \$10,000 towards achieving this restoration.

As part of the project Waikato Regional Council are systematically removing crack willows from the Waipa River. Although the willows are being replaced, not all communities are happy to see the exotic willows replaced with similar species and would prefer a more 'New Zealand' look to their stretch of waterway. Native Forest Restoration Trust's very own Trustee, Rosemary Davison, is one such landowner. She and her family own a farm with a long Waipa River boundary. They were approached in 2014 about the removal of crack willows on their stretch of river and their replacement with Matsudana willow poles.

Rosemary says, "I really dislike long lines of willow poles running up our river banks. It doesn't do anything for biodiversity, it doesn't look appealing and it just does not look like New Zealand."

Rosemary approached the Council and asked if they could instead have an attractive and functional native riparian planting. Not happy with the council's view that this would be prohibitively expensive, a much more difficult option and too small to attract funding, Rosemary set about ringing neighbours. She wanted to see if they would support a project that incorporated native planting and was pleased when they were all keen to be involved.

"We went back to Waikato Regional Council with a project encompassing 11km of riverbank and a range of keen landowners. Te Keeti Marae were also looking to start up a project to clean up and plant the stream next to the Marae. Otorohanga District Council have also been very supportive and we have all teamed up."



The project is planned for completion over the next 3 years. The willows have been removed from the first stretch of river. A big effort was put in from farmers as the whole riverbank had to be re-fenced before the first 12,000 trees were planted in July. A well-attended community planting day was held at Te Keeti Marae followed by wonderful Marae hospitality.

As well as the Native Forest Restoration Trust, the project has received funding from Waikato Catchment Ecological

Enhancement Trust, Maniopoto Trust Board, Otorohanga District Council, Waikato Regional Council and their main funder the Waikato River Authority. Enough funding has been raised to remove the willows, replant with natives, re-fence and engage contractors to release the plantings for 3 years.

“By the time the first 11kms are complete we might be working on the next section. Why stop now!” says Rosemary.

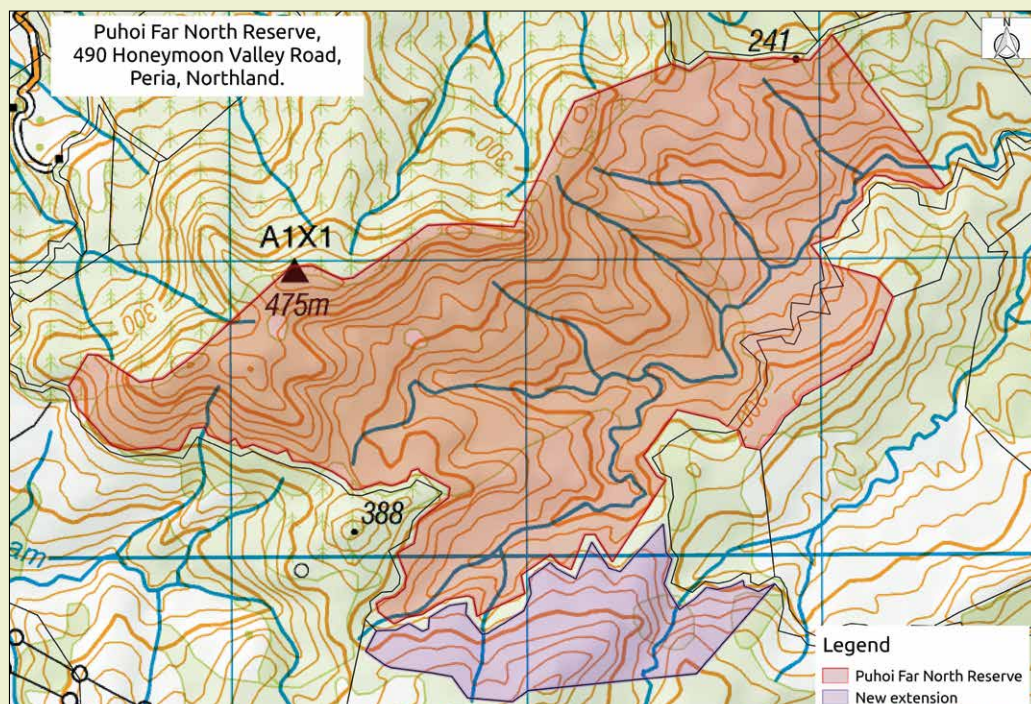
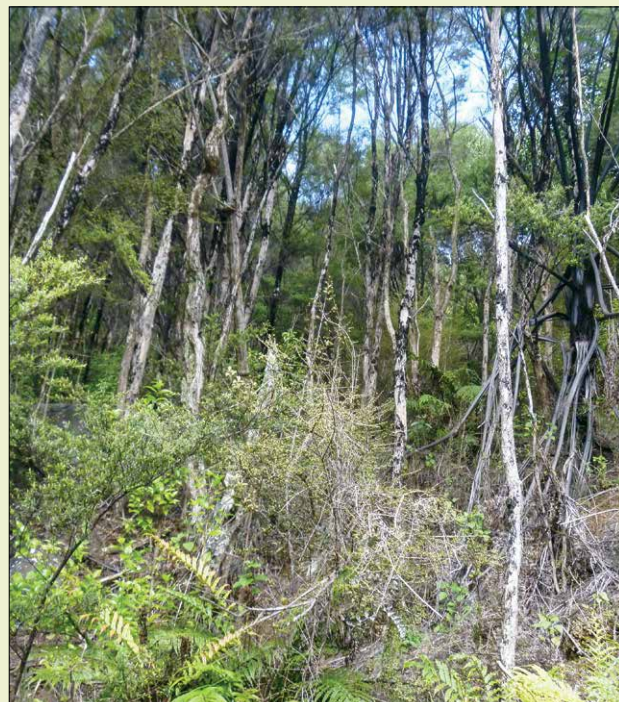
Puhoi Far North Reserve Extended

The Trust recently purchased 38 hectares of land adjoining the Puhoi Far North Reserve, taking the reserve to 293 hectares.

Just off the Honeymoon Valley Road near Peria, the new block adjoins the reserve on the south western side and is a mixture of manuka dominant regenerating shrubland, mature cut over broadleaf forest, pine and pasture. The forested gully has a series of beautiful waterfalls and pools.

The Trust took the opportunity to secure the land, when it was offered for sale, for three main reasons. The purchase completed the protection of the upper catchment of the main reserve stream, it provides for better access for pest control and ensures a conservation intent for the land.

The land is on Honeymoon Valley Road where a new Landcare group has recently been formed to support the conservation efforts of landowners in the Valley. A wider community led pest control programme will begin soon on the new block and adjoining properties. This will extend the Trust's existing area currently trapped for kiwi protection, and make pest control efforts more successful. Recent kiwi call counts in the area show kiwi numbers falling in the Valley so hopefully the additional effort and resources can reverse this trend.



TO MAKE A DONATION

I would like to support the work of the Trust with a contribution.

I enclose a donation of: ☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 \$ (other)

All donations over \$5 are tax deductible.

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