



canopy 64

Newsletter of the Native Forest Restoration Trust

Spring 2017

NFRT Chairman's Message

Hello again to all our supporters, friends, volunteers and staff; welcome to spring blossoms and morning daylight again! And may the rain ease back somewhat, after 6 months with three tropical deluges followed by the usual NZ winter storms. However, the silver lining is that water grows trees and this rain will set most of our reserves up for healthy regeneration during the coming season.

The Wekaweka Valley wetland forest purchase on the NE boundary of the Waipoua Kauri Park has been completed and the opening ceremony is being planned for mid-late March 2018. There's more on this and the fundraising campaign later in this issue of Canopy. I visited the property earlier this month with Trust Manager Sandy Crichton and we were both very excited about this new asset and the active community land care support group. Rob Anderson still owns his house within the block and has kindly agreed to be the Honorary Ranger/Reserve Liaison through to at least 31 March next year. The current suspension/swing bridge across the river for pedestrian access to the forest has been assessed by an engineer as not meeting current safety legislation and can no longer be used. Trustees will investigate potential designs and costs for replacement on a slightly smaller scale; but permitted bridges don't come cheap! Unfortunately, there will not be a bridge for the opening ceremony. Let's hope for fine weather and low water in the river allowing 4WD access.

The potential 133 ha wetland forest purchase at the end of Alfred Rd in Taranaki, to which I alluded in the previous issue of Canopy, has progressed very satisfactorily with an extremely generous family donation covering half the price. The vendor is a relatively new owner and was prepared to accept our reasonable offer for the bush block whilst also giving generous finance terms that allow us some time to raise the balance of \$250,000. For a volunteer Trust such as NFRT, this extra time to secure the necessary funds is incredibly helpful. Trustees are, however, very aware that the clock is already ticking.

This particular tongue of bush extends the national park estate 1.5 km into the dairy pastures of the lowland ecological zone. Over 30 years ago, it was identified in the Protected Natural Areas Programme (PNAP) report for the region as being a highly significant natural area and, since then, many individuals in local government and other environmental groups have wanted to see it protected. Consequently, New Plymouth District Council have been most supportive throughout the whole process, which involves some complex subdivision, and through a heritage fund are also providing half

the cost of fencing the bush/farm boundary, with the balance principally through QEII National Trust as part of the covenanting process. Taranaki Regional Council staff have also helped with ecological surveys and will partner with pest and predator control. There is further detail about this important forest later in Canopy 64.

Those of you who are involved with forestry may be aware that MPI have changed some of the rules around measuring carbon and our projected income to fund reserves management has significantly reduced. We are working through the implications for overall management, but one likely counter strategy is that NFRT will need to do more restorative patch planting in grassy areas on some reserves that are not regenerating sufficiently quickly. Your Trustees are currently seeking professional advice before planning relevant planting programmes, which require a lead time to source suitable trees and shrubs grown from local seeds. We always intended these areas to develop into native forest, but they need help. Subsequent carbon income will be a retrospective bonus. We have already received some generous donations to assist with this restoration work and it would be a nice tribute to name selected groves after these donors and future benefactors. Hillary Hope on the way to Raglan is one reserve where various approaches to revegetation planting are being employed. The fenced carpark on Old Mountain Rd now has a metalled vehicle track down to and along the valley floor with a concrete culvert for vehicle and pedestrian access across the stream. We anticipate using a special bequest to complete this roading project.



NFRT representatives meet stakeholders and vendor at Taranaki Mahood-Lowe Reserve.

native forest
restoration trust

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The Opoutama wetland near the Mahia Peninsula requires a legal and physical access along the northern boundary for weed and pest control, together with fencing to exclude livestock following a change in management on the adjoining farm. It is hoped that we may be able to negotiate a buffer extension across to the small DOC reserve, which will benefit all parties.

Sadly, Chris Wild, our Northern Reserves Manager has stepped down to focus on family and her other interests. In the five years or so that I have known Chris, she has given very sound strategic advice and has always had the best interests of NFRT and conservation at heart. She can think big picture and still act practically at the local level, where she has worked very hard and has successfully helped set up and mentor local community support groups for reserves. Chris has specialist GIS and IT skills that we hope still to use

periodically. Chris had foreshadowed her departure in about 18 months time, allowing NFRT to introduce a succession plan. Unfortunately, it has happened rather sooner and while James McLaughlin will continue with the Waipoua reserves and the major, post-fire revegetation project at William Upton Hewett (as detailed elsewhere), Rob Anderson (Wekaweka) and Bernard Coogan (Puhoi Far North) will have oversight for the remaining Northland reserves until March next year. This continues the management for essential projects and allows NFRT time to develop the transition and longer term strategy for our Northland properties. Thank you Chris for your support, dedication and achievements over the past several years and I look forward to visiting your own restored wetland.

Tim Oliver, Chairman, NFRT

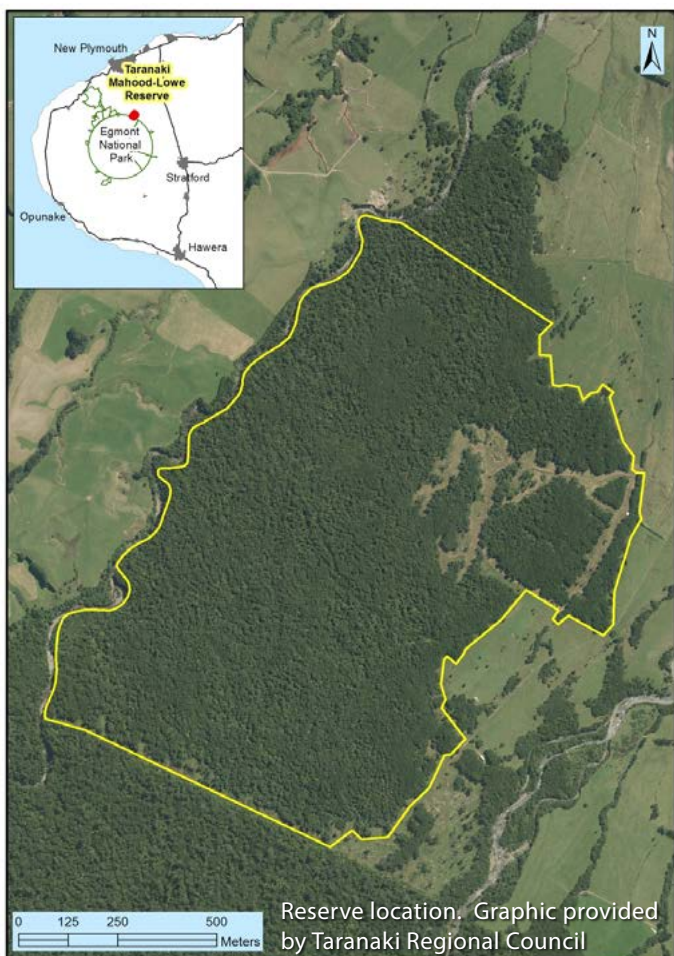
Taranaki Haven in our Sights for Protection

Watched over by the magnificent Mount Taranaki lies 133 hectares of forest wetland that is a haven for our native species. We're working on a campaign, with a little help from our friends, to protect it forever.

The 133-hectare forest wetland, on the ring plain adjacent to Egmont National Park, is approximately 8 km south west of Inglewood and lies between the Waiwhakaiho River and the Kaiauai Stream in north Taranaki. It's a high quality example of an acutely threatened ecosystem and a regionally rare wetland

type, home to a multitude of native species. It is considered a Regionally Significant Wetland and a Key Native Ecosystem by the Taranaki Regional Council and a Significant Natural Area by New Plymouth District Council.

It comprises lowland forest that lies on flood deposits of alluvial gravel and sand (known as the Hangatahua Gravels) which was previously logged. The forest canopy has now recovered and is up to 20 metres in height. The area, a kamahi-dominant lowland forest with swamp maire, northern rata,



(Above) Mount Taranaki beyond the Reserve.

(Below) The upper Kaiauai Stream.





Photograph by Dean Caskey.

rimu, thin-barked totara, hinau and miro, borders indigenous forest in the National Park. Tawa forest is also present. Rarities include Kirk's tree daisy which was recently observed perching in two epiphytes.

It provides good habitat for a range of native forest birds, and connectivity to the National Park ensures easy passage. Species likely to be present include bush falcon and North Island brown kiwi. Whio (blue duck) poo was recently recorded in the Kaiauai Stream and very good whio habitat exists along the western boundary. Recent surveys have also located long-tailed bats in similar habitat of the adjacent National Park.

We've identified the area as significantly important for our native plants and animals and, in keeping with our mission, it is a large enough section of representative forest to ensure its viability in the future. We think it's vitally important to preserve areas of our beautiful native forests and wetlands like this one and are working on a campaign to cover the cost of its purchase.

The campaign has been started by a very generous donation from supporters Ray and Jan Lowe, who pledged to cover half

the price. Once again, the extraordinary generosity of our supporters is overwhelming. Sadly, Jan passed away recently following a brave battle with cancer but was comforted by the legacy she was able to leave. We are very grateful to Ray and Jan for their generosity and commitment to protecting New Zealand's native forests. We will be calling the reserve the Taranaki Mahood-Lowe Reserve in honour of their gift.

The vendor is keen for the area to be protected and has kindly given us some time to raise the \$250,000 balance. It's a big ask. Especially after the extraordinary support we recently received to purchase the Wekaweka Valley Reserve. But when an opportunity like this comes up, we must do everything in our power to take it up.

We're currently looking at ways to make this happen. The native plants, birds and animals that call this area home are too important to ignore. They must be protected. We'll be working hard to do this and we hope you will join us once again to help. We'll be in touch soon with ways to get involved.



Kirk's tree daisy (inset) perching in a high epiphyte clump. Photograph by Dean Caskey.

It's Official – The Wekaweka Valley Reserve is Protected Forever



112 hectares of regenerating native forest joins the Native Forest Restoration Trust portfolio. Photograph by Bruce Jarvis.

The paperwork was all signed on Friday 9th June and the Wekaweka Valley Reserve became the latest addition to the Native Forest Restoration Trust reserve portfolio.

The purchase was made possible thanks to the generosity of hundreds of people from all over the country who made a donation to protect this area of regenerating native forest. To everyone who donated, whether it was \$20 or \$20,000, we would like to say thank you. Thank you for your interest in protecting our natural environment and for acting on your interest by making a donation. We've been overwhelmed by the commitment of our supporters to protect New Zealand's native forests.

We have begun putting in place a work plan for the 112 hectare reserve and are pleased to announce the appointment of Rob Anderson as Honorary Ranger and Reserve Liaison. As well as being a dedicated environmentalist, Rob is a retired industrial chemist, caretaker of the land for the last 30 years and a stalwart member of Wekaweka Landcare Group. Rob is one of the former owners of the property, and still owns a house that sits within the reserve's boundaries. Rob's knowledge of the area will be an invaluable asset to the Trust. Rob will oversee weed and pest control and on-site preparations for the opening. We will continue to work with Wekaweka Landcare Group on pest control and will be establishing mustelid trapping for the reserve.

It's largely thanks to Rob, and his fellow former owners, that the area has been such a success story for regeneration over the past couple of decades. "The number of seedlings that you can see growing, just next to the track, is incredible," said Trust Manager, Sandy Crichton following a recent visit to the reserve with Chair Tim Oliver. "I spotted thousands of little kahikatea

and rewarewa plants and there are a phenomenal number of moss species. The lichen is just dripping off some of the trees."

This diversity and abundance demonstrates the resilience of our native species, given the right conditions, and it can be seen throughout the Wekaweka Valley Reserve. "If you look around the different areas of the reserve, you can see where it was



Rob Anderson at Wekaweka Valley Reserve. Photograph by Bruce Jarvis.

selectively logged in the past, and where it is now regenerating,” said Sandy. “It was fascinating walking around with Rob, who could point out the different areas that showed regeneration from different points in time.”

Another indicator as to the ecological significance of the area has been the identification of some species that are at the southern edge of their range. Coupled with the mix of riverine and upland podocarp-broadleaf forest, it really is a special place for our native species.

However, you shouldn't judge a book by its cover and even introduced, pest species are useful sometimes. There was a surprise in store when Sandy and Tim went to assess the wild blackberry in the reserve. Normally considered a weed, they were expecting to have to get it cleared from the entrance to the property. But on closer inspection, they found it to be a nursery area for more important native species. The blackberry is protecting the seedlings as they take root and is therefore actually a benefit.

They also saw some of the native wildlife when a kauri snail was spotted on the road just outside the property. These giant snails, which used to be widespread in Northland, are now only found in small parts of Northland and some offshore islands so it's thrilling to see them living at the Wekaweka Valley Reserve.

Of course, working in remote, rural areas is not always without its challenges. Between Wekaweka Road, which is the only access road to the reserve, and the majority of the 112 hectare plot of land lies the beautiful Waimamakau River. To date, access to the property has been via a swing bridge, which was built by the owners for their own private use. Unfortunately,

having had it assessed by a surveyor, we've been informed that the current bridge is not suitable for public access. We're currently working through the options we have to make the reserve accessible to the public and will let you know when this happens if you would like to visit.

When the reserve is officially open to the public, it will be a beautiful place to go. We're planning to create a picnic area next to the river, where there is a perfect swimming hole. A walk up the hill through the regenerating native bush, followed by a swim and a good lunch sounds like the perfect summer's day to us. We'll be working hard to get it ready for you to visit as soon as possible. We'll let you know when that is and look forward to seeing you there.



A magnificent kauri snail spotted just outside the Wekaweka Valley Reserve.



The beautiful Waimamakau river – the perfect picnic spot on a summer's day. Photograph by Bruce Jarvis.

Replanting Underway at William Upton Hewett Reserve

It's been all go at our 242 hectare William Upton Hewett this winter with approximately 7,000 plants planted so far as part of the restoration strategy for the reserve. Located north-west of Whangarei, between Pipiwai and Titoki, the reserve is comprised of a mosaic of kauri-podocarp-broadleaf forest, gumland shrubland, dry heathland, and a large wetland. Over 20% of the reserve was destroyed by fire at the beginning of 2014.

Initial efforts following the fire focussed on weeding and seed collecting but this winter we also started planting native regeneration patches. 7,000 may seem like a small number of plants but growing the plants on from seed and ecosourcing additional plants proved to be more difficult than anticipated. It's also a steep 20 minute walk to the planting sites in the middle of the reserve so the plants had to be flown in by helicopter. These sites were chosen as part of a strategy to replant patches of later successional, less flammable shrubs and trees back into the sites they were removed from by the fire. This replanting will ultimately cover 11.2 of the 21.7 hectares of this vegetation type burnt by the fire with the sites meeting three criteria:

1. Replace pre-existing ridge line species to provide shelter and fire retarding vegetation.
2. Plug gaps in gullies where fires can leap across the streams into new areas.

3. Provide patches of less flammable, berry producing broadleaf shrubs throughout the burnt area to provide a seed source for the regeneration recovery.

Over the next 5 years we hope to plant a total of 10 revegetation plots, chosen not only to provide fire breaks, but to be ideally placed so that birds will be attracted and seeds dispersed within the reserve and not outside of it.

Young manuka have already colonised the areas that were burnt. Unfortunately they are slow growing on this soil and a future fire risk. By undertaking this strategic planting of fire

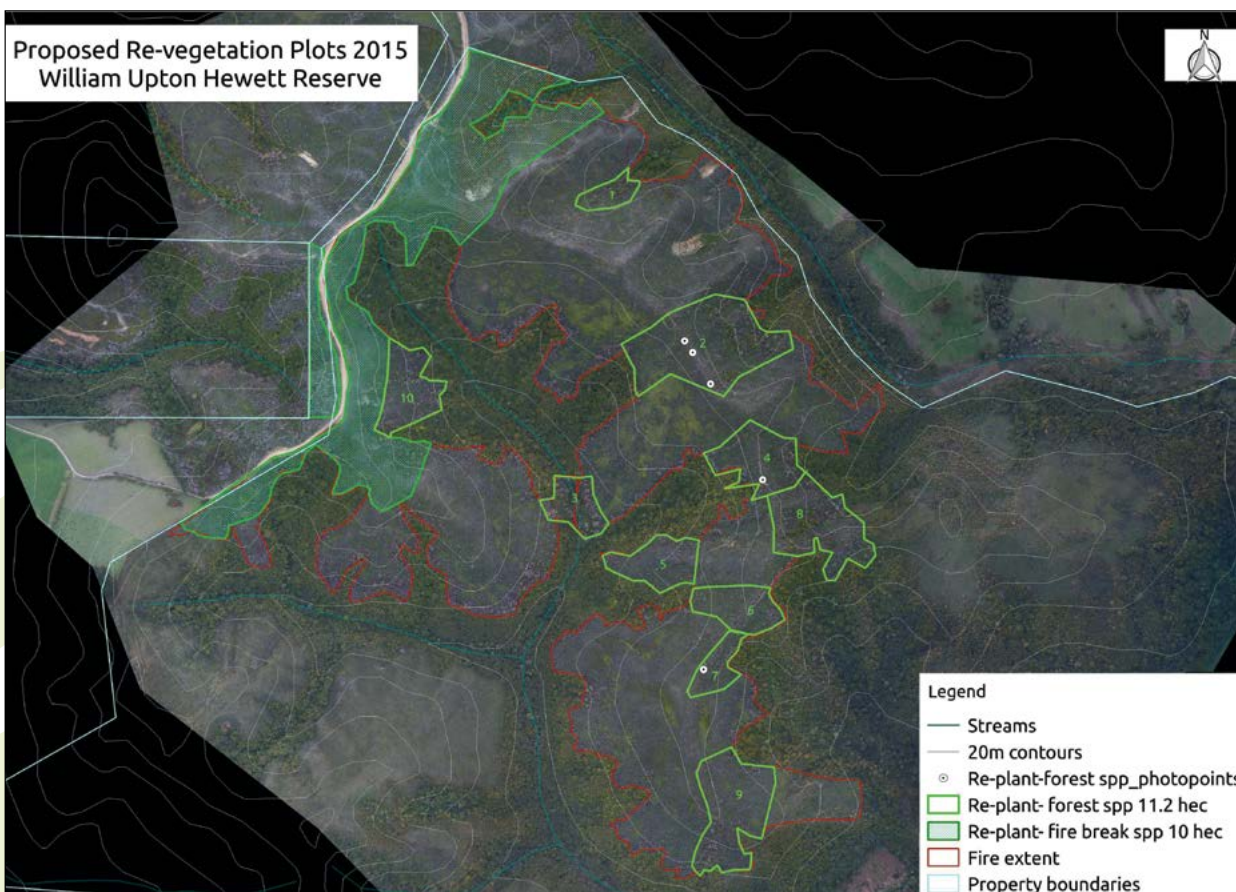


(Top) Ecosourced plants grown from seed collected at WUH Reserve.

(Above) Plants being helicoptered into the Reserve.

(Below) Volunteers begin the restoration planting
Photographs by James McLaughlin.





resistant species we hope to speed up the revegetation for the reserve so that it's not as vulnerable to fire for such a long period.

Helping us undertake this planting are several North Tec students: Claire Heyns, Jess Leigh, and Api. The work provides students with practical conservation experience while helping out a bit financially. Not only have we had the NorthTec

students but we have also had Nika from Slovenia and Claudia from Germany helping. Both of whom are interested in conservation work as well. A big thanks to everyone involved!

James McLaughlin, Reserve Manager – Waipoua and William Upton Hewett Reserves, NFRT

back to the beauty they once possessed. To protect a beautiful stand of native trees is one thing - you can at least see the superb trees you are preserving - but to replant for the future is something ^{else} again. You may see little of the results of your work - It is the future generations and our much loved country itself which will benefit - and those that work towards this end are displaying an unselfish and indeed noble outlook. I must

Excerpt from a letter written by NFRT's long-serving first patron Sir Edmund Hillary in the 1980s, launching the campaign to purchase the Professor McGregor Memorial Reserve. Courtesy of former NFRT trustee, Roy Clements.

Round-up from Hillary Hope Reserve

Whaingaroa Harbour Care's planting team have completed planting "islands" in the retired thick pasture grass. This thick grass inhibits natural regeneration. With proven success in numerous plantings in this Ecological District Whaingaroa Harbour Care's methodology is not to spot spray or release plantings. A mix of the colonising species manuka, kanuka, flax, mahoe, *Coprosma*, wineberry and lacebark is planted and will rapidly shade out grass and provide habitat in which other seeds can germinate. Excessively wet weather right through summer has delayed completion of track work that enables their quad access to other planting areas but it's hoped tracks will be finished before planting has to halt for the spring.



(Above) Planting at Hillary Hope. Photograph by Sharen Graham.

(Above right) Thick grass on hillslopes inhibiting natural regeneration.

Riparian margin community planting

Increasing numbers of helpers are assisting with biannual planting a narrow riparian margin at the main entrance on Old Mountain Road. The area is thick with buttercup and no bird dispersed seed can take hold there. Once that is shaded out and with the abundant seed source less than 20m away, it should be off!

Culvert and tracks

To enable safe pedestrian crossing of Mangakirikiri Stream at the main entrance at times of high water, work on installation of a concrete culvert bridge is underway. Walking tracks will begin here and interpretive signs will convey interesting information along the planned routes.

Sharen Graham, Southern Reserves Manager, NFRT



A Stand of Two Halves

NFRT staff and Trustees were again spreading the word at the Waikato Show, this year as part of Te Papanui – Earth Matters. The 'Help us Grow a Healthy Forest' colouring table was again very popular with young visitors, and again a colourful forest, complete with bugs, fish, birds and pests, was the final result on Sunday afternoon.

But for something a little different, this year we were joined by our fundraising colleagues from NS Fundraising

who were taking stand visitors on an exciting virtual reality 'flight' over the bush of our Ed Hillary Hope Reserve.

Hayden and his team had worked hard to get some great footage of the forest using a drone to capture a 360 degree view, both of the canopy and the forest floor. It was fun to watch as stand visitors, wearing a virtual reality headset, used their swivel chair to look left and right, up and down and all around. It was even better sitting in that swivel chair!



Honorary Ranger Ian Pickering Bids Farewell to Opoutama

On the East Coast, between Hawkes Bay and Poverty Bay, the Mahia Peninsula is linked to the mainland by a series of sand dunes. Hidden amongst them are two delightful wetlands – the tidal Maungawhio Lagoon, and our own freshwater Opoutama Reserve.

From the time of the Reserve's purchase in 2002, Honorary Ranger Ian Pickering has untiringly been helping with its management. As one of our neighbours, a long-time resident and someone who is enthusiastically involved with the area's volunteer fire brigade, Ian knows, and is known by everyone.

Ian is unafraid of tackling the management challenges. After planting a pine plantation long before we purchased the wetland, he then stoically began tackling the trees as weed

species and cutting them down. Resource consent consultation for aerial weed control saw him engaging with about 3 dozen other neighbours to explain the works' necessity and process.

Ian has embraced numerous other activities, some quite new to him, as diverse as pest trapping, deer shooting (when animals jump the fence into the Reserve), collecting native plant seed and establishing a nursery at Te Mahia School, supervising children on planting days, undertaking bittern booming surveys, building fences, seating and carpark surrounds, identifying weeds which he's never before seen and becoming aware of why the wetland is so ecologically important.

We'll really miss Ian when he and Jane move to Napier in October and we wish them all the very best.



(Above) Ian Pickering at Opoutama. Photograph by Sharen Graham.



(Above right) Local children planting at Opoutama, 2010.

It was great to meet and chat with supporters, and to let others know of the Trust's mission, and to take the details of those who wished to join the Trust on planting days at Ed Hillary Hope and other reserves. It was also a great opportunity to network with other environmental and conservation organisations from the Waikato region.

Thanks to Roy, Sandy, Sharen, Dell, Sue and the NS Fundraising team for making the stand a success, and to the Waikato Environment Centre who do a fantastic job of coordinating the Expo.

(Previous page on left) Hayden MacLean from NS Fundraising at NFRT stand.

(Previous page on right) Trustee Dell Hood helping out.

(Below left) Children's activities at the stand.

(Below) Virtual Reality Forest experience.



Auckland Airport Grant for Marie Neverman Reserve

At the time the Marie Neverman Reserve was purchased in 2009 it was being severely impacted by invasive weeds. Woolly nightshade, pampas, climbing asparagus and mothplant were abundant in the canopy of the forest surrounding the man-made lake and outcompeting young regenerating native plants. On the 113 ha “flats” that the previous owners reclaimed from mangrove saltmarsh for grazing, slightly elevated and regionally threatened gallery forest areas of kowhai, cabbage tree, ngaio and flax were succumbing to the same weed pressure.

Contractor and volunteer weed control has substantially brought the weed problem under control but not entirely, and to ensure that we continue to stay on top of the problem, annual work is still required to further reduce the weed seedbank. At the end of 2016, Auckland Airport granted us \$10,000 under their “12 Days of Christmas” programme of community giving to be spent on both ongoing weed control and for the production of an interpretive sign to be installed at the main entranceway. Conservation Volunteers NZ provided a small team to help with the weed work. New signage describing the Reserve’s special coastal and wetland vegetation, the waterfowl and the secretive bird species that use the habitat will shortly be installed. Information about publicly accessible areas, ongoing management and possible opportunities for involvement is also displayed. Thanks to Auckland Airport and Conservation Volunteers New Zealand for their support!

Sharen Graham, Southern Reserves Manager, NFRT

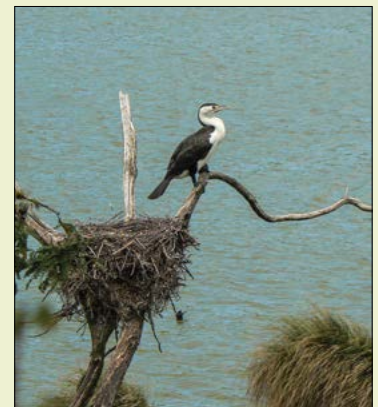


(Above) The team from Conservation Volunteers.

(Below) Trustee Geoff Davidson and Reserve Manager Sharen Graham receive the cheque from Auckland Airport Sustainability Manager Martin Fryer.



(Left) A mock-up of the proposed sign to be erected at the entrance to the Marie Neverman Reserve over Spring with (right and below) detail of the some of the images from the sign. An accompanying sign showing walking routes will follow.



The Trust is a Grateful Recipient of Bequests

Like all organisations that rely on grants and funding from external sources to carry out their mission, the Native Forest Restoration Trust is very grateful to receive bequests. Some are very large and assist us to purchase reserves that meet our strict criteria; others can be smaller, but no less valuable, as they can be used for restoration work such as planting and track building, or signage and seating on tracks to enhance recreation experiences in our more popular reserves.

When bequests are received, and there is no direction from the estate, we endeavour to find out where the deceased's interests lay; it may have been a particular reserve, a certain type of forest or wetland, or a specific region in which they would like their bequest spent. Some people suggest their funds be used for maintenance of a particular reserve, given their understanding that purchasing these important areas is not the end of the process in their conservation and restoration.

Several bequests were combined to help purchase the Ed Hillary Hope Reserve in the Waikato, and more recently three donations were given, following discussion with the deceased's families, to the Matuku Link Trust. Our long-serving Chairman, the late Owen Lewis, and his daughter Dorothea, gave a significant donation in memory of Joy Lewis, half of which was forwarded on Dorothea's request to assist with the purchase of Matuku Link, a wetland on Auckland's west coast to which we also contributed with substantial funds received from another donor (Neville Stacey).

The Trust's latest purchase, two parcels of land in the Wekaweka Valley next to Waipoua forest, was made possible by



Joy, Owen and Dorothea Lewis.

a bequest from the Hewett family which paid the full purchase price of \$50,000 for Lot 3. The Hewett bequest also kicked off the public appeal for the second and larger lot by paying the \$18,500 deposit required to secure the property and give us time to raise the balance of the purchase price.

There's more information on leaving a bequest to NFRT on our website: <https://www.nfirt.org.nz/leave-a-gift/>.

If you would like further information, please speak with your solicitor, or contact the Trust and we will endeavour to guide you.

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: Robyn Jones (03) 524 8266 mangarakauswamp@gmail.com
www.mangarakauswamp.com



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



BECOME A FOREST GUARDIAN

Join us as a Forest Guardian with a monthly donation and help keep our native forests safe forever.

Your generous gift will help with the ongoing maintenance of our reserves, ensuring they're protected from invasive weeds, pests and predators. Thanks to you, native plants and animals will have a safe habitat where they can thrive.

For more information and to sign up, please visit www.nfrrt.org.nz/forestguardian



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