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CANOPY

Newsletter of the New Zealand Native Forests Restoration Trust

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www.nznfrt.org.nz

A Happy Christmas and a successful New Year 2008

To all our supporters in Native Forest Restoration

Two Coromandel purchases completed

We are pleased to report the success of our latest appeal for the **Waiwawa block** on the Coromandel Peninsula. Over \$27,000 has been raised to date and we have now made the final payment, so the title to the land will soon pass to the Trust and this wonderful piece of regenerating native forest in the middle of the Coromandel Forest Park will be preserved in perpetuity. We are deeply grateful to all our supporters who so generously responded to our special appeal letter in September.

We can also report the completion of another acquisition in the area. Readers of Canopy will recall that in issue #45 we reported that negotiations for the **Tararu Cynthia Hewett Memorial Reserve** were completed but that we still had over \$60,000 to raise. We are now pleased to record that, thanks to the support

of the trustees of the Rosemary Middleton estate, the purchase has been completed. We are extremely grateful for the trustees' support in this way.

Another worthy project

Our recent, and most successful appeal for the Waiwawa block on the Coromandel Peninsula, reported above, drew a generous donation from Barry Brickell, owner and manager of the Driving Creek Wildlife Sanctuary near Coromandel township. In his letter he wishes us well and asks us to mention his appeal for funds for a predator proof fence around his reserve. This we are happy to do. We are, of course, in the same field of conservation. Details of his project can be found at www.drivingcreeksanctuary.co.nz



Motu Kaikoura Trust

As Trust supporters will know from earlier reports in Canopy, NFRT was a strong backer of the campaign for Motu Kaikoura which led to its purchase by the Government, the ASB Community Trusts, the Auckland Regional Council and local authorities. The 564 hectare island off Port Fitzroy, Great Barrier, in the outer Hauraki Gulf was opened in May 2005 as a scenic reserve managed by a team of volunteer Trustees, among whom is Geoff Davidson who had a leading role in the campaign to secure Motu Kaikoura for the people of New Zealand. The aim is to encourage the natural cycle of regeneration without introduced pests, either animal or plant, making the island into a sanctuary for NZ wildlife, available for outdoor and environmental education for youth in particular.

Studies are establishing a baseline prior to pest eradication; namely surveys of the birdlife led by Mel Galbraith, plants led

by Ewen Cameron and Maureen Young, and seaweeds by Mike Wilcox. A very interesting evening of talks given recently by Mel, Mike and Maureen at the Unitec campus explained the considerable progress already made, including the establishment of monitoring tracks and forest ecology plots. Meanwhile, nearly all the fallow deer have been cleared by shooting and the numbers of feral cats and pigs appear to be low. Rodent eradication should take place next winter. The absence of possums, mustelids and hedgehogs from here or on Gt Barrier Island is a great advantage for the project. The future for the island is exciting.

For more details and the opportunity to become a Supporter of the Motu Kaikoura Trust contact Rosalie Miller, 44 Martins Bay Road, R D 2, Warkworth or email: hellorosaliemiller@hotmail.com

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

The Ballad of the Green Man

*Composed by Owen Lewis as a tribute to
Trustee Geoff Davidson on the occasion
of his 60th birthday -
Hearty congratulations Geoff!*

I might have been a pilot or a lawyer or a chef
Instead I chose to be undoubtedly a Geoff.
For I didn't relish living with monotony,
But much preferred seductive charms of botany.
I gave other jobs a look that was quite cursory
And settled for creating a native nursery.
I travel far and wide for necessary needs,
Collecting plants, and climbing trees for seeds.
I bring together unexotic plants but strange,
And collect a wide and comprehensive range;
Then display them boldly row by row
Where plants and customers profusely grow.
I can quickly tell an *ixerba brexioides*
From a *pittosporum eugenioides*.

Now I try to give the populus a push
To help ecologists in saving bush,
And pursuing then this missionary endeavour
I search for forest blocks to save wherever.
From remote recesses of Omoana
To the watery shores of Opoutama;
And in the interest of forest restoration
I contribute to the cause of conservation.
And now I'm sixty! Thanks all for your support!
Let's celebrate by breaking out the port!



Pine trees at Opoutama free for removal

In the previous Canopy [#47] we outlined options for the control of a patch of plantation pine trees in the Opoutama Wetland Reserve, Mahia Peninsula. Our solution was to give the 3,000 unpruned trees, which are 12-15 years old, to a firewood merchant for his removal. We have been told they are unsuitable for posts or logs. The trees are still there and we want them gone!

If anyone knows an individual or a commercial operation that may be interested in this free supply, which would have to be removed in its entirety, please contact the Trust's Field Officer, Sharen Graham, tel: (09)8175537 or email: sharen.graham@ihug.co.nz.

Controlling weed pests at Pigeon Bush

An environmental specialist has recently surveyed pest weeds to determine the issues affecting our Pigeon Bush reserve. The 32 hour survey was confined primarily to the edges partly by budget constraints, but also because of the size of this, the Trust's largest reserve of 1,157 ha, and the fact that most weed invasions occur at the perimeter and at human access points. Corridors formed by streams, State Highway 2 and the railway line provide access routes and are the most likely entry points for weed incursions.

Very pleasingly, no invasive weeds were found actually within the reserve. Gorse has been widespread but is now being topped

by native plant regeneration. There is some blackberry and broom but the main problem in the reserve is the existence of over 200 mature wilding pines.

Pest weeds on adjoining boundaries include *Buddleia*, *Cotoneaster*, elderberry, German ivy, hawthorn, holly, Japanese honeysuckle, old man's beard, periwinkle and *Tradescantia*. Findings have been plotted on topographical maps and recorded by GPS to ensure easy location in future. As it is possible that birds, water and wind could have dispersed seeds into Pigeon Bush Reserve, a helicopter survey has just been conducted to gain a full picture of weed

threats and to check particularly for any infestations of old man's beard and Japanese honeysuckle on terrain inaccessible by foot. Because of known infestations on Tararua Forest Park land alongside the lower Rimutaka Hill Road, DOC and the Trust shared the cost of the chopper survey. Now the aerial survey has been completed plans can be prepared to control the various weeds, taking account of their threat levels. Scattered wilding pines will be a major cost to control. Whether they can be cut down economically on such steep country or eliminated by aerial spraying has yet to be determined.

Mainland Islands

Inspired by the example of Wellington's Karori Sanctuary, the country's network of pest-free reserves, each securely protected by its predator-proof fence, is going from strength to strength. Forest generation flourishes naturally in these 'islands.' Bird numbers show spectacular recovery, while invertebrates benefit from the removal of rats, and the native gecko and skink populations multiply. The second phase, comprising reintroduction of species driven to local extinction follows, and this step is now proceeding with enthusiastic support from residents of the districts concerned.

Examples are to be found at Forest & Bird property at Bushy Park near Wanganui and also in the South Taranaki region where a visit to the planned Rotokare Sanctuary, encompassing a 230 ha native forest reserve with a 15 ha lake, featured in the mid-year conference of the Ornithological Society. In the Waikato, the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust is celebrating the elimination of pests and new hope for the kiwi in their 3400 ha reserve south of Cambridge. 1700 tracking tunnels spread across the mountain show just pockets of mice still to be targeted. Kindred steps are in train on the Coromandel Peninsula, and a very large pest-exclusion zone centred on Mount Moehau is mooted.

The Auckland region has a peninsula reserve north of Warkworth where a 2.5 km fence was erected in 2004 with continuing support from the Tawharanui Open-Sanctuary Society. ('Open' to the public through an automatic door, but strictly closed to pest animals). Kiwis, robins and whiteheads have been introduced, bellbirds have recolonised the area of their own accord, and NZ dotterels are breeding on beaches where stoats, wild cats and egg-seeking hedgehogs had taken a heavy toll in the past. Next on the ARC list is Whangaparaoa Peninsula within 555 hectares made up of Shakespear Regional Park, property owned by Rodney District Council and Defence Force land in close proximity to the successful Tiritiri Matangi Island sanctuary. Bird surveys have taken place and the target date to start fencing is October 2009. A fund for part of the cost (\$600,000 for 1.5 km of predator-proof fence) has been launched for donations of \$50 per post by the Shakespear Open-Sanctuary Society. All being well, SOSSI is set to become a friendly rival of TOSSI.

Predator-free status is a goal of the NFRT chain of properties and thanks to the efforts of our supporters and honorary rangers the Trust continues to work in this direction during forest restoration of our reserves.

“Old Blue” Award for Arthur Cowan

This year the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society added six recipients to those honoured for conservation in the name of the lone female black robin (known by her blue leg-band) whose eggs saved that species from extinction. Well deserved among them was our founding Trustee Arthur Cowan. Arthur has been a stalwart for decades at F&B outings and tree plantings (besides those of the Trust) including trips to Rangitoto Station, one of the most significant properties protected through his efforts. Forested areas and walking tracks in the Otorohanga township, along with other reserves and covenanted areas with their many hectares of restored native vegetation, bear testimony to his major contribution now saluted by the Society. The August 2007 issue of Forest & Bird completes its report with a nice picture of Arthur and his wife Pat, displaying their award photograph of Old Blue. Open Space, the magazine of the QE II National Trust, also has a piece applauding this highly merited award.

Congratulations Arthur & Pat on behalf of your fellow Trustees and all our supporters!

Minutes Secretary needed

We urgently need a person to act as Minutes Secretary for the Trust. Meetings are generally held in Epsom, Auckland, on the third Wednesday evening of the month as required. This is an opportunity to be part of highly rewarding voluntary efforts for conservation in a convivial atmosphere with a friendly group of people.

A hearty vote of thanks goes to Jim Dart who has performed this task to excellent effect for the past several years. Fortunately Jim will remain a Trustee with his experience on hand to guide his successor.

A Springtime Visit To Rangitoto Station

Recently we were delighted to be sent an account of a stay in the Trust's house at Rangitoto Station by Patsy Schwabe who described in lively detail a September weekend spent there with six friends. Among highlights of the visit were:-

The views right down the valley, where slashes of white clematis cascaded down regrowth bush along the track approaching the property. We saw the first of many red admiral butterflies there.

The feeling of tranquillity which greeted us at Rangitoto Station.

Exploring the Mangatutu Ecological Area where the Howick Tramping Club and others had recently laid out new season's bait stations.

Enjoying the wide variety of trees and plants, from tiny mosses and orchids to the tall tawa, rewarewa and podocarps which form a grand canopy, and admiring the tall kahikatea with its boughs liberally clothed with epiphytes.

Being privileged to catch sight of a falcon as he swooped low and fast over the forest after a couple of small birds and later to see another falcon fly in to perch on a power pole near the house.

Hearing plenty of birdsong. Once a robin flew in to land near us. A tomtit or two briefly put in an appearance, and we caught glimpses of lumbering pigeons, and busy tuis or bellbirds. One small party of whiteheads gave us a treat - our lunch spot was on their feeding route!

For several members, watching a kaka fly in and climb 'beak over feet' up an old tree trunk.

Searching for the fernbird behind the woolshed. He was vocal enough, but still invisible!

Tramping alone into the foggy dawn after a very early breakfast to the junction of the Mangatutu Tracks and listening to the dawn chorus with lots of tui and bellbird calls, and one that I could definitely say was kokako.

And of course the fine meals, entertaining conversation and happy companionship which are always a great feature of such trips.

Patsy's article concluded with these kind remarks: "We, as Trust members who give small donations for land purchases, really appreciate all the work and organisation put in by a few members. Firstly those who find suitable properties and work on every process that goes with that; then those who look after each block when it has been purchased. Our native birds and creatures cannot survive and thrive without somewhere for that to happen. The NZ Native Forests Restoration Trust (often with DoC workers alongside) makes that possible!"

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) 524 8072, Email: 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)



Your donation supports the work of the Trust and ensures that your address remains current on the mailing list for CANOPY

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

Here is my tax-deductible donation of \$

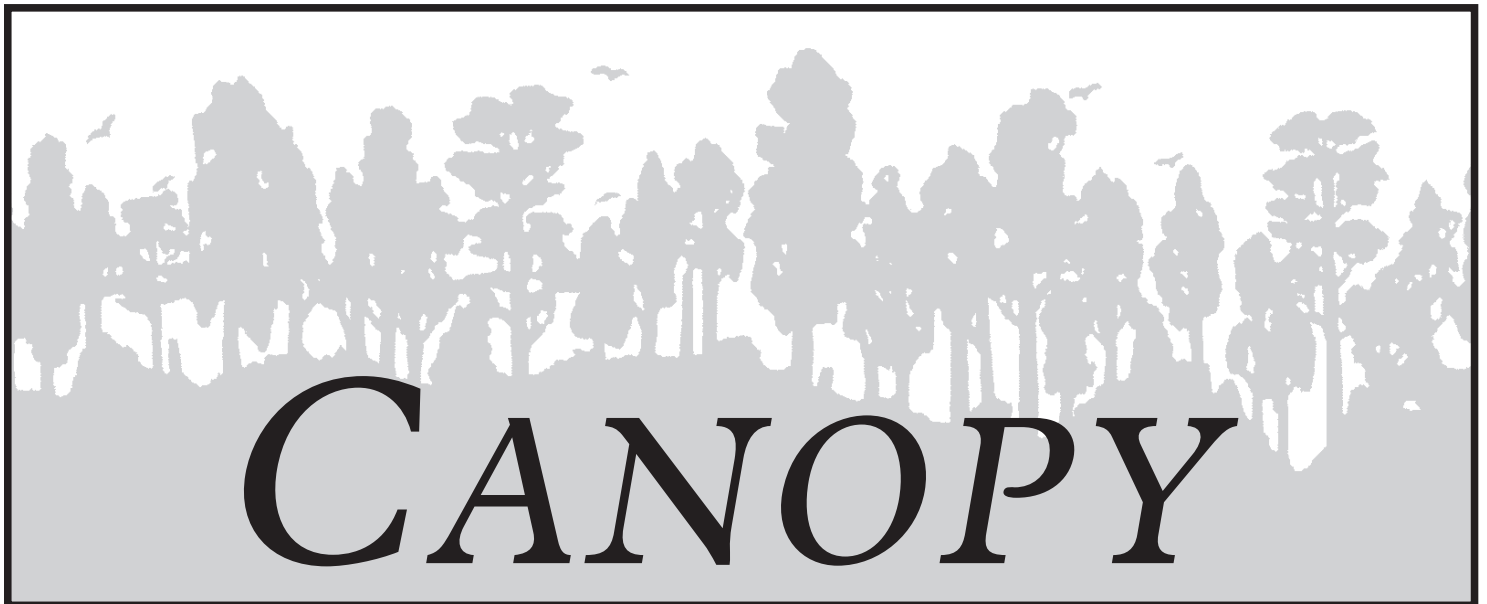
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