



canopy 71

Newsletter of the Native Forest Restoration Trust

Summer 2021

NFRT Chairman's Message

Welcome all NFRT supporters to Canopy 71, the closing issue for Christmas 2021. Little did I expect, when writing to you 6 months ago, that we would soon all be forced back into lockdown for even longer than during the first wave of Covid-19 in 2020. Some of the variants of this virus sure know how to spread around! With 7 Trustees and our Southern Reserves Manager stuck at levels 4, then 3, for over three months it has not been an easy time.

However, the work of the Trust has continued apace, but without the backpackers and other volunteers upon whom we have traditionally relied. Sincere thanks and congratulations to James and Alana with help from local tangata whenua, Te Roroa, for all the planting at Waipoua that they completed this spring. To help protect the new plants, and those from last year, a pig trap was purchased and has been very successful in reducing numbers and ongoing rooting and damage.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Ed Chignell to NFRT as our newest Trustee. Ed lives in Auckland and is CEO of Treescape, operating throughout NZ and in eastern Australia. Ed brings energy, enthusiasm and great business skills and practical operations experience. Valuable assets as we engage more contractors to help manage our expanding portfolio of reserves.

You will all be aware, from the current appeal to supporters, that we did not have long after stabilising our finances post the Oreti Totara Dunes Forest settlement before yet another high value and urgent purchase needed action. This is the special Patui project inland from Stratford in Taranaki. Despite the urgency of some proposals, Trustees must act responsibly and have a strategy to ensure a successful outcome. Fortunately, a very generous "white knight" came to the rescue and underwrote the immediate financial requirement, giving Trustees assurance and allowing valuable time to raise the funds to complete this



The special Patui project inland from Stratford in Taranaki. Photograph by Rob Tucker.

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restoration trust

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purchase. It is a sign of the times and rising land values that Patui, at \$1.7 million (excl. GST), is the largest single purchase that NFRT has ever made. It is a standout property that meets our ecological and restoration requirements. Six of your Trustees visited Patui in July, to view the property and plan purchase details and future development and restoration. We met both the vendor and a very supportive group of locals who clearly feel a very close affinity with this land. The presence of bats and kiwi are just the icing on the cake. The current appeal is progressing extremely well, with several amazing donations, despite the difficulties around lockdowns.

While on finances, a huge shout out to both you Patui donors and to all the Forest Guardians helping our ongoing planting and restoration across our many other reserves now spread from Kaitaia to Bluff. Again, I also want to acknowledge the support of Air New Zealand and the generosity of their customers through their FlyNeutral contributions. This is hugely important in helping NFRT restore whole ecosystems back into permanent native flora and fauna. It is unfortunate, for both Air New Zealand and NFRT, that most flights have again been grounded for several months. And ... some progress to report on the insurance claim resulting from the January 2014 fire that burned nearly 60ha of the William Upton Hewett Memorial Reserve west of Whangarei. This may now move to mediation in the near future and, hopefully, avoid the expensive High Court process.

Having never had a physical office, and with contractors and volunteers working remotely, outside of Level 4, NFRT has

had it easier than most businesses when trying to keep operating. Modern communications have permitted a fairly seamless transition away from face-to-face meetings. Even to the extent that our very valuable Trust Manager Sandy Crichton and his family have been domiciled in Cairns for the past 6 months, with no reduction in his efficiency and effectiveness.

The community teams on the ground at Oreti, Purple Peak, Mangarakau, Ed Hillary Hope and the Honeymoon Valley Landcare Group in the Far North continue to achieve amazing results and are the first point of contact for locals and visitors. Trustee Rosemary Davison continues to manage very ably the multiple activities, complications and relationships around our Rangitoto Station reserve. In Taranaki we say farewell and a very sincere thank you to Neil Phillips, who recently retired after 22 years locally with QEII National Trust. Neil has been a great friend of NFRT and has facilitated much of our progress in the region over the past two decades. We will now have three QEII reps covering this region. With the addition of the new Patui reserve and the extra load that will entail, the Trust has been pleased to be able to welcome Sean Gardiner to a new role as the part-time Taranaki Reserves Manager, coordinating oversight, local QEII liaison and contractors. Through his work with Taranaki Regional Council, Sean is well known locally in the environmental field.

With best wishes to you all and hoping that families and friends really can gather together over this summer.

Tim Oliver, Chairman, NFRT

Saving and Restoring Patui Forest

Most Canopy readers will be aware of our current fundraising campaign to purchase Patui near Stratford in Taranaki. This campaign was launched in October with the goal of raising \$1.7 million to buy approximately 360ha of privately-owned land comprising large stands of mature and regenerating forest, marginal farmland and some man-made wetland.

I look at that figure of \$1.7M and think, blimey. Property prices sure have gone up, and not just in the cities. This makes our job so much harder. Our remit as a charity is to purchase land in order to preserve existing forest and restore damaged and degraded forest to its former ecological glory, for the benefit of our wildlife and all New Zealanders. But the sums of



Some income will be generated by leasing out grazing land.
Photograph by Rob Tucker.



Lower stature vegetation includes pigeonwood, mapou, mahoe and tree ferns
Photograph by Rob Tucker.

money we are trying to raise now seem colossal in comparison to just a few years ago.

However, in the case of Patui, the effort is justified. Not only do we have the opportunity to secure a swathe of ecologically valuable forest habitat and restore its degraded portions, we are also presented with a site which is already home to some incredibly rare wildlife.

The Patui property lies within the Matemateaonga Ecological District and Patea River catchment, and at the western end is connected to adjacent native forest including the Tututawa Conservation Area and Tututawa Local Purpose Reserve. The

main forest canopy is dominated by tawa and rewarewa, with occasional large emergent rimu and kahitaea. The understorey and ground cover are sparse in places, as stock have been able to access the forest to browse, but seedlings and saplings are present and the property is a fantastic candidate for restoration.

Very excitingly, long-tailed bats and grey ducks have both been recorded here this year. These birds – yes, even the bats are birds now according to Forest & Bird, which have named our long-tailed bat as Bird Of The Year 2021! – are listed by the Department of Conservation as “nationally critical” meaning their very existence is threatened. The presence of these species



Two manmade wetlands are present providing a small area of wetland habitat.
Photograph by Rob Tucker.

at Patui makes it even more important to prevent the property falling into unsympathetic hands.

Many New Zealanders are unaware that we even have bats in this country, as they are usually found far away from human habitation. There appears to be an active population of long-tailed bats at Patui, which zip along the forest margins at dusk hunting for insects.

Grey ducks are very similar in appearance to females of the introduced mallard and are often confused with them. The mallard is the grey duck's greatest threat, because interbreeding and hybridisation means there are few "pure" grey ducks left. Their best hope of survival is in remote forested headwaters away from human settlement where mallards and hybrids occur.



Photograph by Rob Tucker.

Patui is clearly the perfect home for these two threatened species; its large old trees potentially provide wonderful roosts for the bats, and its mix of remote forest and wetland provides perfect habitat away from humans and mallards for grey ducks.

However, protecting and restoring Patui will not just benefit these two species; the forest type here is declining in Taranaki and beyond, which ultimately threatens all the species living here. Birds, invertebrates, reptiles, fungi – and the forest plants themselves – rely on the continued existence and integrity of the forest. By securing this property we have the chance to save not only a patch of forest but an entire ecosystem, to ensure it remains intact and present for future generations to enjoy.



Photograph by Rob Tucker.

Recovery Continues at Pace in the South

There is great work happening at the Trust's southernmost Reserve. Predator control, bird monitoring, weed control, visitor facility development and more; it's all keeping the management team and volunteers busy at the Oreti Totara Dune Forest.

Since the first predator traps were set out in June 2020 over 880 catches have been recorded, the majority of these being mice, hedgehogs, rabbits and possums. This ongoing predator control has seen a pleasing number of birds present and lots of seedlings appearing over spring. Honorary Ranger Maurice Rodway mentioned, in his October report, the appearance of haumakoroa (*Pseudopanax simplex*), ti kouka (cabbage tree), kahikatea, totara, manuka, miro, horopito and makomako (wineberry) seedlings, all making a strong showing...along with some very small spider orchids. A notable recent finding is the orchid, *Caladenia variegata*, which Maurice spotted in the 'Giant Manuka Jungle' part of the property. Although not threatened, this represents a significant range extension. My favourite, puawananga (*clematis paniculata*), can also be seen rambling over the canopy. There are also a number of other plants recovering after being kept heavily trimmed by previously present browsers.



Honorary Ranger Maurice Rodway with the very tiny orchids he spotted. Photograph by Jesse Bythell.



Totara seedlings. Photograph Maurice Rodway.



Male cones on totara and spider web dusted with pollen. Photograph Maurice Rodway.



Visitors to the reserve. Photograph Maurice Rodway.



Orchid *Caladenia variegata* which has not been recorded this far south before. Photograph by Jesse Bythell.

The most abundant bird species reported are korimako (bellbird), tui, piwakawaka (fantail) and tauhou (silver eye).

The mowing of the walking tracks, building of boardwalks and development of interpretation panels with post European Settlement history are other activities that have kept the local volunteers busy over the past few months, while they continue to enjoy support from the local community, local government organisations and education facilities. This includes bird counts by Southland Institute of Technology students, a visit from a local primary school, planting by the Southland Tramping Club, growing on of seedlings by the community garden, plants for the reserve from the Invercargill City Council and funding for pest control from Environment Southland. A true community effort.

The completion of the road-facing section sales (as mentioned in Canopy 70) and fencing requirements has seen the QEII covenant process completed for the Reserve so the land and plants are now protected in perpetuity.

Sue Cameron, Administrator, NFRT

A Building Industry First: NFRT partners with APT

APT is a leading New Zealand distributor of some of the best decorative and performance surface brands for the building industry. They are a values-based business and they pride themselves on working with those who share their vision and understand the concept of partnership.

They are passionate about the need to protect and preserve New Zealand's native bush and natural environment. "It's about the plants and the waterways, the birds and the insects – the whole biodiverse ecosystem." But it's also about us say Directors Aaron (Bart) Carpenter and Nicky Duggan. They are firm believers in the power of nature to influence our wellbeing – a belief which has certainly been reinforced during the COVID-19 lockdowns says Aaron, "The problem is, New Zealand's natural environment is under attack. From all angles. From pests. From introduced species. But, most of all, from people. Including us, in the building industry. As we all know, the building industry is a large contributor to emissions and user of natural resources."

APT noticed that many of their product manufacturers around the world were working on environmental initiatives of their own. As a distributor, they didn't want to simply reference the efforts of their manufacturers, using their achievements to tick APT's boxes. They wanted to be proactive and take meaningful action themselves, in New Zealand.

APT is committing more than just dollars. They plan to assist NFRT with the planting and protection of native trees as well as the acquisition of additional plots of land to regenerate. They have developed a long term framework that will ultimately involve not just them, but their specifier and trade customer communities.

They will be planting one native tree through NFRT for every Corian® Solid Surface sheet, sink and basin, and every FENIX® sheet, panel and sink sold from 1 November 2021. In addition to this, APT will also be planting and protecting a native tree for every product delivery.

For Aaron and Nicky, it's about walking the talk and staying true to their values. Being authentic in their efforts and encouraging others to do the same. They believe that if they work together, as an industry and a community, they can shape a more sustainable building sector and a thriving natural environment in Aotearoa for generations to come...and who could argue with that. Welcome aboard!



Director Aaron (Bart) Carpenter participating in deer control work in Fiordland.



A Warm Welcome to New Trustee Ed Chignell

We are pleased to announce we have enlisted a new trustee who we are confident will bring new skills and passion to the Trust.

As students in 1981 Ed Chignell and his best friend from high school, Brandon Whiddett, co-founded and developed Treescape, which has now grown to be the largest arboriculture and vegetation management company in New Zealand and one of the largest in Australia. Ed is an accomplished businessman with key strengths in business development and relationship building. This was recognised by the Government when in 2017 Ed Chignell was appointed as the first Chief Executive of the government-owned charitable company Predator Free 2050 Limited. The role included overseeing investments in ambitious predator eradication projects, breakthrough focused research and new innovative products that could be utilised by the expanding eradication projects being mobilised throughout New Zealand.

In 2020 Ed returned to Treescape Ltd, to see it through challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic and is currently the Executive Chair.

Trustees first got to know Ed in the early 2000s when he proposed a project to assist us in managing the 5,700 hectares we owned at that time. He visited all the Native Forest Restoration Trust reserves to assess them and put forward a plan to deliver biodiversity enhancements as a joint venture named the Canopy Project. It required a third partner, but unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in finding a corporate entity to be involved.



I got to know Ed as we travelled together to visit some of the reserves, plus other conservation projects I was involved with, including Motu Kaikoura Reserve, and a potential project on the Chatham Islands. His enthusiasm for all these conservation efforts convinced me that Ed would be an ideal trustee, and I was pleased to introduce him to newer trustees as someone with an ability to collaborate with multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, iwi and community organisations.

His time with Predator Free 2050 Limited has established strong connections with people and projects which will be useful in the future to help us achieve our goals.

Geoff Davidson, Founding Trustee, NFRT

Welcoming Sean Gardiner to our Reserve Manager Team

With an increasing number of reserves under the guardianship of NFRT, which meant an increasing workload for our long standing Southern Reserves Manager Sharen, it was time for Trustees to consider adding another member to our Reserve Management Team.

The decision was made to group the steadily growing number of Taranaki Reserves, together with a couple in the southern King Country, into a Taranaki/southern King Country package and recruitment began. As a result, we are very pleased to welcome Sean Gardiner who started with the Trust in early November. Sean will have oversight of the Omoana Bush, Taranaki Mahood-Lowe, Norfolk Road and new Patui reserves, as well as Steuart Russell and Awakau Kiwi.

Sean has over 25 years' experience in the pest control field, as a tutor passing on his skills, as a professional hunter for councils and private landowners, with management and administration experience, and latterly with the Taranaki Regional Council as Environment Officer (Biosecurity and Biodiversity). For the last six years he has been focused on achieving biodiversity outcomes via the Council's Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) programme.

Sean's local knowledge and experience, gained over the last 20 years working with landowners, iwi, schools, community groups and iconic projects in the Taranaki District will be invaluable to the Trust moving forward.

Sue Cameron, Administrator, NFRT



Elvie McGregor Reserve Planting & Possum Control

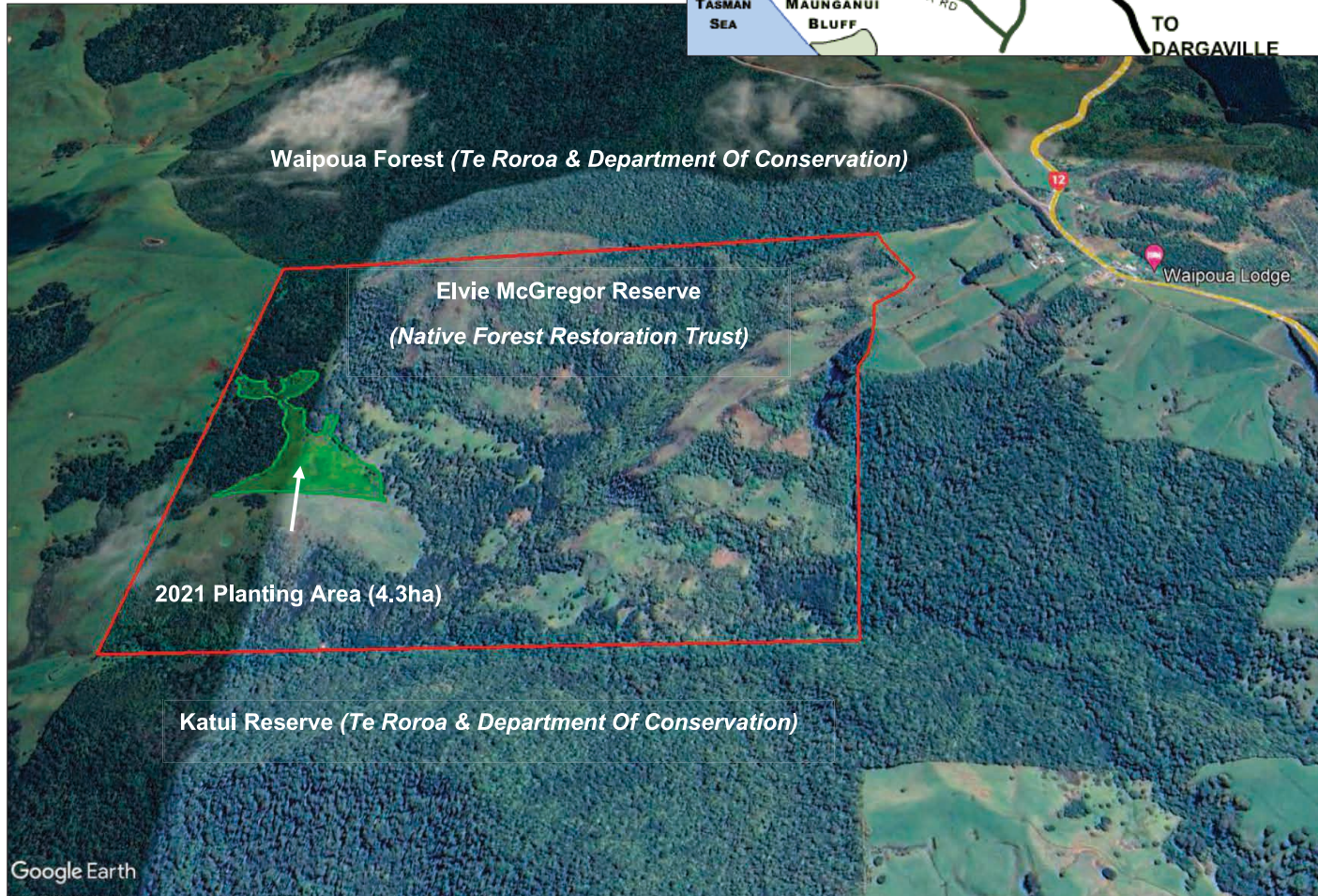
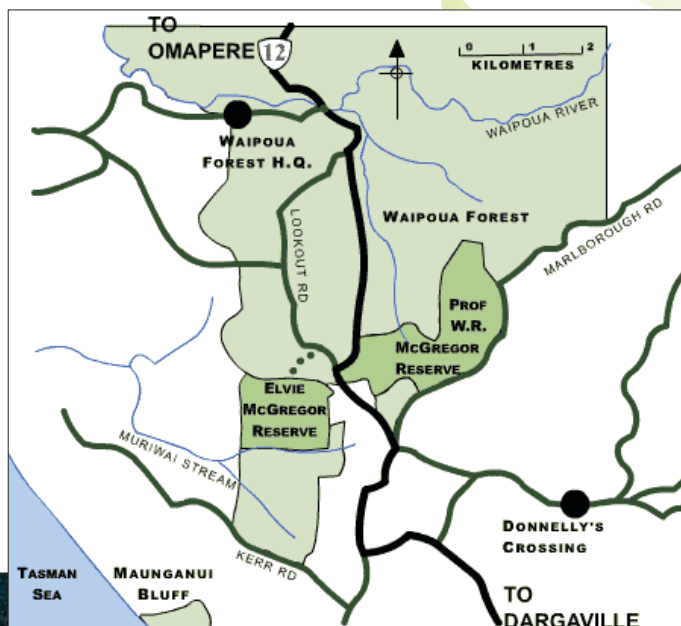
The Elvie McGregor Reserve is one of several Trust reserves next to Katui on the southern border of Waipoua Forest in Northland. Acquired in 1991 this 141ha block was purchased to link the Waipoua Forest and the Katui Scenic Reserve and create an ecological corridor for wildlife.

Since its purchase, a lot of the reserve has regenerated from farmland to native vegetation helped by a small amount of planting, however large sections of the reserve have been colonised by kikuyu grass suppressing any further natural regeneration. To aid in the regeneration of the reserve we planted approximately 12,000 plants (including manuka and coprosma sp.) over 4.3ha this past winter with the help of Te Roroa (the local tangata whenua), and James Lee our on-call contractor.

Getting the plants into this remote site required a helicopter operation which was planned and implemented by Alana McLeod (Assistant Reserve Manager) and Sue Cameron (NFRT Administrator). In total 27 fadges of plants were dropped in the reserve without any problems.

Possum control was also undertaken on the reserve this year in a joint operation with the Department of Conservation and Te Roroa. Some of you may be aware of an online campaign by Geoff Reid to save the Waipoua Forest which showed possum browsing causing the death of many old trees on the edges of the Waipoua Forest. These images were taken just north of the

Elvie McGregor's Reserve. The images helped to gain the social licence for possum control within the Waipoua that had been proposed in recent years but had not got the traction needed to be implemented. So far trapping north of the Elvie McGregor Reserve has resulted in 1,413 possums being caught within a 225ha block, that works out to be 6.2 possums per hectare. It's likely that this is a conservative density estimate and the actual density is somewhat higher.

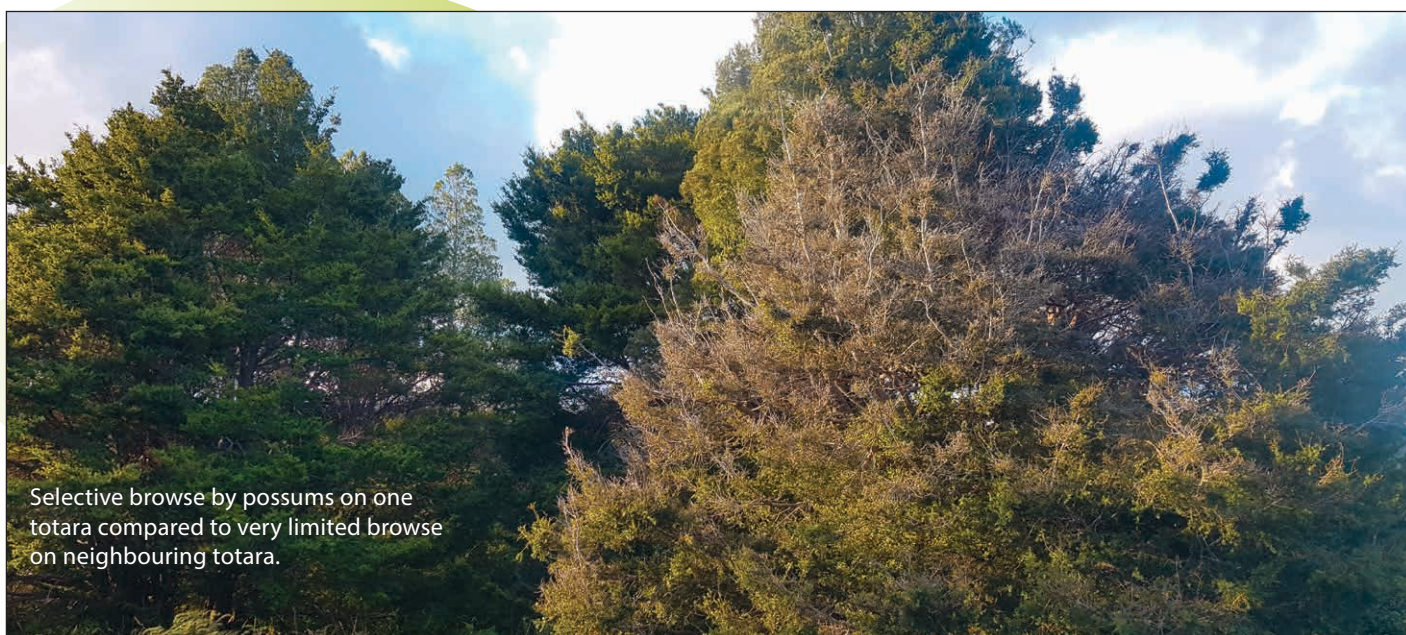


Within Elvie McGregor reserve we set up 72 bait stations. Initial kills appear high with up to 8 possums being found at some of the bait stations. The possum control was also undertaken as a result of browse on many of our new plantings. Fortunately, even though the plants have been browsed they appear to be surviving.

Interestingly within the reserve, and Waipoua forest as a whole, the possums are targeting some trees while leaving others of the same species. Researchers have also observed this and with investigation found that possums will heavily browse a particular tree over another of the same species due to the differing nutritional components in the leaves.

House Maintenance – Trustee and Treasurer Andrew Tuckey spent three weeks undertaking all the little maintenance jobs on the McGregor house and garage we haven't had time to do. He's done a fantastic job and the shelving in the garage is great. Thanks Andrew!

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



Tararua Tramping Club continues its long connection with Pigeon Bush Reserve

The late David Burson was an enthusiastic member of Tararua Tramping Club (TTC) and also the Pigeon Bush Reserve Honorary Ranger for a long period of time. David inspired members to become involved with the Reserve and reap the benefits of voluntary work and exploratory forays on the steep sided slopes.

Pest and weed control, seed collection, plant propagation and planting have all been tackled by TTC. They have scoped, cleared and marked much of the Reserve track network on visits that were treated as Club expeditions because of the degree of difficulty. One of their major early efforts was to establish 80 steps on the precipitous track up from Big Bend on the Remutaka Hill Road to allow access to “Nichol”, the Reserve high point at 437m.

This September, and after a couple of recce’s, TTC visited for a working bee. Current Honorary Ranger Colin Shore worked with 5 volunteers planting, releasing and installing plant protectors. This group also cut around all traps and bait stations along Prince Stream with a weedeater then cleaned and baited them. Others held the fort with the thermettes and a BBQ for the post work refreshments.

Another 10 of the group completed a huge amount of uphill track cutting work and a new “T” section with the main track leading to the highpoint of “Nichol”.

We are very grateful for the continuing TTC connection to this Reserve.

Sharen Graham, Reserve Manager - Southern Reserves



Tararua Tramping Club group September 2021.
(Photograph by Colin Shore)

Seeing the Lite

Servicing the wider Wellington region, Lite Energy are not your average electricians. They have a passion for the industry, initially setting out to change people’s everyday experiences when encountering tradespeople. Along the way, they knew there had to be something more they could do to make an impactful difference in their services and their work. They realised there is increasing dependence on electricity and power, but a lack of understanding of where the power comes from, how it is generated, and its impact on the environment.

As part of Lite Energy’s giving back program, the team chose to support charities and organisations that share the same values as their own, focusing on different aspects of the environment.

They invited NFRT to be part of their initiative, largely because of the ecological impact and difference NFRT have on New Zealand’s forests and wetlands, and the species that inhabit and thrive in these environments.

When we asked co-founder of Lite Energy Max Stein why they chose NFRT, he said “We are stoked to support NFRT as part of our charity initiative and follow their fantastic journey. Their work is incredible and their efforts and dedication to restoring Aotearoa’s forest and wetlands is something that aligns with our vision and it’s definitely worth getting behind and supporting in any way we can”.

Max went on to say, “New Zealand has a reputation for being clean and green, and we’re fortunate to live here. From our clean water, beautiful beaches and endless mountains, our environment has allowed New Zealand to harness the power of nature and create an energy grid that supplies us with 80% renewable energy sources to heat our homes. However Lite

Energy wants to do better. By educating and reducing electricity consumption in homes and businesses, Lite Energy is paving the way to a sustainable future.”

At Lite Energy, the team educates themselves, their staff, and their customers and clients by helping find energy-efficient solutions that are more sustainable, reduce our impact and optimise the hard work that nature has already done. From electrical fit outs to heating, lighting, and hot water, they provide services centred around highly efficient products that use less power, last much longer and have a reduced impact on both the planet and the power bill. A brighter future for all of us, really – it’s a win-win!

To find out more, visit their website www.liteenergy.co.nz



Environment Southland Community Awards' Winner

We're delighted that the efforts of Maurice and the team at Ōreti Tōtara Dune Forest have been deservedly rewarded. The team won the “Environmental Action in Biodiversity & Biosecurity” category at the 25th Environment Southland Community Awards in Invercargill, despite the event attracting a record number of nominees this year from all corners of the region. Congratulations to everyone involved!

Left to right: Dallas Bradley, Honorary Ranger
Maurice Rodway and Jesse Bythell



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.nfvt.org.nz/forestguardian

Our Landscape Our Legacy – Protecting, Inspiring, Managing, Restoring

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. Rosemary (07) 873 7354 rkmgdavison@xtra.co.nz

