



# CANOPY

Newsletter of the New Zealand Native Forests Restoration Trust

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## From the Chair

This issue of Canopy records a significant advance in the Trust's life, with purchase of Tui Glen, a block of land with regenerating bush in the Waitomo Valley. Readers of our history "Out of the Ashes" will recall that Trust members have been active in planting in the headwaters of this waterway, with important consequences in preventing siltation in the nationally important glow worm caves. The stream has a catchment of about 48 sq. km and much of this area was cleared of its indigenous mixed broadleaf podocarp forest before 1914. By 1980 about 75% of the valley was in exotic grassland. Road and farm track-making in an area of high rainfall had resulted in slips on the steeper ground. Feral goats and other animals had worsened the problem by depleting the vegetation and measurements showed that 2-to-3 metres of silt had accumulated in the cave stream bed in the past century. Thus restoration of native cover to the surrounding land had assumed the greatest importance.

It is in this context that the Trust, following discussions between trustee Arthur Cowan and the owners, the

Frederikson family, resolved on prompt action to purchase the 100 ha block in the Waitomo Stream catchment. Further details of the Tui Glen acquisition are in the article below. We have been encouraged and supported by Environment Waikato who have provided 80% of the purchase price, while other funding bodies including the Department of Conservation and the local branch of Forest and Bird have shown support. The neighbourhood, likewise, has encouraged our efforts and we are pleased to work in this way with the Waitomo community.

Principal guests at the opening on 14 April were Paula Southgate, Councillor from Environment Waikato, the Mayor of Te Kuiti - Mark Ammon and Waikato Conservator - Greg Martin, who appreciated viewing the new Reserve. We hope that Trust supporters who were able to join us - at the short notice for which we apologise - also enjoyed the occasion, notwithstanding the slippery conditions of the track.

**Colleen Newton**

## New Trust Reserve to protect the Waitomo Caves catchment



The Waitomo river catchment lay under forest cover for several hundred thousand years. One hundred and fifty years ago all that changed; the forest was cleared and farming began until only small remnants of bush were left. By 1980 the caves and glow worms were being threatened by major silting and deterioration of water quality. At this point the Native Forests Restoration Trust and Te Kuiti Tramping Club realising the danger became involved in restoration planting. Not only was a national treasure at risk, but a multi-million dollar tourist attraction with many thousands of visitors per year and world-wide recognition was at stake.

Cave protection in earnest began when Peter Dimond established a covenant on the bush remnant by the bridge to the Ruakuri reserve. Bob Horsefall, a Trust member, came up with this idea and Peter readily agreed as he was well aware of the condition of the glow worms and the silting involved. Planting had already started on the roadside reserve opposite the covenant. An embarrassing situation occurred at this stage. A DOC officer was to get permission from Council. Two weeks later most of the planting was in place when the official party arrived to OK the project! A certain amount of smoothing out was required. However all was well and Council generously agreed to do the roadside fencing. All this happened 25 years ago. The work of cave protection escalated from that time with major support from Environment Waikato and the Department of Conservation. The Catchment Committee brought together by Environment Waikato had the support of every farmer and all tourist operators in the Waitomo district - an all-time record! Major plantings continued from then on. These have provided a seed source and regeneration is now well under way. The cave system is considered stable and the glow worms safe, but intensification of farming or building development could put this at risk. We cannot stand idly by - protection for the future is needed. We are confident that the Tui Glen purchase to establish a permanent reserve, where forest cover can be expanded in the Waitomo river catchment, is a big step in the right direction.

# New Trust Reserve to protect the Waitomo Caves catchment *(cont'd from front page)*

**The Trust's Tui Glen Reserve** comes from the farm owned by Mark and Mary Frederikson whose family has been involved in the protection of the Waitomo river and caves since the early days. By the present purchase the Trust has acquired 100 hectares consisting of a valley which reaches to the Te Anga road, 5 km west of Waitomo Caves village. The area comprises mainly residual bush with steep, erosion-prone hillsides and includes some farmland that can be planted in native forest. An enrichment planting programme is already in progress whereby 1000 trees and flax were established in winter 2006.

We extend warm thanks to Mark and Mary for giving us the opportunity to establish this important new reserve for the Native Forests Restoration Trust.

**Glow worms** need their cave environment quiet, dark and still. So when you take a Waitomo Caves tour you turn off your lights and stop your chatter. But have you thought of what else it might take to keep glow worms safe and healthy?

The air that flows through the cave system above the river comes from the outside, bringing with it the tiny wood midges and fungus flies that the glow worms feed on. These microfauna exist in great numbers in healthy,

undisturbed forest. Some species thrive in regenerating bush or undisturbed grass areas, but they don't live on active farmland.

The river itself can damage the glow worms' environment when it floods, as the water levels rise dramatically with silt-laden water. Flooding is more severe and more frequent when the land around a river has been stripped of its native forest cover.

## Grant backs the Trust's Waiwawa purchase

As you, our supporters, know well, the Trust's work of conservation and restoration relies on continued financial contributions towards both land purchase and reserves maintenance. Supporters have recognised the value of our work over the years and so too have local authorities. We here pay tribute to Environment Waikato for the generous grant of \$40,000 towards our Waiwawa Bush Reserve on the Coromandel, whose opening was described in Canopy #44. Environment Waikato through their Programme Manager of Natural Heritage, Mr Kevin Collins, has long been a contributor to the Trust's land purchases in their area, recognising the benefit of our efforts to their primary environmental mission.

We believe that this grant, with others, justifies the Trustees' vision in proceeding with this purchase taken in the light of the importance in securing this valuable 'island' of regenerating native forest in the middle of the Coromandel Forest Park. This sum will cover the second-to-last payment on our interest free mortgage to the vendor. The final payment is due in October this year when extra funds will be needed to bring this project to fruition.

## Help us at Pehitawa Kahikatea Forest Reserve



On Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 November there will be an opportunity to visit the Trust's magnificent Pehitawa Kahikatea Forest Reserve near Te Kuiti to help a group of volunteers. **The main job will be the hand-pulling of privet seedlings.** This is easy work following up on recently conducted control of privet and is needed to remove what will be hundreds of privet seedlings from the seed source left behind by the adult trees.

More details will follow in the next Canopy, but if you wish to find out more in the meantime, please phone Roy Dench on (07) 823 6816.

## Removal of plantation pines from Opoutama Reserve

Within the Trust's Opoutama Reserve at Mahia, on a slightly elevated sand dune area to the north east of the freshwater wetland, there is an eight-hectare patch with a ten-year-old stand of around 3,000 pine trees. Good management of the reserve requires these trees to be removed because of their adverse impact on the water table and their ability to spread seed and hence generate many wilding pines. Moreover, the area they occupy should be devoted to native plant species, creating valuable habitat.

Several control options have been considered. The pines could be killed by injection with herbicide (or by aerial spraying) and left standing to provide shelter for native seed dispersal and plant establishment but would be dangerous once the dead trees began to fall. They could be felled and left to rot but the debris would hinder access for planting, while pampas and gorse would quickly invade. The possibility of harvesting the pines for timber is too expensive since provision of truck access would be necessary. Hence the preferred option, involving no cost to the Trust, is to remove the pines for firewood. The contractor will pile up any debris, allowing access for native planting and seed dispersal in time for revegetation during winter.

Initially manuka slash will be spread over the cleared area as an effective way to introduce manuka seed and begin regeneration of a nurse crop. This will be followed with seed or plantings of other species native to the area.

# Congratulations to the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust!

To mark the 30th birthday of the QEII National Trust a special event was held on 16th March at Lake Pounui, the 284 hectare covenant of Annette and Bill Shaw in the South Wairarapa. As on earlier landmarks of the trust's progress, such as the celebrations of the first 1000 then 2000 covenants, the fine property was open for visitors to explore and enjoy. With Gordon Stephenson as Master of Ceremonies, the formal proceedings included the welcome by Chairperson, Sir Brian Lochore, ONZ, and a tribute to covenantors from Deputy Chair, Bill Garland. The chief guest, HRH Prince Andrew, Duke of York, who arrived by helicopter took a conducted tour of the covenant. After the formalities were over he assisted the local Kahutara School pupils to plant several native trees, then mingled with the crowd for a short time. A fine photograph of the Prince admiring one of the new trees is on the latest cover of Open Space, the QE II National Trust members' magazine. The Minister of Conservation Chris Carter also travelled, by separate helicopter, to join the official party at the celebratory function which included the cutting of an impressive birthday cake

We of the NZ Native Forests Restoration Trust, stressing that all our reserves are similarly protected by covenant, offer our hearty congratulations and endorse the wish of the QEII National Trust that now is an especially fitting occasion to recognise and pay tribute to:

- 30 years of voluntary protection by private landowners;
- the vision and commitment of more than 3,000 covenantors throughout the country;
- the protection of over 100,000 hectares of New Zealand's natural and cultural heritage in perpetuity;
- the foresight of this country's farming community and the Federated Farmers organisation for initiating the legislation to make possible this rich legacy for future generations of New Zealanders.

Footnote:- the recent election of two Trust Directors attracted an outstanding field of 24 candidates, 18 men and 6 women. That so many who have come forward, with impressive profiles, to offer their services is a powerful endorsement of the work of the QEII Trust and an encouraging portent for the preservation of New Zealand's unique natural features.

## William Upton Hewett Reserve

*An enduring memorial*



This 242 hectare block situated near Titoki, north west of Whangarei, was formerly owned by Mr Jack Kennedy who had for many years recognised its conservation values and had resisted tempting offers by companies wishing to plant pines there. During 1984 the Wildlife Service inspected the property and recommended that it should be added to the conservation estate as publicly owned land. However this never happened. Finally in 1991 the block was purchased under the Native Forests Restoration Trust's 'Memorial Forest Scheme' by Mr Basil and Miss Cynthia Hewett of Cambridge to commemorate their brother who was killed in the Second World War.

### Special Values

Very little original native habitat remains in the Whangarei district and many regenerating areas are unprotected, leaving the way open for roller crushing and planting in pines. Much of the reserve contains vegetation that is unique in the area. Manuka/kanuka, Hakea sericea, Dracophyllum, bracken, Juncus, Lycopodium and umbrella fern shrubland is the dominant vegetation, covering approximately 60% of the reserve. There are many young canopy species emerging, including kauri.

Kahikatea swamp forest comprises about 15% of the reserve with kowhai, cabbage tree, raupo, flax, Eleocharis sphacelata (bamboo spike sedge), and swamp maire that is found on the flatter areas by the stream. The more mature podocarp and hardwood forest is confined to the valleys, with kauri, rimu, tanekaha, totara, mahoe, rangiora, mapou and putaputaweta. Of special interest is Hoheria angustifolia, Pseudopanax anomalus and a large variety of native orchids. The reserve supports a diverse range of bird life, including a small population of North Island brown kiwi, kukupa (native pigeon), tui, grey warbler, kingfisher, morepork, spotless crane, fantail, and pied tit. A population of North Island fernbird adds to the reserve's importance as bird habitat.

### Management:

To protect vulnerable spotless crane, fernbird and kiwi from rats, possums and mustelids, control has been in place since 1992, being firstly undertaken by volunteers and honorary rangers and then after receiving funding from the Biodiversity Condition Fund, by contractors. When necessary, pigs are hunted to prevent excessive rooting, interference with traps and bait, and the destruction of ground-nesting birds' nests.

Wilding pines, pampas and prickly hakea are invasive plants that are monitored and controlled where necessary to prevent their spread through regenerating shrubland. On the shady bank of Aponga Stream, wandering willy (Tradescantia) is controlled to prevent its spread into new areas.

To ensure continued easy access for visitors, and to facilitate the work of pest animal control contractors, tracks markers are maintained and vegetation trimming and grass mowing is undertaken, but always after the orchid flowering season is finished.

### Facilities:

At the reserve entrance there is a carpark and noticeboard. From the carpark a 15 minute steep climb on a track takes you to the ridge where there are extensive views. The reserve has two loop tracks, the longer one taking 2-to-3 hours. The main track skirts the edge of the swamp by way of a boardwalk. Allow time to watch and listen for fernbirds that may also be heard at the carpark. Volunteer opportunities include weeding wilding pines, Hakea removal and track clearance.

### How to get there:

From Kamo turn west into Pipiwai Rd and then turn left into Wright Road before crossing the Hikurangi River. From Maungataupere take the Kaikohe Road; after 14 km turn right into McCardle Road, then into Wright Road. The entrance to the property is on the eastern side of Wright Road.

# An Overview of NZ NFRT Reserves

*Continuing our review of the Trust's properties, we look at some important reserves in the King Country.*

*Further details of these and our other reserves can be found on the website [www.nznfirt.org.nz](http://www.nznfirt.org.nz)*

## KING COUNTRY

### **Owen Lewis Reserve** 237 ha (Acquisition 1996)

Location: Waimahora Road, south-east of Otorohanga.

Description: A block of forest flanking the Waimahora Stream on the way to Rangitoto Station. Although the steeper valley sides had already been protected by a voluntary agreement, plans were under way to clear-fell a large portion of the remaining area and convert it to pasture and pine forest before the Trust stepped in to save the native bush. The forest cover is important for protecting water quality in the flood-prone Waipa River.

### **Rangitoto Station** 427 ha (Acquisition 1990)

Location: At the top of the Rangitoto Range, south-east of Otorohanga and north-west of Pureora Forest.

Description: A large block of mixed mature and regenerating bush, surrounded on all sides by well-established native forest, including Pureora Forest Park, private reserves and Maori Trust land. Three major tributaries of the Waipa River originate on the station. Protection of these waterways is vital to the water quality further down. A 'mainland island' project run in the nearby Mangatutu Ecological Area has resulted in a flourishing kokako population, which will eventually spread into the reserve. There is a house available for overnight accommodation and an extensive system of walking tracks.

### **Pehitawa Kahikatea** 19 ha (Acquisition 2001)

Location: Along the Mangapu River, 5 km north-west of Te Kuiti.

Description: This kahikatea forest remnant, together with an adjoining 20 ha protected under a Maori covenant, is described as self-sustaining and in near virgin condition. It represents a forest type that once covered some 40,000 hectares in the Waipa Ecological District but now sadly reduced through clearance to only 158 ha. For these reasons it is the most important remnant of its kind in the North Island.

## *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), Email: [jrhanbury@actrix.co.nz](mailto:jrhanbury@actrix.co.nz)**

## *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](mailto:javn@xtra.co.nz)

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

I would like my donation used for Waiwawa Reserve purchase, reserve maintenance, general purposes, etc.

.....

Here is my tax-deductible donation of \$ .....

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... Phone: .....

Please make cheques payable to **NZ Native Forests Restoration Trust**  
**Send to NZ NFRT, PO Box 80-007, Green Bay, Auckland 0643**