



ASB Community Trust

Te Kaitiaki Putea o Tamaki o Tai Tokerau

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COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT PUKENUI/WESTERN HILLS FOREST CHARITABLE TRUST (April 2014)

A recent trip to Norfolk Island reminded me that species around the Globe are under eternal threat from pests and predators. Norfolk Island's two main pests are rats and cats, and, along with habitat loss, have had a major impact on their endemic Green Parrot. This species is closely related to our kakariki/ red crowned parakeet. I never got to see their Green Parrot while I was there, but I did get to hear its distinct call in the distance.

Pukenui Forest was also once home to our kakariki and only intense pest control will see their return.

Further to which, Max Hutchings, pest control team leader, called a meeting of the pest team recently to discuss progress and future work, and a few days ago we were hard at work building another stash of bait stations. These will be set out throughout this Winter, ready for filling in September. This will be our third round of poisoning predators in the DOC part of the Forest and we are pushing 600 hectares of pest-free forest...an impressive record! I am working with Kevin Parker, species translocation expert, to develop a translocation plan that will be acceptable to the Department of Conservation.

I am also currently working on the permit from the District Health Board for us to lay poison for possums, as promised to our funders the ASB Trust, along the Western Hills, running parallel to the main State Highway 14. I can't wait for modern technology to give us better tools for truly efficient pest control. Till then, we just keep on keeping on.

Apart from attempting to control animal pests, we also continue the war on weeds. I have been working with Richard Cameron of Northland Vegetation Control and he and his team will be hitting weeds at the start of the Maddren Walkway. Believe it or not, but it won't be long before our friends the Taiwanese Cherry will be rearing its pretty head all over Whangarei, including parts of Pukenui Forest.

The discussion on new signage is coming together, and I met with a WDC planning officer who tells me they are about to place a new style of sign around the more popular forest- edge tracks. We will be putting track signs in the deeper parts of the forest, which is overdue, as someone was lost in the bush recently.

I have been trying to get our forest work in the local papers, with a little success, as funders like to get a mention when possible.

Gerry Brackenbury

Community Relations/Advocacy (Part-time)