



ASB Community Trust

Te Kaitiaki Putea o Tamaki o Tai Tokerau

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

The Pukenui Forest Trust has reached a major milestone in its conservation activities. I believe the pest team, under the guidance of Max Hutchings, has now completed the laying out of all the necessary stoat boxes throughout Pukenui Forest. Max and his team are to be congratulated and we are now a major step closer to making an application to release kiwi back into the forest.

Margaret and I have just about finalised the review of the Trust's Health and Safety Plan, and a number of activities have been added including a session with Search and Rescue, run by the Police Department.

I met with Stuart Jackson of the WDC Parks Department and have agreed to progress new signage in the more out-of-the-way parts of the forest. Their signage contractors are a new business called "Splash" and I have met with them for a preliminary chat. I spent a pleasant morning putting up orange track markers along part of the Ridge Track. All of the lesser used tracks need to be upgraded in this way...getting lost in Pukenui Forest is not to be recommended! Also, while Max and his team were taking stoat boxes into Pukenui via Woods Road, I took the opportunity to spray the track that is starting to be infested with Tradescantia and African club moss. This was not before time as both these noxious weeds were starting to spill over into the forest proper.

Margaret and I met to finalise the ASB Community Trust funding allocation report for the past six months. This money has been invaluable in helping us achieve our conservation goals.

I have been in touch with a Forest and Bird Conservation Officer based in Nelson, Debs Martin. Debs helped organise the bat conference earlier in the year and I asked her to put us in the national "bat loop" so we can keep up with the latest in bat conservation.

Our possum knockdown in August is getting closer, and I have been dropping letters off and sending e-mails to various interested parties. I briefly attended the Pukenui/Maunu Road subdivision monthly meeting to bring them up to speed with our activities and, while there, I was informed of the presence of wild pigs in the vicinity. I have passed this information on to Glen Coulston of DOC who, as an avid pig hunter, is keen to deal to them.

Sara Brill of NRC is once again preparing for her weed workshops. Whangarei dates are Thursday 19 June or Saturday 21 June. Workshop times are 9am-12pm or 1pm-4pm (Saturday - morning only).

Finally, I would like to pass on our congratulations to past Chair, Alan Martin, who was recently appointed to the Northland Conservation Board. It is always good to have a friend at court!

Gerry Brackenbury

Community Relations/Advocacy (Part-time)