



ASB Community Trust

Te Kaitiaki Putea o Tamaki o Tai Tokerau

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

It is Spring, and in Pukenui Forest, Spring has well and truly sprung. Orchids are now showing, with *Earina mucronata* hanging in fragrant clusters off branches and *Pterostylus banksii* are pushing up out of the ground. Karaka tree flowers are spreading on the ground and soon the Puketea flowers will be doing the same. Native pigeons are nesting and tuis are tuing.

An oxymoronic occurrence has just happened in the form of the very likely discovery of possibly the last kiwi in Pukenui Forest. Exciting that a live kiwi may still be hanging in there; sad that after many thousands of years, kiwi in Pukenui are down to one last bird. We live in hope there may be just a few more to take advantage of all the incredible pest work that has been done there over the past four years.

On a more encouraging note, the pest team have now cleared a large enough area to allow the start of the formal process of returning kiwi to Pukenui Forest. The paperwork required is on a par with Mr Bean putting on his underpants without taking off his trousers! But it can be done. The SOP I mean, not the sartorial habits of Mr Bean. (Note to bureaucrat: SOP stands for: Standard Operating Procedure for the Translocation of Endangered Species...lunch is optional).

Various volunteers have been helping the Trust out in a variety of ways, and the end of the planting season saw Kamo Primary School, on a rare sunny day, plant native trees at the end of Amalin Drive, off Three Mile Bush Road. Chris Windust, our trapper, drove the plants to the bush edge and Julianne Newbold helped the pupils get the trees into the ground. Well done everybody.

Julianne, along with fellow Royal Society scholar Jane Norman and myself, were meant to check out the lizard covers that Jane and I put up this time last year in Pukenui Forest. This recent bit of grotty weather has put a pause on that...but it will happen. The NZ Herpetological Society is keen to know the results for their data base.

Finally, a synergy is developing called the Western Hills Collective, looking at how the Pukenui Forest Trust, the Whangarei Museum (Kiwi North), the Whangarei Quarry Gardens and the Quarry Arts Centre can find common ground to pursue our collective interests...watch this space.

Gerry Brackenbury

Community Relations/Advocacy (Part-time)