



**RANGER'S REPORT TO THE
PUKENUI/WESTERN HILLS FOREST
CHARITABLE TRUST
(March/April 2011)**



Northland Hospitality

It has been quite a busy time on a number of fronts, plus two trips into Pukenui Forest, one with Max Hutchings and myself on March 29th, and one on April 12th with Max, Steve Pohe, Mark Dudley and myself. Both trips involved plotting out the edge of the “ark-in-the-park” boundary. It was good to have Steve with us, who is both very familiar with the forest, and brings his scientific background during decision-making discussions. While in the forest we put out some tracking tunnels and collected and put out tunnels from the earlier Papp trials. I collected some tracking papers from the Regional Council which they gave us for free. The second trip saw a bit more wildlife, including a family of tom tits and saw and heard several native pigeons. Steve found a lovely young female weta, and reported on what sounds like a forest gecko found in Terry Millington’s bath! Terry lives very close to the forest, so this is an encouraging sign that there is still some wildlife to save.

I have been in discussion with an MA student in Hamilton following a story in the paper about long-tailed bats. It seems he has designed a bat-roost that is able to keep out predators. I contacted him and said it would great if we could benefit “our” bats from his research. He was enthusiastic about the idea and thought another bat research site would be good. We intend to keep in touch.

Kiwi: I have started the ball rolling with regard to our desire to have kiwi back in the forest. Following a “heads-up” from DOC kiwi ranger Pete Graham that the Dept is changing its strategic direction from pest management to dog advocacy, I contacted both the Regional Conservator, Chris Jenkins, and Clea Gardiner, kiwi manager at their Area Office, and was assured that this change in direction would not have a detrimental affect on Operation Nestegg (ONE). Max and I met with Clea, and she advised me to make contact with the head of all the Kiwi Translocation Proposals in the Country, Avi Holzapfel. I have done this and will need to follow DOC’s protocols as best as we can. We need to be aware that theoretically, it takes three years to go through the process! Hence my getting going.

I have been to see Keith Thompson of Environmental Northland and got all the addresses of those living around the forest who own a dog. The intention is to do a letter drop of a package containing information on us, the Trust, and the impact of dogs on kiwi. This will look very good to DOC, and help us in our translocation proposal down the line.

Funding Applications: We have been unsuccessful with our application for funds from Transpower CommunityCare Fund. They received 104 “high quality” applications and have said we are welcome to try again.

I assisted the application put in to the Oxford Sports Trust by Sharon Morgan et al by writing the rationale for the application.

I have a meeting next month with Ngaire Tyson of the NZ Landcare Trust to see what we can get from the Community Biodiversity Enhancement Fund. The NRC has its pest control (not sure of its proper name) fund coming up soon and I think Steve is picking up the ASB funding application.

I had some discussion with WINZ re a good worker who is currently on ACC, but may be coming off some time soon. The chap in question has been doing good work on Limestone Island and knows our forest reasonably well.

Finally I wrote an article in the Whangarei Report on Pukenui Forest, which included the work done by Rotary (in which I helped) on upgrading the Mad Woman’s Track.

Gerry Brackenbury