



ASB Community Trust

Te Kaitiaki Putea o Tamaki o Tai Tokerau

supported by **ASB**



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

This is my final report for 2014 and, looking back, the Trust, its Trustees, sponsors and growing band of volunteers can feel proud that all of us, in our different ways, have helped to greatly improve the conservation and recreational values of Pukenui Forest. It does no harm to reiterate that Pukenui Forest, at around 2,000 hectares, is the largest piece of extant forest in the Whangarei District, and its potential in natural and human values is immense.

With the generous funding sponsorship of the ASB Community Trust, we have been able to plan with confidence our several programmes for the coming years. A game-changer for the Trust, and the forest, is the imminent employment of a full-time Ranger. This is a massive step in how the Trust will function, both professionally and in the difference this will make to the on-going improvement in the ecological health of Pukenui Forest.

We are now able to join the other Trusts at the “Top Table”, confident that we will be taken seriously when we apply for funding with the various national funders.

The Pukenui Forest Species Re-Introduction Plan has been written and received by the Trust, and its author, Dr Kevin Parker, has done an excellent job. A copy has been given to Nigel Miller of DOC for his comments. No native species can be moved around without DOC’s approval.

The weather was kind for the Whangarei A&P Show, and the Trust shared the tent with fellow travellers (Kiwi for kiwis, Whitebait Connection, Fish & Game and The Landcare Trust, who generously paid for the collective site). The two days went well and a lot of interest was shown in our display, including a large map of the forest, a live green gecko and a kiwi/sugared worm contest for the kids!

A long-tailed bat was recently caught by a cat (of course), but survived the ordeal and was returned unharmed back to Pukenui Forest. Our on-going predator work can only improve the chances of survival for these little fellers in the forest.

With the help of Julianne Newbold (Royal Society), we finished the survey of our four lizard lines (consisting of all up 120 rubber covers). The bad news is not a single gecko was found under any of the covers. Rats.

Finally, our thanks go once again to Max Hutchings for professionally organising another poison blitz in the forest. A good turnout of volunteers helped make the two-day event a success and we will do it all over again next year.

Please all have a very Happy Xmas and a safe and successful New Year, and may the Big Guy in Red bring all you wished for.

Gerry Brackenbury

Community Relations/Advocacy (Part-time)