



**RANGER'S REPORT TO THE
PUKENUI/WESTERN HILLS FOREST
CHARITABLE TRUST
(July 2012)**



Northland Hospitality

With winter well and truly here, it is planting time, and congratulations to Grant Smith for his successful application for funds to buy 5k's worth of native plants via the Guardian Trust. When school starts again, I will finalise a date for us to invite pupils from Hurupaki School to plant up the site prepared by DOC at the start of the Pukenui walkway. We had a site meeting there with DOC staff and came up with another site nearby that older pupils could also help us plant...possibly from Huanui College. We also discussed and walked a re-alignment of the track entrance, which will be much more attractive to visitors. DOC is close to finalising their signage there as well.

Grant found a large dump of rubbish there as well! We thought we might organise a clean up at the end of the year with members of the community. Further to which, I recently met Mark Bellingham, the North Island Conservation Manager of Royal Forest & Bird. Mark liked what we were doing with Pukenui and felt his organisation's local members could help us with the many tasks that face us. I am thinking weeds again, which is one of our biggest challenges. Royal Forest & Bird have a long background of dealing to predators in a large forest in their Ark/Park in the Waitakeres and Mark has offered their advice and experience.

Margaret and I have finalised our Health and Safety Plan, which DOC says we must have if we are to continue our work in the forest. The plan has been sent to them for comment and I would like to thank Margaret for her hard work. She and other committee members also met to finalise our application to the Pacific Development and Conservation Trust. We have asked Sheryl Mai to be our referee.

The kiwi listening season is over for another year and Max, Ian Buckley and I spent a night in what should have been prime kiwi habitat past the Weir, but heard nothing. I also spent an hour up Millington Road with similar results. Under Max's guidance, we put out more stoat boxes and, if we can get funding to service them, maybe we will be allowed to return kiwi back to Pukenui Forest.

We climbed way up to a huge pa complex that I never knew existed and returned to where we started at the Pukenui Estate. Hard graft but worth it.

Finally, I have started the process for us to poison possums and rats in our Ark/Park area. It should not be as arduous as last year, as much is the same with regard to talking to neighbours and schools, etc.

Gerry Brackenbury
Ranger (Part-time)