



COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT PUKENUI/WESTERN HILLS FOREST CHARITABLE TRUST (July 2015)

Since my last report, we have had some good news with our large funding application through the Department of Conservation, namely their Community Conservation Partnership Fund. Having got through the first hurdle, we now wait to see if we are successful with the second and final hurdle. Preparation for this funding application has taken some time and money and we can only hope and keep our fingers crossed for a successful outcome.

Luke Robertson (our new trapper) and I spent a day with a class from Kamo Primary School, planting trees along the edge of Pukenui Forest. Their teacher was Jane Norman, who spent a lot of time in the forest last year as a Royal Society Fellow, and it was good to see her and her class checking out the weta box and lizard covers that we put up last year. The plants were provided and paid for by Mr Barry Reiher, who is developing the land that interfaces with the forest along Three Mile Bush Road. Barry has also put up a "state-of-the-art" dog-proof fence which should separate any dogs from kiwi along this stretch of bush.

I recently gave a talk on the work of the Trust to a community club, and am booked to give a similar talk next month.

A number of volunteers and staff will be sharpening our hacksaws to start another round of constructing our modified bait stations. When these have been built, we will start the arduous task of nailing them up in the last "Ark-in-the-Park" area, ready for toxin this coming September.

Which leads me to the sad task of saying a huge "Thank You" to the man who planned and put his body on the line in setting up the whole pest control programme to date in Pukenui Forest. Max Hutchings has handed over his "baby" to others of our team in the knowledge that a first rate structure has been created that we can rely on for the coming years. Max says he will still be a volunteer for the Trust and keep an eye on the forest he has done so much for.

Gerry Brackenbury

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