



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



*Northland Hospitality*

Last month, our committee granted permission for myself and Max Hutchings to take the ASB Trust representative, Kim Collins, on a flight over Pukenui Forest and the Western Hills to support our funding application with them. It was, for once, a pleasant day and the three of us left Onerahi Airport in a fixed wing plane. We had an excellent birds-eye view over the forest and it was a novel and effective way to show Kim the size of the challenge we had taken on, and how much we need extra funding to help us put more effort into servicing our large network of traps, etc.

Further to which, the NRC has given us more, and larger, traps to target ferrets around the boundary of Pukenui Forest. These have been placed on private property (with their permission) or just inside the forest boundary where these large predators live.

We continue to fundraise for more traps, and Margaret and I have sent a letter of thanks to Royal Forest & Bird (Northern Branch) to thank them for their grant to purchase more of these. We are also working through our Health & Safety Management Plan for DOC to sign off.

Last months big poisoning exercise in the AIP should now be showing dividends, with breeding birds being more successful in the absence of rats and possums. To check our success (or otherwise), next week Max and his team of volunteers will join DOC to set out tracking tunnels to see what percentage kill we have achieved.

Following the need to plan our activities for the coming year/s, some of the committee met at Denis Hewitt's house for a pizza-fuelled brain-storming session to re-look at our Annual Business Plan so we can decide what we want to do, when, and the cost of each project. Wendy Morris produced a long-term Business Plan, and an annual one will help us concentrate on our more immediate needs...such as the purchase of a Personal Locator Beacon for when our volunteers are in the bush on their own. This harks back to our Health & Safety Management Plan. Sue Milner will be giving us the results of this meeting.

Last week, a small team dug holes for planting at the Amalin Drive entrance to the forest and trees were planted soon after. One disturbing thing was the presence of stock on the wrong side of the fence. I have contacted Glen Coulston of DOC requesting some fencing be done fairly urgently to prevent a recurrence. After digging holes, we went to inspect the tree weta box and admired an olearia tree daisy in full, white flower, plus a tree fuchsia in similar mode. Remember...all work and no play...

Finally, another exciting find in the forest – this time a two inch terrier known as a Peripitus. This relatively unknown creature is very ancient and is believed to be a cross between an arthropod and an annelid. While very small, it is, in its own way, a top predator; in the same class as a tiger or a great white shark! It was found by Ben Barr, Limestone Island Ranger and all-round good guy and lizard guru to the House of Chatterley, who was helping us with our trap work. He rolled over a rotting log and there it was, spitting goo at him...two inches or six foot...take your bets now.

The more time spent working in the forest, the more treasures we find and the more we appreciate what a gem it is.

**Gerry Brackenbury**  
Ranger (Part-time)