



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

The sun is returning and the flowering Taiwanese Cherry is telling us that spring is around the corner. It also tells us that the planting season is coming to a close.

I have been digging the good soil along with Luke Robertson, our new Ranger, and with other volunteers at various sites around Pukenui Forest, not forgetting our productive planting day with Kamo Primary School earlier in the year.

One recent memorable site was the Miss Maddren entrance in Russell Road. Organised by the Whangarei District Council, an amazing array of people, from toddlers to OAPs turned up to plant. Our Trust brought thirty beautiful Kowhai to plant, courtesy of Denis Hewitt. One group of planters was the Russell Road Ratepayers. Luke thinks we should get alongside them and help form some sort of Landcare Group, similar to the Whau Valley Road organization. Russell Road has been in the news recently, with plans for major road works and possibly some major weed control, of which they need both big time.

September will see our fifth year of pest control in the "Ark-in-the-Park" area of Pukenui Forest. The control area will now increase to around 600 hectares, which is our limit at the moment, given our time and resources.

I have spent some time, with the help of Margaret, working through the requirements of the Northland District Health Board to get sign-off for the upcoming poison operation. This will be one of the major times in the year when we seriously call upon our volunteers for help.

Further to which, several of us spent a day at DOC building more bait stations to be nailed up over the coming months. Thanks to volunteer, Don Munro for his help.

By the time you read this, I will have given three talks to various clubs about the work of the Pukenui Forest Trust. People are endlessly surprised by the size of the forest (2000ha) and the amount the Trust has achieved over a relatively short time.

Gerry Brackenbury

Community Relations/Advocacy (Part-time)