



**RANGER'S REPORT TO THE
PUKENUI/WESTERN HILLS FOREST
CHARITABLE TRUST
(February 2013)**



Northland Hospitality

A month ago (12/01/13), I wrote an informal Ranger's Report, which dealt mainly with various issues of our pest control regime. As we know, our current trap layout needs doubling up if we are to get permission to release species such as kiwi, kokako and robins into Pukenui Forest. Margaret and I (with valuable assistance from Steve Pohe), have put in the hours finalising several funding applications, including one to the Mazda Foundation. I have also been in touch with Ngaire Tyson of the NZ Landcare Trust, based in Norfolk Street, to progress an application on the Biodiversity Fund. This funding is only applicable to private landowners. We are fortunate in having around 300 hectares of this on the Brock Quarry property, so I believe we qualify. I have spoken about this with David Brock, and he is happy to support us.

Our new one-day-a-week employee, Chris Windust, has now started his contract and I believe was quite impressed with our regular volunteers who, on the toughest Blue Line, caught five stoats! January and February are the peak months for stoat activity, so our volunteers are on their mettle.

We have finally got sign-off from DOC for our Health & Safety Management Plan that Margaret and I have put a lot of time into, and now Max Hutchings will be organising a volunteer day to go through the protocols we will all have to adhere to.

Max is also giving some thought into our next major possum knock-down sometime in the next twelve months. We will soon be doing a BMI (bite mark index) in the Ark in the Park area. This will indicate how successful we were at the end of last year in our poisoning programme.

Still on the subject of pests, following a meeting with Allan Gardiner, he tells me another 46 goats have been shot, bringing the total tally to close to 500 animals! We now have a breathing space of a couple of years before we have to think about goat control again. The goat cull programme ends this June.

To something less gory, Margaret and I have put together, with input from several people, a script for a brochure that will be handed out at the Northland Field Days (21-23 February). We are lucky that WDC is happy to pay the cost of production for this, meaning we have a little more fiscal fat to use on other projects, etc.

Sara Brill ran a very successful weed bust at the start of the Kauika Road entrance to the forest before Christmas. Our volunteers joined the NRC weed busting team and some great work was done. We will return next April to go over any bits that were missed.

Finally, Margaret and I sent the wording, as requested by WDC, for the plaque to commemorate the centenary of the Coronation Scenic Reserve.

Gerry Brackenbury
Ranger (Part-time)