



## RANGER'S REPORT TO THE PUKENUI/WESTERN HILLS FOREST CHARITABLE TRUST (July 2011)



*Northland Hospitality*

For a forest that is sadly lacking in kiwi, the last six weeks has seen a lot of kiwi activity in Pukenui Forest. A number of volunteers and myself spent several nights listening for kiwi, but with no result. This included two listening devices that we put out, with the help of the kiwi DOC ranger Paul Cornielle.

A group of other DOC kiwi staff and “big-hillers” spent a few hours in the forest, entering the forest from Woods Road, and we talked about the “Ark-in-the-Park” proposal. I felt the DOC staff were both impressed with the quality of the forest, and the plans we have for knocking down the “nasties”.

I am hopeful I am getting close to finishing the AEE (Assessment of Environmental Effects) that DOC requires to use certain toxins in their part of the forest.

Further to that, I have been busy massaging the media to get our aspirations over to the public, including writing several articles in the local papers and getting a small brochure out to several thousand dog owners about Pukenui Forest and the impact of dogs on kiwi. This was made possible by Keith Thompson of Environmental Northland, who has been a great supporter of then work we are doing.

I also want to thank Murray Madden, Manager of Radio More FM, who has kindly put out a number of messages on air about our work.

Other hard workers include Max Hutchings, who has been the driving force in the re-design of the 200 bait stations that we bought with the money from Pub Charity. He, myself and volunteer Marcus Bax, along with designer and DOC pest officer Nigel Miller, have worked over several days to make these bait-stations more efficient, being able to kill both possums and rats. These will be put out next week at the Ark in the Park site.

Several “bighillers” gathered at Sue Milner’s place recently and started to get our teeth into creating a web-site we will all be proud of. My task was to put some words together for the web-site on both the wildlife of the forest (or lack of it) and the predators and browsing animals we aim to blitz. Further to this, there is some good news re the goat control programme. The cullers have taken out up to 400 animals and the forest recovery is already starting to show.



**Figure 1.** Gerry Brackenbury, ranger, and volunteer Marcus Bax beside a hundred modified bait stations.

Finally I went down to Hamilton to meet Batman (aka) Darren Leroux, and spent an interesting time learning a lot more about our long-tailed bats. If they can manage to survive in the crappy scrap of bush they were living in, our mature forest should, by rights, see them flourishing in big numbers. Let’s hope so.

Gerry Brackenbury.  
(Ranger-part time).