



COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT PUKENUI/WESTERN HILLS FOREST CHARITABLE TRUST (February 2016)

And so another year of conservation starts again.

Before Christmas, the Dog Management sub-committee met to discuss the need to produce a dog management draft plan in anticipation of a kiwi release next year. From this meeting, I wrote a draft plan for DOC to comment on and we have a follow-up meeting soon to progress this and keep up the momentum.

Our funding from Foundation North comes to an end in a few months, and Margaret and I will be sitting down to prepare for another funding application. It hardly needs to be said that it is critical to our pest work in particular, that we are successful in getting more money to keep up the conservation work we have generated.

The Northland Regional Council recently sent a team into Pukenui Forest to clear up an old dope growing site, which had the usual mess of rotting plastic and rusting wire, plus attendant weeds. The forest has a surprisingly large number of these sites. I have written a letter thanking them for their efforts.

Another letter I need to write is one to the Waikato Forest and Bird, who manage the Valder Trust. Their funding has helped Denis Hewitt to grow many Kowhai trees, quite a few of which have been planted by volunteers at the entrance to the forest at the Quarry Arts Centre. The trees flowered for the first time last spring and were a credit to Denis and our Trust.

For the third year running, we had a presence at the Whangarei A&P Show at Barge Park, in the shadow of Pukenui Forest. We shared the tent again (sponsored by Landcare Trust), with several environmental groups, and it was a great success. Thank you to all who helped in whatever way.

Finally, the 700 hectares of Ark/Park poison pest control exercise went according to plan (with thanks to Luke in particular) and Max is planning to extend the area again.

Gerry Brackenbury

Community Relations/Advocacy (Part-time)