



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



Northland Hospitality

Early August saw the AGM of the Trust. It was a very positive meeting and with a good selection of Trustees in positions of responsibilities. As the new Chair, I feel very positive about the future direction of our Society and know that Pukenui Forest is in the hands of dedicated supporters and a growing band of volunteers ready to return the forest to its former glory.

The AGM also saw the launch of our website, and I congratulate Sue Milner on an excellent job in finally nailing the project, that has been more than a while in coming.

This past month has seen a lot of work done in the 200 hectare Ark-in-the-Park. A number of volunteers, led by Max Hutchings, plus DOC officer Nigel Miller have just about finished doing the GPS sites. Each site will see a modified Philproof bait station nailed to a tree and filled with toxins to kill rats and possums, the scourge of our native forests.

Further to this, myself, Max and Mark Dudley attended a full day course doing the theory and practicum to hold a poison licence, issued by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). It consists of 15 pages, ensuring the licence holder is of good character and attends church regularly!

I have spent a lot of time this month working to get Dept of Health approval to put toxins in our designated area, which I finally achieved recently. The last leg of this bureaucratic challenge is to get sign-off from DOC for their AEE.

Both the Northland Regional Council and the Whangarei District Council have both been very generous with funding to purchase stoat traps. These will be set once our possum poisoning exercise is complete.

As you can gather from the above, to bring back our wildlife takes a huge amount of time, money and energy to control pests, but it has to be done.

On a slightly more jolly note, native nettle seeds collected near the Whau Valley Dam were sent to Oratia Native Nursery in Auckland, where they were grown on, and the plants were successfully put on Matakohe/Limestone Island recently. It is hoped that the nettles will grow into large, healthy plants and provide much needed food for the caterpillars of the Red and Yellow Admiral butterflies.

Finally, I recently planted a young kauri tree at the entrance to the bush in recognition of all the hard work done by the Trust and its growing band of volunteers. May it grow well and remind us all why we keep the faith.

Gerry Brackenbury
Ranger (part-time)