

RANGITIKEI ENVIRONMENT

Treasured Natural Environment Group

Makowhai Stream Planting

By Chris Shenton, Te Runanga o Nga Wairiki Ngati Apa

A project to riparian plant the Makowhai Stream has kicked off in the middle of June. This stream is of significance to Ngati Apa and Ngati Raukawa hapu based in the Rangitikei as it was a reliable supply of tuna (eels) and inanga for many years past. We were told that our people at Parewanui used to cross the Rangitikei on horseback and fish in Makowhai as you could almost guarantee a successful fishing day. It is this relationship that we are looking to reinvigorate.



Planting of the Makowhai Stream

With the intensification of land use over the years the stream has been seen more as a drain, with very little vegetation along its banks to shade and cool the waters. Thankfully it is, to a large extent fenced so stock can't access the water. We are looking to plant around 3000 native plants over the next two planting seasons and we will do more if we can.

This year we engaged a planting contractor to plant 1200 plants on the lower reach of the stream which we will manage to ensure that keep above the long grass and start to flourish. With the

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assistance of Horizons we met with local farmers who were very supportive of what we were proposing by enabling us to have access across their land and facilitating access for contractors to do the work. It is hoped that we will have community planting as part of the project next year and from there we see this as just the beginning. If we can capture the necessary resources we see this work as going on for generations' right throughout the Rangitikei catchment and throughout our tribal area.



Planting of the Makowhai Stream

It is important for people to reconnect with such places that historically we used to frequent. If the fish life is enhanced by this kind of work, that gives us more reason to re-establish our relationship with this significant awa.

Blue Duck Comeback

By Brian Megaw

Recently I was lucky enough to attend a Whio (Blue Duck) recovery workshop in Turangi.

Attending were about 40 people ranging from Department of Conservation (DOC) staff, to landowners and many enthusiastic volunteers. These volunteers are the ones who brave inclement weather and give freely of their own time in order to check trap lines in the hills and along rivers.

In 2008 there were as few as 2500 Whio left. Whio, an endemic species to New Zealand, are one of only 4 species of torrent ducks (like white water conditions) in the world. They are an indicator species and no matter the amount of predator control will not be found on rivers and streams that are not pristine.

In 2008 it looked like they would slowly slide into extinction. This extinction would be the result of predation from introduced stoats and loss of pristine habitat.



Whio on the Rangitikei River

Luckily for these birds, a group of people both from within DOC and the general public rallied together and started a program aimed at the recovery of this unique species.

Flash forward to 2016 and numbers have now recovered to about 3000 birds. There are a total of 8 secure areas (4 in the North Island and 4 in the South Island) which have the funding to have quite intensive management. Much of this funding is provided by Genesis Energy through [Whio Forever](#).

What Is Happening With Whio on the Rangitikei and the Northern Ruahine Ranges?

River Valley is a part of the [Ruahine Whio Protectors](#) Collective. This is a collective of 7 different groups that are actively trapping for stoats (which are the principle cause of Whio decline) in the northern Ruahine Ranges. Other local parties include the Aorangi Awarua Trust who along with the Te Potae O Awarua Project administer some 620 traps on Aorangi, the Ikewetea catchment and the Waiokotore catchment.

Total traps deployed throughout the range number about 1800, of which River Valley look after 150. You can see what River Valley is doing by following this link to the [conservation pages on our website](#).

This area has been designated as a recovery area and presently has a known population of 30 pairs of Whio. The goal is to lift the population to 50 breeding pairs by 2020.

Our own goal is to see a resident population of breeding pairs on our home river, the Rangitikei.

An observation from DOC personal involved in the trapping program (these are volunteers – DOC does no active funding of the Northern Ruahine project), was that there had been an impressive bounce back of all bird life in areas covered by the traps.

Can You Be Involved in Saving Whio?

What can you do in assisting Whio recovery?

There are a number of options available to help out. These options depend on whether you are physically able to contribute or simply wish to make a donation.

To help the overall group, Ruahine Whio Protectors, [please follow this link](#). If you want to help out with what River Valley is doing, then contact [Brian Megaw direct](#).

Help us to guarantee the survival of this unique bird.

Bulls Rivers Users Group

By Jan Harris, Bulls and District Community Development Manager

With summer coming, we are currently working on upgrading our existing picnic area down at the Rangitikei River. With us firmly in the grip of winter and the current work Rock Wall upgrade, our project is slowly making progress.

Redeveloping this area will give river users a fantastic site to use throughout the warmer months. The site upgrade is designed to marry with environment and provide locals, walker, cyclist, educational groups and area where they can learn about the issues that impact our environment. We are extremely lucky to have some strong environmentalists on the Bulls Users Group who love nothing more than sharing their

passion and knowledge with others – this is community working at its best.

With the help of Bulls School Teacher – Leigh Hanson and her Green Team, the site is now clear and ready for the next phase. The group of parent helpers, pupils, Athol and his team plus members from the River Users group made light work clearing the site.



Bulls School working bee at the Rangitikei River

Bulls School is currently working towards their Bronze status as an EnviroSchool. This partnership provides a bank of people who will steer this project for many years to come.

The picnic area will provide also be a great place for tourists and Te Araroa trail walkers to take a break while passing through Bulls. Often cyclists and walkers are on limited budgets so this free area for all to use will be a fantastic resource for these people plus the wider community as a whole.

With the help from local digger owner/operator, Brain Kirker, the existing site will be cleared making way for new weed mat. The existing rocks will be re used to cover the front and side area,



placing them to mirror the fantastic work done by contractors working on the rock wall.

Bullocks in Bulls have donated metal to cover the site. We have had peelings donated by Santoft Roundwood which will help mulch the new planting supplied by Horizons. Local carriers Ross Dear and John Zander have kindly offered to cart the mulch to the site.

Road Runner will kindly make a sign for this area that reflects the unique setting that will thank Funders and acknowledge businesses who have donated in kind.

We recently received a grant from Horizons to help us manage the Ivy and Old Man's Beard that in an ongoing problem down at the River. Without the generous donations of product, time and machinery there would be no way this project could be achieved.

I have noticed in the short time I have been in this role, Bulls and District residents are keen to help their community where possible, they just need to be asked. I can't thank them enough for the support and generosity they have shown me since I took over the role of Community Development Manager. If your company would like to donate resources, time or money to this project we would love to hear from you.



Bulls School working bee at the Rangitikei River

Parks and Reserves

By Athol Sanson, Parks and Reserves Team Leader

Koitiata Sand Dune Movement

In February we were contacted by the Koitiata Residents Association regarding the advancement of sand dune towards the playground within the coastal reserve.

The movement of sand on our coast is common and at times the dunes can be very unstable and constantly on the move. The speed of this sand movement may have been hastened by the June flood event. Large volumes of sand and sediments have been brought down local rivers which need somewhere to go.

A meeting was organised at the beach with concerned residents, staff from the Horizons Regional Council and the Rangitikei District Council



A plan was formulated at this meeting to help slow the sand movement towards the playground. The plan involved a number of points – from movement of logs to act as wind fences, to collection of native

plant seeds with sand binding abilities for future plantings and also long term care.



Horizons confirmed that no consent was needed to move the logs from the lagoon area to the blow-out zone providing no Katipo spiders and no nesting Dotterels were present. This was confirmed by an ecologist on site.

The Koitiata Residents Association requested that they would like to undertake the work as a community based project.

The following day I meet with the residents to collect seeds of plant species growing in the immediate area. Good numbers of seeds were available and it was perfect timing for collection.

Eco-sourcing is often used in restoration projects because locally sourced plants are thought to be more likely to survive than those from further away. This is because species are often better adapted to local conditions. Eco-sourcing has many other advantages – too many to go into now.

Species Collected: *Fimbristylis nodosa*, *Spinifex sericeus*, *Calystegia soldanella*, *Fimbristylis spiralis*, *Muehlenbeckia complexa*, *Carex pumila*.

The seeds were then packed, labelled and sent to a local nursery for propagation for planting in winter 2017.

The local residents commenced moving the logs from the lagoon so that they are placed across the blowout and the sand will be collected by these logs rather than advancing any further. Hay was then spread in areas between the logs to help stabilise the sand.



Planting will occur in 2016 but will only involve Marram grass as no other plants will be available. Plants will be planted behind the logs to give them some protection from the prevailing winds on site. This area will take a number of years and take careful planning to put right. However with long term commitment from the Residents and the RDC this area will be put back in a better condition than what was present before.



Sand fences will be installed in some areas that could not be covered with logs and marram grass will be planted in sheltered spots. Marram is currently being divided and stored ready for future planting.

All the seeds collected by the local residents have been sown. I was contacted two weeks ago from the nursery saying that around 100 *Calystegia soldanella* had germinated. These will be planted in the coming weeks; I can't say I have very often had a native plant ready to plant 3 months following seed collection before.

Future Planting Memorial Park

Over April and May we collected native tree and shrub seeds from Memorial Park with a view to replanting various areas that have had sycamore trees removed over the past few years. All seeds have been collected from naturally occurring vegetation within the reserve.

Planting will be undertaken in conjunction with Horizons Regional Council and Rangitikei Environment Group (REG) during 2017.

Again any planting in the reserve will need to be eco-sourced. Eco-sourcing involves propagating seeds of wild plant from local areas and planting them back within the same area.

A special tree of note during May in the reserve is *Dacrycarpus dacrydioides* or kahikatea. These trees are in full seed at present. Kahikatea is having a mast year in the region for seed production. The ripe bright orange seed is clearly visible from beneath the trees. Now that the wasps are diminishing, the birds have come back to feast on the sweet fruit. The bird song is something to enjoy and is a highly recommended outing on a nice day.

Mast seeding, also called masting, is the production of many seeds by a plant every two or more years in regional synchrony with other plants of the same species.

Memorial Park has some incredible native plants growing within this special reserve many of them highly sort after in the horticultural industry.

Other seeds collected: *Myrsine divaricata*, *Myrsine australis*, *Lophomyrtus obcordata*, *Hoheria angustifolia*, *Sophora godleyi*.

During the visit I located a plant that I had never seen before. It was clearly a *Carex* of some description and only three plants were present. We collected a sample and sent it off to one of our leading New Zealand botanists for identification.

While it was identified as a *Carex* the species could not be fully identified. The sample was then sent to Landcare Research and again the botanists had difficulty with its precise identification. It has been given the name *Carex muricata* and recorded as an unrecorded plant from Taihape.

It's always exciting to locate something a bit different.

Become a Kiwi Guardian!

By Department of Conservation

The Department of Conservation and Toyota have been working together to create a new programme to get kids to connect with nature – Kiwi Guardians!

“The goal of Kiwi Guardians is to turn our kiwi kids into guardians of the land and sea.”

– Allanah Irvine DOC Operations Manager for Manawatu.

Kiwi Guardians allows kids to plan an adventure online then go there for real! This exciting new programme encourages kids to explore, discover and experience the outside world and learn how to take action and protect it.

The idea is allowing children to cut down on screen time and notice the nature that is right on their door step. Helping children to see they can make a difference and giving them control over how they can care for the land now and in the future. It's also about getting outside and having lots of fun!

Kiwi Guardian sites can be found in the Rangitikei at Bruce Park Reserve and in the Manawatu at the Manawatu Gorge. Located at the site is a Kiwi Guardian post with a unique code. With this code the kids can collect a certificate as well as a Kiwi Guardian medal.

The steps for becoming a Kiwi Guardian are easy. Go online to www.doc.govt.nz/kiwiguardians and choose your Kiwi Guardian site.



Download the adventure map to find out what you can do, and then go exploring!

To learn more about the Kiwi Guardian programme and find the Kiwi Guardian sites visit the DOC website – www.doc.govt.nz

“Help us create future guardians of New Zealand – Toyota Kiwi Guardians!” – DOC

Upcoming Events/Community Contacts

Treasured Natural Environment Group Meeting

3pm 19 October 2016 – Marton Council Chambers

Contact Katrina Gray

katrina.gray@rangitikei.govt.nz

Bulls River Users Group Meeting

Contact Jan Harris –

bulls.community@xtra.co.nz

Tutaenui Stream Restoration Group

Contact Greg Carlyon– 021 327774

Paengaroa Road Environment Group

Contact Phyllis Leigh – 06 388 016

Hautapu Catchment Care Group

Contact Angus Gordon –

angusg@xtra.co.nz

If you have any contributions to the newsletter, any questions, or wish to subscribe please contact Katrina Gray katrina.gray@rangitikei.govt.nz
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