



Piroa-Brynderwyns Landcare (PBL) Newsletter

Recent Highlights

It been a very busy few months for the PBL community with loads of new initiatives and new projects underway. Big thanks to all those who have put in countless hours progressing our important work.

Restoration work: King/Cove Rd Reserve

On behalf of PBL, Weed Action and the Mangawhai community a massive thanks to the team who work tirelessly in the DOC reserve at the corner of King & Cove Roads.

Back in May 2020 Weed Action was looking for volunteers to help on various projects - Lew stepped forward offering to help given his passion for conservation in the area and got to work removing wattle in the reserve. Not that long after Guy saw Lew out there on his own working hard, so stopped and offered to help.



Guy, Lew and Helen onsite at King/Cove corner.

It started off as really hard physical work for the two gents, but they got on top of things and before you know it, they were on to the honeysuckle, pampas, wild blackberry and so on. Helen saw the great

progress and offered her help bringing a wealth of plant knowledge to the small team.

Every Monday the three musketeers continue their hard work. Six months ago, they introduced animal pest control (a DOC 200 trapping network) to help reduce rats, weasels and stoats in the reserve which has helped the return of the ground-nesting kōtātā (Fernbirds) and other native species.

What's next for the team...they are keen to get KDCs approval to have a local volunteer with a digger level the ground ready for planting in early winter. Mangawhai Natives has kindly offered to help with the planting efforts, so the aim is to plant the area with appropriate plants in early winter!

We have secured some more DOC200s from PBL to increase their trapping network including installing Celium monitors on the boxes to increase trap efficiency.

If you are keen to help with the planting or donate some natives for planting, please let us know - PBL and Weed Action will take any kind offers to help!

Education - working with Schools.

We recognise the importance of raising awareness and understanding among young people and involving them in conservation focused activities in our area. Their enthusiasm and passion for the natural world are encouraging.

Schools are now invited to register their interest in conservation programmes that can be delivered in school or outdoors on school camps/days out. The activities can be custom designed to spotlight local conservation stories on the shore and in the bush. PBL has been approached by some schools to work with their enviro teams and build this into our approach.



The Waipu MenzShed has been busy putting together flat-packed rat traps and these are now available for schools to set up their own traplines and bait stations. The packs are supported by an educational resource and experienced teachers can assist with designing trapping lines and bait stations. Getting creative with the curriculum means that science, technology, maths, language, art, and drama can all be linked to conservation themes.

To find out more about the conservation programme for schools, email Susan at: sdsteedman@xtra.co.nz



Kaiwaka Primary School [Enviroschools Aotearoa NZ](#)



Susan & Neville from Waipu Menzshed with rat box kits for Kaiwaka School.

Congratulations Kaiwaka School! - You are indeed a Bronze Enviroschool 🌱.

Councillor Rick Stolwerk offered his congratulations at the school's heartfelt powhiri to commemorate the environmental action led by the Kaitiaki Group.

PBL Stats

A dashboard will be published soon showing key achievements for 2021. Initial trapping results for 2021 compared to (2020) are:

- 135 stoats (134)
- 1489 rats (1548)
- 784 possums (694)

These results show that there are still plenty of predator animals out there and additional areas of active trapping and toxin deployment are working to reduce their numbers. These predators are threats to kiwi, other native birds, and insects.

In our next newsletter we will have additional stats from PBL and WAPB along with Kiwi Coast to give the broader picture of predator animals and pest plants removed in Te Tai Tokerau.



Progress at Marunui Conservation – safeguarding kiwi and their chicks

Over the past two months it's been exciting at Marunui Conservation hearing pairs of kiwi calling at night. Keeping them safe from predators on its 421ha bush-covered property is one of Marunui's main tasks and with the breeding season approaching it becomes a vital activity. Despite the difficulties caused by Covid 19 over the past two years it has been possible to undertake and complete all the predator trapping rounds, thanks to the efforts of Marunui's residents and the help of local volunteers.

Trapping has been carried out every three weeks from November to March and four-weekly from April to October using a variety of baits depending on the type of trap. The majority (120) are for catching mustelids – ferrets, stoats and weasels. These include DOC200s, DOC250s and Fenns. They also catch rats, while Trapinators and Timms traps target possums.

In 2021 the catch totalled 12 stoats, 5 weasels, 5 feral cats, 156 possums, 25 hedgehogs and 228 rats. In addition, annual baiting for rats and possums was carried out in September-October, considerably reducing the numbers of both.

So far this year 6 stoats, 3 weasels, 1 feral cat, 25 possums, 11 hedgehogs and 28 rats have been caught.

In 2021, the Ring of Steel project, which involves the servicing of mustelid traps on properties surrounding Marunui and including Hancock's Waipu Forest, caught 26 stoats, 31 weasels, 1 feral cat, 56 hedgehogs and 427 rats. Stoats are the major killer of kiwi chicks so the removal of the 44 stoats will have been key to chick survival, potentially enabling them to reach breeding age.



Cathy Hawley on her trapping rounds.

Together with weasels, stoats also predate other native birds, eggs, lizards and insects. Although no ferrets have been caught in Marunui since 2019, they present a major threat to adult kiwi, illustrated by the death of one male last year in Waipu Forest. A ferret was recently seen on a neighbouring property and extra traps were deployed.

The recent sighting at night in Marunui of a juvenile kiwi and the number of calls heard gives confidence that the combined efforts of all involved in Piroa-Brynderwyns Landcare are making a significant contribution to kiwi recovery in the Brynderwyns and surrounding areas.

Marunui welcomes new volunteers to help it maintain the levels of trapping required to protect kiwi (training and tools provided). Contact john.hawley@xtra.co.nz



John Hawley hard at work

Update from Waorahi (from Bruce Copeland)

Work carries on at Waorahi (the former Langs View subdivision) at pace. Harvesting of the 4ha of pines has finished. The north face that is now prominent from the road was very difficult particularly during a particularly wet winter. Fortunately, most of the pines on the Western face were mechanically harvested and all shipped out in January. Signage saying "Public Access is closed" has been removed and more people are riding and walking up and down our road. The house at the top is undergoing renovation so keep an eye out for more traffic than normal.

After the spring toxin pulse, traps were largely empty except for a regular reinfestation of possums of over 50 possums in our perimeter network. We were surprised with how many reinvaded and how quickly. We are currently doing an autumn pulse of toxin through our network of 430 bait stations which we hope will mop up any populations that have eluded traps and the inevitable rats.

While spending time in the South Island last year I met a professional trapper who has developed a fresh salmon lure using salmon frames from Hook in

Wanaka. We are giving them a go now and are also looking forward to spicing up our traps in winter with old straw ferret bedding and a secret weapon called "stink juice". Strange that stoats and weasels are attracted to the scent of their larger competitors. Will report back on how we go.

Summer rain has been kind to the over 2500 plants that Eden from Rural Design planted during winter. Ferocious, fast growing weeds overwhelmed many during spring but once released and weeds sprayed, they have had a terrific start in life. The mulching and spray program from a year ago is really showing great results. Native plants are taking their place and the meadow areas have looked magnificent with new kikuyu. We've been stoked that to date we haven't had much regrowth.

Steve is working hard on a massive list of large and small projects. A priority is to open more walking tracks, so people have new experiences and opportunities for walking and enjoying the amazing regenerating bush on our doorstep. We hope to have new routes open before winter.

Weed Action Piroa Brynderwyns

A big welcome to Ron Haynes who has recently graduated with a Diploma in Environmental Management from Northtec, following on from a NZ Certificate in Sustainable Primary Production, and an Agriculture NZ Organic Horticulture course through PGG Wrightson Business.

Ron is dedicated to protecting the unique native environment of New Zealand. He is now the Weed Action Piroa-Brynderwyn volunteer groups coordinator.



Ron Haynes, new WAPB Coordinator

Since moving to Waipu in 2015, Ron has never looked back. Impressed and inspired by the local community's interest in protecting and advancing public and private spaces, Ron is now an active participant in cleaning up troublesome areas in the Piroa Ranges catchment. This area includes Waipu, Lang's Beach and Mangawhai, all of which boast a natural beauty that is worth preserving.

Ron says: I personally love where I live – and want to do as much as I can to help in the eradication of pest plants and pest animals, and any work to restore the environment in general. I encourage people to take part in volunteer workdays, community events, pest plant weed management, and pest animal trapping in your local community.

Through awareness and practical solutions, we can keep our natural assets for future generations to use, admire and partake in.

We have placed several signs around the neighbourhood to raise awareness of backyard plant escapees which then threaten our native bush. The worst offender is climbing asparagus. If you see any or want to know how to deal with it be in touch at weedactionpb@gmail.com.

Marketing & Communications

We now have our Facebook, email, and website up and running which is really helping us raise awareness broader than our volunteer community.

With some advertising both on Facebook and in local newspapers we are recruiting a good number of new volunteers to help our cause. Some of you may have seen the articles in the various local publications.

Looking Forward

Dunes Clean Up April 9th 9am

Weed Action is looking for volunteers to help along with a DOC ranger Kallan Mehrtens, to tackle some pest tree lupin on the Mangawhai Spit on April 9th.

We will be meeting outside the Tern Point gated community at 9am and going through as a convoy to get out to the spit.

We will be cutting and pasting smallish trees. Chop and drop. Not too hard. Bring a small saw or loppers if you can, but some will be provided.

Some morning tea will be provided by Weed action. Back by noon - if not earlier.

Any questions call Ron Haynes 022 072 0627.

Workshops

We are keen to run more workshops for our community but given the current COVID situation we will hold off scheduling dates until it's clearer we can bring groups together. The workshops we are looking at running in coming months include:

- Know Your Dog Workshops - we are looking at 2 dates. Fill in the form and we will contact you once dates are arranged. [Here](#)
- Trapper Training - Winter workshop training and bringing in interested trappers.



- Health & Safety training for volunteers - we are looking at running a workshop of all our volunteers to help them with their H&S needs while out working.

Kiwi Listening

The Kiwi listening annual count is nearly upon us so we will shortly be sending out a notification of the dates and next steps. If you are interested in participating, drop us an email and we will get you in touch with the PBL kiwi listening team. Contact Graeme on 021 118 4816.

Formation of the Piroa Conservation Trust

PBL is currently in the process of forming a trust and becoming a fully-fledged legal identity. Becoming a legal trust will help us build strong partnerships with agencies such as DOC and NRC, as well as access further funding and community grants. These next steps are crucial for extending the scope and scale of our conservation work across the 23,000ha High Value Area.

Over the next three months there will be a formal period for nominations of inaugural trustees. If you know someone with trustee experience and passion for conservation call Peter on 021 666 779.

To align with the new trust, we will also be putting in place working groups for the key delivery areas and building the framework for stronger communications and volunteer management.

Sponsors

A huge shout out to the sponsors who have made our work possible: ITM Waipu, Northpine, Menzshed Waipu, Hammer Hardware Waipu, Wyatts Mangawhai. If you'd like to contribute as a sponsor of our conservation work, please contact Graeme on 021 118 4816.

Join us to grow our impact

We're always on the lookout for new people to help us deliver our work. Newcomers are especially welcome - it's a great way to make new friends and contacts in the community and we'd love to find a role for you.

There's plenty of variety in the work- some work is outdoors in the hills doing trapping and bait lines, some is chipping away at pest plants in local reserves or using your keyboard skills and experience for the quintessential comms.

We are especially looking for writers, social media, creative marketing and grant funding talents, teachers for our programmes in schools, event organisers and project delivery coordinators.

If you would like to volunteer, please fill in a simple form indicating what you would like to be involved in and the right team member will be in contact.

<https://forms.office.com/r/Ms8h312KhB>

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Silvery eye by Aaron Skelton