



## Piroa Brynderwyns Landcare Group Summer Newsletter

Welcome to the summer newsletter ... but for many of us it doesn't really feel like we have had a summer! Topped off with the latest storms we have faced unexpected challenges, but we hope everyone is safe.

The content in this edition is truncated due to the weather events. Much like your own homes and gardens our volunteers have faced a lot of destruction due to flooding.

Much damage has occurred to plantings, traps, trap lines, access tracks and walking tracks. Please do report on any damage that have been caused by the storms so that we can identify ways to help with repairs and reinstatement of affected areas. If you are keen to help in any way, please do let us know.

In relation to trapping: rather than just replace like for like, this seems like an ideal time to regroup on the kiwi management/trapping/baiting strategy with new technology and scientific understanding of getting the best results to help our kiwi population to breed and disperse safely across the High Value Area (HVA).

Over the coming weeks we will be rethinking and learning. With automation now available and being well used by DoC and other groups how can we best apply techniques to our work such as improving trapping routes to more efficient and effective? Are we targeting the right predator animals, improving domestic animal management and so on?

In the meantime, it's important we don't take the foot off the pedal; we must keep moving forward with many of our great programmes. We hope you find the stories in this edition informative.

### [Our Social Sciences School Curriculum for 2023](#)

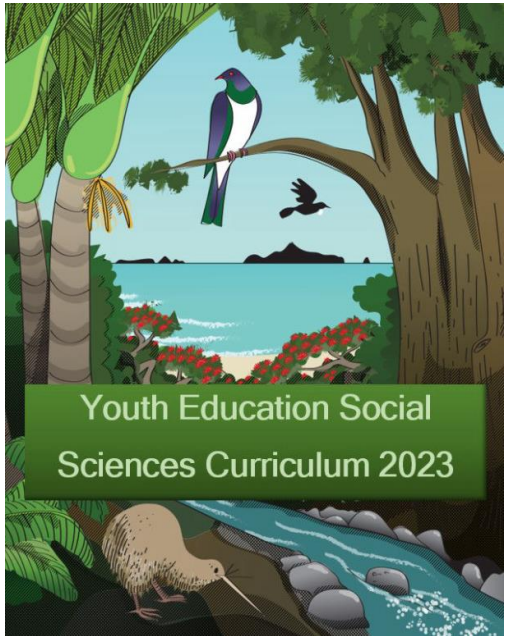
We recognise the importance of raising awareness and understanding among young people and involving them in conservation focused activities in our area. Their enthusiasm and passion for the natural world are encouraging. Our focus is on supporting teachers provide hands on / practical activities that are part of the Conservation experience for students.

In 2022 we worked with the Mangawhai Beach School and Mangawhai Nature School to establish a rat trapping programme, art activities and a shorebirds programme, and with the Waipu Surf Club Rookie Camp



where the focus was on shorebirds and dune planting as well as trapping. In 2023 we have expanded our offerings and support, and we hope to reach several more schools in term 1 and beyond.

For 2023 we have developed packages of curriculum-based activities that can be undertaken in the classroom, on the beach, in the bush and on school camps.



We have people who have taught in schools with a raft of experience working with conservation and community-based volunteer groups. We are offering their expertise in the field and their understanding of how to achieve the goals that have been set for the lesson or for the term.

All the offerings can be adapted to age levels and for species types upon request. These can be cherry picked to support what teachers are doing, or they can become a package that is developed and fitted to the learning outcomes the teacher is aiming to provide.

Feel free to access our Teachers' Hub including the overview documents and term-focused Resource ketes [HERE](#)

### [We've been thinking about our streams and beaches.](#)

Streams start in the hinterland and end up on our beaches. During recent big rain events the rivers raged; they brought down silt, trees and plant material. Thankfully, despite torrential rainfall, our hills are comparatively intact. We've still seen muddy sea water extend well offshore, as much silt has eroded from the land.

It will be interesting as the ngahere regenerates whether we see the land stabilise and we witness a decrease in the silt suspended in our streams. We're hopeful that will be the case. Anecdotally we've noticed, following intensive pest control, there are significantly more small plants in the understory. We would like to think that each tiny plant will slowly inhibit erosion and reduce silt in the rivers.

When our beaches are tempestuous families with small children should stay out of the surf and enjoy playing in the streams. The LAWA website provides an assessment of the predicted water quality of the stream at Langs.



Is the Water safe for the children? In New Zealand, the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) sets out the water quality standards for wadeable rivers.

These standards are based on measurements of certain physical and chemical parameters of the water, which are used to assess the ecological health of the river.



The current water quality standards for wadeable rivers in New Zealand are:

- *E. coli levels:* *E. coli* is a bacterium that is commonly used as an indicator of faecal contamination in water. The maximum acceptable level of *E. coli* in a wadeable river is 260 per 100ml.
- *Nitrate-nitrogen levels:* Nitrate-nitrogen is a nutrient that can promote excessive plant growth in rivers and can cause problems such as algal blooms. The maximum acceptable level of nitrate-nitrogen in a wadeable river is 6.9 mg/L.
- *Ammonia levels:* Ammonia is a nitrogen compound that can be toxic to aquatic life at high levels. The maximum acceptable level of ammonia in a wadeable river is 0.15 mg/L.
- *Dissolved oxygen levels:* Dissolved oxygen is essential for the survival of aquatic life. The minimum acceptable level of dissolved oxygen in a wadeable river is 80% saturation.

Do we want children playing in a river with wadeable water quality? E-Coli is the main factor for determining whether water is drinkable. Recently the stream was tested on Waiorahi for E-Coli levels before their first large scale toxin program. They were surprised to find that E-Coli levels were 10 times the safe level for drinking - even though the river started on our property and there is no obvious source of contamination!

They have recently retested after 18 months of very low pest numbers and were still surprised when it came in at 4 times the level for drinking and are baffled why. Maybe it's the pigs ... or maybe it just takes a while to clear? There is a lot to learn about our rivers. It would be nice to know that they are safe for children.

### Trapping News.

There's not a lot of trappy news to report due to the holiday season and the weather that has stopped most of our keen trappers from getting out doing their trapping for quite some time.



The bait freezer at the camp wasn't able to be used during the storm so it's been replaced and a new one is currently at Graeme's until power is restored to the camp - should be there by now.

Anyone wanting bait should give Graeme a call to check if he is home on 0211184816.



Some bad news for ferrets: we have 10 F-bombs now (manufactured by Rewild in Taranaki, a potential replacement for the DOC250) and will be deploying them into areas which we think are most likely to have a population of ferrets.

These new traps also take care of stoats, rats etc and are so much easier to use than a DOC250 as you don't require any tools!

### The Wairahi Tracks Trust Cyclone Gabrielle Response Team

Cyclone Gabrielle brought all sorts of problems to the Lang's Beach community, as it has elsewhere, and we are therefore very mindful of the rest of New Zealand and their tragedies.

Lang's had no power for five days, meaning no lights, and difficult cooking conditions. The torrential rain and strong winds brought down trees and slips. For a short period the road access was closed. Another problem that emerged was that the power outage caused the defrosting of deep freezers and bait fridges, with food spoiled and very smelly!

This is the team that has cleared fridges and freezers of food of several local homes (20+) during and after Cyclone Gabrielle. Whilst most of the food was good only to be dumped, they did manage to save some that was then distributed through Tame and Sharon Paki to families in the One Tree Point/Ruakaka/Marsden areas - those who are struggling to make ends meet at the moment.



Those on the image (left to right):

- Back Row: Glenn Clark, Kathryn Clark, Dawn Morrison, Richard Raines.
- Middle Row: Malcolm Morrison (with the hat), Mary Sinclair.
- Front Row: Wendy Morgan, Christine Raines.

We were supported by others such as Michelle and Kerry Finnegan (Friday).



There were others in the community who agreed to the use of their trailers and other equipment, while the staff at the Uretiti Landfill were also very flexible.

Families who have been supported have been invited to consider donating to the Wairahi Tracks Charitable Trust to assist us with the clean-up and repair of the Coastal Walkway Track (Waipu Cove to Lang's Beach) and the Lang's Beach Scenic Reserve. To date close to \$1000 has been donated which will be a huge help with that work.

### The Coastal Walkway (Waipu Cove to Lang's Beach)

The Wairahi Tracks Trust had spent considerable resources, time and effort in getting the Coastal Walkway open and ready for the Christmas season.

Now, after Cyclone Gabrielle, it is once again closed. This is disappointing.

A careful assessment of the damage is being undertaken right now. We know the Ding Bay steps, both public and private, have taken a bashing from the strong waves over the storm period.

First reports are that much of the completed work has stood up well to the onslaught of Cyclone Gabrielle, but there is large slip in one area that has caused the track to be closed.

The Lang's Beach Scenic Reserve has not fared so well. There are many trees down and our groups have a lot of tidying up to do.

### A Community partnership

A huge shoutout must go to Jesse and George of Zippy's mobile cafe.

Zippy's comes to Lang's Beach all summer long, selling coffees and fresh yoghurt ice creams.

On Sunday 5th February Jesse, in partnership with the Wairahi Tracks Charitable Trust and the Lang's Beach Dune Restoration team, organized a beach clean-up for the Lang's Beach community and offered free coffee or ice cream to all helpers.





They came from far and wide, young and old, and much was achieved.

Four teams spanned out the length of the beach with black rubbish bags and picked up all the litter from beach and roadside.

Probably the biggest scores were a blown-out tyre and a red sandal. Jesse and her team took all the rubbish to the tip. Another group set to weeding and clearing the sand dunes, while yet another group re-sanded and strengthened the walkway to the beach.

Indeed, much was achieved and we sincerely thank Jesse and George for their initiative.

Over the summer, a collection box for small change at Zippy's from sales has been donated to the Wairahi Tracks Trust - this amounted to over \$350.

A big THANK YOU!

### Mangawhai Beach School Conservation Group are off to a flying start



The students from the school Conservation Group are off to a flying start with their trapping this year.

They have caught two hedgehogs already. Though there were some comments about how cute hedgehogs are they listened carefully as they were given the low-down on what is on the menu for a hedgehog: eggs, lizards, frogs, slugs, snails, wetas and other insects. "One hedgehog was found with 283 weta legs in its stomach." (Predator Free NZ). They can eat up to 160g of invertebrates in a day.

As well as eating birds' eggs hedgehogs can eat newly-hatched chicks, so they are a threat to our ground nesting birds. To date the rat catchers from the conservation group have caught 4 rats and have plenty of time left to match the efforts of last year's Conservation Group - the 2022 total was 18 rats. Ask yourself how many native or endemic birds are eaten by one rat in a lifetime, and you can see what a difference trapping programme in schools is having.

### **WE ARE HIRING:** Catchment Coordinator- Bream Bay Community River Catchment Project

We are seeking a Catchment Coordinator to deliver an exciting new project. The goals of this short term project are to accelerate adoption of on-farm change in Bream Bay to improve freshwater and biodiversity outcomes through community-based catchment groups. Funding is provided through the Ministry for Primary Industries Essential Freshwater Project Fund till July 2025.



The successful applicant will require skills in project management and delivery, a level of Te Ao Māori understanding, community group facilitation, networking and communication skills, problem solving, an understanding of agriculture and the environment, and an outgoing personality. An affinity with the Bream Bay area and established networks with landowners, local communities, and resource management organisations will be particularly valuable.

This is a full-time, independent, contract role with flexibility recognising that some evening and weekend hours may be required by negotiation.

Job description can be found here: <https://1drv.ms/b/s!Aq7-pujYCPr3i1dKPzhUjgR-gPP?e=SgaqKD>

Interviews: Mid to late March 2023 with the contract start estimated for April 2023

Further questions: email [piroabrynderwynslandcare@outlook.com](mailto:piroabrynderwynslandcare@outlook.com) or call Ann on 027 432 1833

### **Workshops coming up.**

#### **Calling all weeders**

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April the Weed Action Waananga team and NRC will be holding a best practice sharing session for the day at Barge Park. If you are keen to join drop and email to [PiroaBrynderwynsLandcare@outlook.com](mailto:PiroaBrynderwynsLandcare@outlook.com) and we will send you the details.

### **Sponsors:**

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 - 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 it could be using your keyboard skills and experience for the essential communications. We are especially looking for teachers for our programmes in schools, as well as writers, and people with social media, creative marketing, grant funding, event organisation and project delivery coordination talents.

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

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