OHO MAI PUKETI
ISSUE 42
Summer 2018-19

2019 KAURI CHALLENGE WALK A GREAT SUCCESS!

On Saturday 26th January the Puketi Forest Trust once again put on the annual Kauri Challenge – This the fifth event – with two walk options (21km and 12km) through the ridges, valleys and riverbeds of Puketi Forest. The route follows the scenic Pukatea Ridge and Lower Waipapa River tracks, and with 102 entrants, ranging in age from 1 year to 70 plus, everyone enjoyed the activity and beautiful surrounds as they walked (or ran!). It was a good opportunity to see the Kauri die-back mitigation work that has been occurring on two of the main tracks in Puketi, which includes new metalled paths and sections of steps and walkways to protect the roots of our precious Kauri trees – still free from the scourge of the Phytophthora pathogen. Thanks to every-one who participated in the walk, to Far North Search & Rescue and all those who volunteered their time and resources to make it happen, and thanks to New World Kerikeri for the provisions at the finishing line!

(Photos: Toby Ricketts)

WWW.PUKETI.ORG.NZ

Email: info@puketi.org.nz

Phone: 09 405 0074

Post: PO Box 257, Kaeo 0448

IN THIS ISSUE:

2018 AGM

The 2018 AGM of the Trust was held on Saturday 3rd November at the Puketi Recreation Area trampers' hut. In accordance with the Trust rules, Gary Bramley stepped down as chairman having held this role for the last five years. Cherry Beaver was elected the new chairperson. Two new trustees, Toby Ricketts and Michael Winch were also elected. The trustees are now: Cherry Beaver (chairperson), Tricia Hodgson (secretary), John Dawn (treasurer), Jo Baguley, Gary Bramley (Forest & Bird rep.), Toby Ricketts, Wiremu Williams (Piki te Aroha Marae rep.), Ian Wilson, Michael Winch.

Because this meeting was earlier than usual, the audited accounts were not quite ready and a draft financial report was presented. The audited performance report is now available on the Charities Services website, www.charities.govt.nz. Search the register for 'Puketi Forest Trust' then look at Annual Returns/Financial statements. The meeting was followed by a presentation from Tertia Thurley, DOC Biodiversity Planner, on short tailed bats in Puketi and their role in pollinating dactylanthus – which you can read more about on page 5.

INTRODUCING NEW CHAIRPERSON CHERRY BEAVER

Cherry Beaver was elected to the Chairperson's role at the AGM on 3 November. Cherry has been a Trustee since 2010 and was secretary from 2011. This is her first term as Chair. Cherry runs a floristry business in Kerikeri. Her organisation skills have previously been put to great use organising the annual Kauri Challenge.

> **It is my pleasure to take over as chairperson after being a trustee and secretary for many years. We must all thank Gary for his two terms of five years and for being a founding member with 15 years' work and advocacy for the Trust.**
>
> **The coming years will bring many challenges, especially with funding. At the Trust's inception there were few other such ventures, now there are many, which is great for conservation, but it can mean funding may be spread more thinly and is often contestable.**
>
> **We value you - our members' - ongoing contributions. We also welcome any new ideas and volunteers to help continue our great work in, Awaken Puketi 'Oho Mai Puketi'.**
>
> *-Cherry Beaver*

INTRODUCING NEW TRUSTEE TOBY RICKETTS

Toby is a relatively new arrival to Northland, having moved into the area in 2013. He currently resides near Mangonui on a 2.4 hectare patch of native bush which is heavily pest-managed and home to Miromiro, Rironiro, Tui, Kiwi, and Kukupa.

Toby's key skills are in the area of media, marketing and broadcasting, having worked for major broadcasting networks in NZ, owned a recording studio in Christchurch, and produced countless videos and media for corporate clients. He currently has a very unusual occupation - working from home as a world-renowned voice over artist! He can be heard regularly on commercials and videos all over the world for brands such as BMW, Facebook, and Samsung, although he is relatively unknown in New Zealand. He brings these media skills, his youthful energy and new ideas to the trust to be part of the next generation of kaitiaki and ensure the health and wellbeing of the Puketi forest into the future.

INTRODUCING NEW TRUSTEE MICHAEL WINCH

Michael works as a civil engineer in Kerikeri. His involvement with Puketi Forest began in 1985, on a field trip with the Native Forest Action Council, when the group saw and heard the last of the original kokako. His interest in and knowledge of native plants and animals was cultivated by the scientists who led these trips.

Michael moved to the Far North in 1990 where he lived on a 100ha block of native forest at Totara North for 19 years before moving to Kerikeri. During his time in the Far North he has been active in the local Forest and Bird branch which was instrumental in setting up the Puketi Forest Trust. He was branch secretary for many years and is currently the Forest and Bird branch treasurer. Michael has carried out volunteer work for the Puketi Forest Trust regularly since its inception.

PEST CONTROL VOLUNTEERS MAKING A BIG DIFFERENCE

The trustees would like to thank all the volunteers who assisted with trapping last year. 2018 trapping records show that 22 volunteers trapped over 998 pests in Puketi Forest, Puketi Scenic Reserve and on farmland between the two forests (see table). The total is actually higher than the table shows, as it is estimated that at least half of the possums caught on P1 and P2 are completely removed from the traps by pigs and so are not counted.

Pests Trapped by Puketi Forest Trust Volunteers during 2018

Trap line	Stoat	Cat	Weasel	Ferret	Rat	Hedgehog	Possum	Mice
P1	1				7		49	
P2							49	
T7	3				47		14	4
T8	2	5			39	1	180	236
S10	12	2			86		2	
PSR	10	6			56	3	127	1
Farmland	2	7	1		13	5	27	1
Total	**30**	**20**	**1**	**0**	**248**	**9**	**448**	**242**

The time and effort supporters put in to servicing the traps are greatly appreciated. At times some of the lines are hard going and physically demanding but most of the volunteers have been supporting the pest control effort for a number of years and enjoy the challenge and/or realise the value of their contribution.

Possum lines P1 and P2 were put in to remove sedentary possums that may not move as far as the possum traps on stoat line S2, but would produce offspring likely to move out and reinvade nearby areas with low possum numbers. This seems to be working as we were catching 40-50 possums a month on S2 but in the past 18 months the number caught has reached double figures only twice. S2 runs through an area that had good numbers of kokako in the 1980s before they died out. It is hoped offspring from the kokako the Trust has reintroduced will spread into that area again before too long.

T8 runs along part of the southern edge of Puketi Forest where it meets farmland. It is serviced every day by Jill Mortensen. Line T7 runs near the Waihoanga stream 100 metres below T8 and is serviced every four weeks by other volunteers. The area these two lines run through traditionally had high numbers of possums as well as goats and pigs. Several thousand possums have been caught on these two lines, the majority on T8 with its more frequent servicing and the fact that they are the first traps a possum encounters as it attempts to reinvade the forest.

Over the past two or three years Trust supporters have shot 30 goats in the vicinity of T7 and T8, in addition to those removed by cullers contracted by DOC. When trapping in this area started in 2010 the only kohekohe we saw were old trees near the stream and one small sapling on T8. That sapling is now a small tree and there are thousands of young saplings all through the area. There are also many other species making a comeback, including other possum palatable plants such as titoki. In 2017 progress along the trap-line was becoming hampered by the re-growth and a group of volunteers spent a day re-cutting the lines.

Volunteers walking a trap line (photo: John Dawn)

A new trapping roster is being drawn up for 2019. If you are not currently involved with pest control and would like to help, please get in touch with Ian Wilson (phone: 09 4019056 / email: ianwilson.puketi@gmail.com) or one of the other trustees. There are lines that suit all levels of fitness and previous trapping experience is not necessary as we can pair you up with an experienced volunteer trapper.

HEALTHY FOREST, HEALTHY YOU

As a member of the Puketi Forest Trust you already know that your membership supports the health of Puketi Forest. Have you considered how being a member supports YOUR health? The Mental Health Foundation promotes five factors that facilitate wellbeing; exercise, relationships, time in nature, giving back and learning new things.

Exercise –Tramping or walking trap lines on varied terrain is a great way to keep fit. Events like the annual Kauri Challenge are good exercise too.

Relationships – Members can connect with like-minded people while tramping or volunteering in the forest. Lunch stops and rest breaks in the peaceful forest allow for great conversation.

Time in Nature – Wandering through eye-catching varied natural landscapes is a great antidote to stress. Henry Thoreau wrote "We need the tonic of wilderness. We can never have enough of nature".

Giving back – Charity promotes self-esteem and gratitude. Puketi is our legacy.

Learning – There are always new and interesting things to see and learn in a complex ecosystem like Puketi.

We hope you get the most from your time in Puketi! *Louise Wilson*

REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Spring and summer have seen a large range of work taking place in Puketi-Omahuta.

Contractors have nearly completed the Kauri Dieback track mitigation work on the Pukatea Ridge track and the Lower Waipapa River track. These tracks and the associated sections of the Te Araroa should reopen early in March. Numbers walking the Te Araroa are up again this season with walkers having been diverted around the outside of the forest via Jacksons, Mokau Ridge and Waiare Roads while the work has been in progress. Hana Harris has been working as a summer ranger at the Puketi campground where there have been less campers than last year but more day visitors. The board walk through the kauri grove at Manginangina has been particularly busy and many people have been cooling themselves in the Waipapa River at Forest Pools.

The Waihoanga Gorge Bridge has been deemed unsafe for general use but is being kept open to provide access for the trust's trappers and volunteers, with a load limit of one person at a time. The Bay of Islands office has submitted a Biodiversity Capital Expenditure Bid to get approval to replace the old Waihoanga Bridge to enable safe and efficient access for biodiversity management. Consultation is continuing around the possible closure of tracks in the forest to mitigate the threat of Kauri Dieback.

The Biodiversity team has been very busy. December saw the team catching and transmitterising short tailed bats in Omahuta, and tracking them from both the ground and the air. Two roost trees were located as a result of this work and further monitoring continued in January, with recorders placed through the forest to obtain further detail on the distribution of bats. November saw weed control in the main Waipapa River and in January the Whakateterekia and Mangapa streams were treated. Further KD sampling was also carried out and the remaining few sites identified from aerial survey should be checked by the end of March. The kauri dieback pathogen has not been detected in any samples from Puketi so far. Goat contractors have also been operating, targeting goats in their usual haunts.

Upcoming work includes putting transmitters on kiwi, Dactylanthus monitoring, and translocating tradescandia beetles, for bio-control of the invasive ground cover *Tradescantia fluminensis* which is found in the main river system downstream from Mangapa.

In the community sphere, work is mostly centred around Kauri Dieback. The Department, Trust, Piki te Aroha Marae committee and other members of the community are working to develop a comprehensive plan to manage the risk of Kauri Dieback to Puketi-Omahuta Forest. The plan will address issues such as signage, how to involve pig hunters and other forest visitors especially those who have possibly been in nearby infected areas, biosecurity measures, and general advocacy and education.

DACTYLANTHUS IN PUKETI

Female dactylanthus flower

Dactylanthus taylorii (pua o te reinga, or woodrose) is one weird plant! It is one of New Zealand's few fully parasitic flowering plants, has no leaves and is the southernmost member of its mainly tropical family. Its Maori name (flower of the underworld) comes from the way its flowers emerge directly from the soil without stems or leaves. The other common name, woodrose, refers to the structure that the root of the host tree forms at the point of attachment. In response to dactylanthus parasitism the host root moulds into a fluted wooden structure resembling a flower such as those in the photo below. Dactylanthus draws all its water and nutrients from the host tree through this placenta-like attachment. About 30 species of hardwood tree common in regenerating forest are parasitised, including broadleaf, five-finger and kohuhu. It prefers damp but well drained places and has been found from sea level to 1200m.

Dactylanthus occurs from Northland (Puketi is the northern most record) down to the Wairarapa. It was historically recorded in the Kahurangi National Park area of northern South Island, but it is most common now in the central North Island and East Cape areas.

Dactylanthus has a conservation threat ranking of "threatened (nationally vulnerable)". The earliest threat to this unusual plant was collectors, who collected them for their curiosity value and used the wooden roses as ornaments. More recent threats include habitat destruction, browsing animals such as possums, rats and pigs, and cattle which destroy plants through trampling.

Dactylanthus has separate male and female plants. The flowers are strongly scented and produce copious nectar, which brings animals (including pests) from far and wide in the forest, but the only confirmed pollinator is the native short-tailed bat which scurries amongst the flowers and gets coated in pollen. Decline in numbers of short-tailed bats may have contributed to the decline in dactylanthus. Pureora Forest in the central North Island is the only forest where the ecological connection between plant and pollinator is known to be secure. Many plants at Puketi are protected by cages to exclude possums and pigs, but not rats or bats. It is impossible to count the number of dactylanthus plants because only the flowers emerge above the soil. Locations are not publicised, to discourage collecting (which is illegal).

You will have read in our recent newsletters, or heard at the AGM, about the bat surveys undertaken in Puketi. Both short and long-tailed bats live at Puketi. Unhelpfully, the area known to have short-tailed bats is not the same as the area where dactylanthus occurs!

In the interests of protecting dactylanthus at Puketi, Tertia Thurley in her talk to the AGM suggested a survey of Puketi dactylanthus to confirm when they flower (sometime between January and May, usually later in that period) and that bat detectors be put out to confirm whether short-tailed bats visit them. If there is no bat activity the flowers could be hand pollinated. Pollinated flowers produce large amounts of seed and dactylanthus has been successfully translocated by sowing seed around suitable host trees. The security of Puketi dactylanthus could be increased by establishing new colonies in places with greater short-tailed bat activity, restoring that ecological process of pollination. This might include the Trust's core management area, where they would be protected from possums and rats.

If you are interested in participating in this work during 2019 please contact one of the trustees.

Wood roses formed on host roots. (Photos from DOC website)

OUT-GOING CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

Gary Bramley presented his last annual report as chairman to the AGM in November. This is an abridged and updated version of his report.

This is my last report as Chairman, my fifth in recent years and my tenth overall. Our constitution requires that I step down, but I will continue to serve as a trustee for the foreseeable future. Since we formed the trust in 2003 the conservation landscape has transformed. In 2003 there were no other private groups in Northland working to protect biodiversity. Although we are still one of the largest, there are now hundreds of such groups throughout the North. This is a good thing, but it does mean substantially more competition for funds and attention, and it is easy to get lost in the crowd. This will be an ongoing challenge and demonstrates clearly why we need our capital fund. We are one of the few groups I know of that has given strategic attention to long term funding and of all the groups I have seen and worked with, I think we are one of the best placed with respect to achieving that elusive goal of sustainable funding – our model of sponsorship covers a good proportion of our operating expenses, and by having the capital fund and involving the Northland Foundation we have made significant steps towards protecting our future income. This is not to say that we can rest easy, our sponsorship model is only around 1/3 subscribed and our capital fund is still less than 20% of what it needs to be, but few other groups have taken these steps and there are no meaningful examples in New Zealand of what a financially independent community conservation group looks like, so we are making our own path in that respect.

Last year, for the first time in many years, the Department of Conservation carried out aerial 1080 drops in Northland. As expected this was controversial and there was a lot of public attention focussed on the decline of biodiversity in Northland. This has yet to result in any meaningful long term solutions, but may in time. These activities also directed attention at the Trust and our trapping regime. In the last newsletter we asked members to share their opinions on the use of 1080 with the trustees. One member responded that we shouldn't base our decisions on a "popularity contest", rather that we should follow the science and best practice. I can reassure you all that we are not basing our opinion solely on the numbers of supporters or detractors of 1080 within our membership, but we are mindful that if we were to support 1080 we may risk losing or alienating some financial members and the degree to which that might occur is one of many things to be weighed up in our decision making process. The feedback was mixed, with a majority in support of the use of 1080, but a significant proportion opposed. There is no current proposal to use 1080 in Puketi, but we are aware of what our members think about the issue and will bear that in mind if we are asked to give an opinion in future.

Kauri dieback has still not been confirmed at Puketi, but the spread of kauri dieback in Northland is continuing. We have long advocated for a management plan to keep dieback out of Puketi, and at last we appear to be moving in the right direction. The trustees are working on this with the Department of Conservation, Piki Te Aroha Marae and others, and we hope to make good progress this year.

We are still awaiting a decision from the Department of Conservation on replacement of the Waihoanga Bridge and kauri dieback mitigation work on the Waihoanga Track, so that access to the Trust's main area of restoration work can remain open. Local staff are supportive, but the Department's financial controllers have yet to release funds.

Last financial year the Trust had a shortfall of approximately $30,000 in operating funds, which was absorbed from reserves. Repeated shortfalls in funding cannot be sustained indefinitely. The Trust received a grant from the DOC Community Fund in 2014-2017, but our last application in 2017 was not successful. Apparently there were $28 million worth of applications but only $4.15 million was available. This reflects the increase in community conservation work, which is not matched by an increase in available funding. The trustees will apply again to the DOC Community Fund this year.

The Department of Conservation has stepped away from funding some of the pest control work it was doing in Puketi (three-yearly possum control in key areas, trap lines near the headquarters, and the Weedbusters work). The Trust will pick up some of the trap lines and the Weedbusters volunteers will continue under the auspices of the Trust, but it is disappointing that the Department has not directed funding to these activities. We hope that funding will be restored in future budgets.

The Trust continues to receive valuable support from Foundation North, Kiwis for kiwi, and Trust members who contribute their time and money regularly to support Trust activities. I extend grateful thanks to them and to the Oxford Sports Trust and Far North District Council who also provided grants during the last year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

The Trust extends grateful thanks to the following organisations for their valued support:

Foundation North	Kiwis for kiwi	DOC Bay of Islands Office
Kerikeri Shade House Volunteers		Tiny Mighty Power
Far North Search and Rescue	New World, Kerikeri	NZ Trackworks Ltd

TINY MIGHTY POWER SPONSORSHIP

Tiny Mighty Power entered the electricity supply market in 2014 with a promotional sponsorship scheme supporting local charities. New customers signing up could nominate a charity, which then received donations annually from Tiny Mighty Power as long as the account remained open. Puketi Forest Trust enrolled as one of charities available for nomination, and several Trust supporters switched to Tiny Mighty Power. Tiny Mighty Power was re-absorbed into its parent company, Mercury Energy, in late 2018 and the sponsorship scheme closed. Over the period of the scheme, Tiny Mighty Power donated $2,650 to the Trust. Many thanks to Tiny Mighty Power and to their customers who nominated the Trust to receive the donations.

PUKETI ENDOWMENT FUND UPDATE

The Kerikeri Shade House Volunteers have made another significant contribution to the endowment fund from surplus income generated by their native plants production. The Shade House Volunteers have made donations every year since the endowment fund (capital fund) was launched in March 2008, totalling $30,500 to date. The fund has also received three bequests and 65 individual donations. Based on the 31 December 2018 valuation of the investment portfolio held by Northland Foundation, the fund has now reached $203,000, including accrued interest and unrealised capital gains.

KIWI LISTENING 2019

Kiwi populations throughout the country are monitored by systematic listening every year in May – July during designated periods when there is little or no moonlight. This year's official listening period hasn't been announced yet, but it's expected to be about 22 May – 10 June, with back up 20 June – 9 July. Trust volunteers monitor 12 or 13 sites every year. If you took part last year you will be contacted nearer the time. If you haven't done it before but would like to, your help will be greatly appreciated. You don't need to know what kiwi sound like as we have training nights at the start of the listening period. You do need good hearing and warm clothes. Each site is monitored for the first two hours of darkness over four nights. Fine nights with little wind are chosen within the designated period. For further information contact Ian Wilson, (09) 4019056 or email ianwilson.puketi@gmail.com.

EGG CARTONS WANTED

During the winter we use eggs for bait in the stoat traps. As you can imagine, carrying 100 or more eggs through the bush is a bit of an exercise. The eggs are bought in bulk trays and the trappers like to pack them into egg cartons to keep them safe. The cartons don't last long, especially on wet days, so we need quite a few. We had a great response to previous requests for egg cartons and accumulated a good supply, but these are now almost used up and we need some more. If you have old egg cartons that can be reused by the trappers, we would be grateful to receive them. They can be dropped at Cherry Blossom Florist in Kerikeri or at Ian and June Wilson's house at 635 Puketi Road.

PUKETI FOREST TRUST

Sponsorship Form

There are several ways you can donate to support the restoration of Puketi Forest.
Please choose the method most convenient for you.

1. **By Mail**: Complete this form and send with a cheque or credit card details to
   The Puketi Forest Trust, PO Box 257, Kaeo 0448, New Zealand.
2. **By Direct Credit**: Puketi Forest Trust, Account No 03-0351-0165464-000 (Westpac, Kerikeri)
   Please advise payment details by posting this form to the address above or email to info@puketi.org.nz.
3. **By credit card or PayPal account through the web site**: www.puketi.org.nz/donate.html
   (payments are processed through the secure PayPal system).

Name ……..……

Address…….....

……..……....

Email: …… Phone:……..……..……

I would prefer to receive newsletters by *email / post* (select one).

I wish to:

Sponsor _____ hectares for _____ years	@$50 each	$_____
Sponsor _____ kilometres of track @ $1000 per km		$_____
Donate _____ rat traps @ $10 each		$_____
Donate _____ stoat traps @ $20 each		$_____
Donate _____ feral cat traps @ $25 each		$_____
Contribute to the Endowment Fund (minimum of $1000)		$_____
	Total Donation	**$_____**

Payment method: **Cheque** (payable to Puketi Forest Trust) ☐.

or: **Credit Card**. (*Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover*)

Credit card number: _____/_____/_____/_____ Expiry: _____/_____

Name on card: _____ Card verification No (CSC): _____

or: **Direct Credit** payment date: _____ payer account name: _____

If this is a gift for a friend, please enter their details below. Your friend will receive a certificate and Puketi Forest Trust newsletters. The receipt will be sent to you at the above address.

Name. ……..……..……..……

Address. ……...……

……..……

Message to appear on their certificate: ……

……..……..

Puketi Forest Trust is a registered charity. Your donation will qualify for a tax credit.

Thank you for your support