

## Chairperson's Annual Report 2010

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

2009-2010 has been another busy and exciting year of building on the successes of the previous years, with the added bonus of a major grant from the Ministry for the Environment. This has enabled Friends of Oakley Creek to pay me as full-time project manager for 12 months from July - and this has meant the project has been able to progress and expand at a much greater pace, as it would otherwise have been able to.

For the 2009 planting season we put 4286 plants into the ground – up from 3744 the previous year. This brings us to an overall total of plants along Oakley Creek since our group was established in late 2004 to 29,533. Plantings were undertaken by the local community on our regular monthly days, together with a number of other plantings with groups/organisations from the wider community including:

- Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre
- Mt Roskill Intermediate
- St Judes Scouts
- Kodesh Christian Community
- Mason Clinic Tane Whakapiripiri Unit
- Conservation Volunteers New Zealand
- Sustainable Business Network
- Te Ngahere (ACC Contractors)
- And students from schools such as St Peters – undertaking their 'community service'.

We had the regular, monthly weeding/maintenance/plant releasing sessions over the summer and autumn months, and another successful community clean-up, organised in conjunction with David Bowden, Auckland City Parks Volunteer Co-ordinator - with a considerable amount of rubbish being taken out, including what seems to be a never ending stock of old tyres and supermarket trolleys. Waterview Primary School participated in a clean-up activity during National Clean-Up Week.

Under the expertise and guidance of committee member, Alicia Warren, and with funding and support from Auckland City and the ARC, we are into our second year of our monitoring and pest control programme, which gives the community the opportunity to be involved in another dimension to our restoration project.

Subsequent to the archaeological report being produced last year – which identifies *'The Oakley Creek environs, particularly from its mouth through to New North Road, as likely to be the most significant archaeological landscape .. as defined by a creek catchment ... within the Auckland City isthmus.'* - the Historic Places Trust has issued an Authority to Modify, to further protect the heritage of Oakley Creek.

The Oakley Creek Wai Care groups have continued water testing along the creek including the Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre, St Judes Scouts and Mt Roskill Intermediate. And, more recently, members of the Kodesh Christian Community

and Auckland A Rocha group have been trained and are carrying out water testing on a regular basis in the creek adjacent to their property.

Eco-sourced native plants are being grown for planting along Oakley Creek by the Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre 'garden group', under the guidance of Karen Mann; and by Sean Carroll's students at Mt Roskill Intermediate.

We participated in Auckland City's Heritage Festival again in September 2009 – with a guided tour of the Oakley Creek Walkway – that, according to one participant, was '*the best guided walk she has ever been on*'. And we will be participating in the festival again this year [*September, 2010*].

And, we undertook a guided walk for the Auckland Botanical Society, which resulted in the production of a complete plant species list of the lower catchment area; and an article in their journal.

The two SLIPs proposals that we submitted to the Council two years ago, have progressed further, with a concept design for the waterfall upgrade completed and scoping for the next stage on the agenda; and the signage well underway.

We have continued to work closely with the different contractors including – Te Ngahere, Envirotech, City Parks and Metrowater and their contractors – All Drains, which is crucial to ensure we are all working together to the same end.

The continued efforts of groups such as Conservation Volunteers NZ (CVNZ) has been a great help in keeping up with the work that needs doing. And we had teams from the Corrections Department working on-site one day a week over the summer months.

We have continued with our outreach, to further raise awareness of our taonga and its importance through a variety of avenues, which included our excellent newsletter by committee member Adrienne Stanton; and our website and a set of new display posters – thanks to committee member, Heather Docherty. We had displays at events such as the annual Wai Care Expo, local libraries on World Water Day, and at an Orienteering event through Unitec and the Oakley Creek Walkway. And we have taken every opportunity to publicise our activities through the local media, and on various websites, including the ARC Eco-Events.

With regards to the looming State Highway extension through our area, much time and energy has gone into keeping abreast of this, working with the wider community to advocate for appropriate levels of consultation from both NZTA and Auckland City Council. And Heather has kindly offered to co-ordinate our submission on the motorway.

Funding – again, we would like to thank David Bowden for his wonderful, continued support, and both the Avondale and Eden/ Albert Community Boards for the funding for site preparation and plants.

Much time and energy has gone into the co-ordination of activities, with networking, outreach, liaison with other stakeholders e.g. Auckland City Council, Metrowater and Unitec, responding to enquiries and expressions of interest from a wide variety of community organisations and individuals – including the Kodesh Christian Community and Auckland A Rocha; tertiary students – undertaking a variety of projects and research, including Rosemary Phillips, doing research on fresh water mussels in Auckland urban streams, and Te Whare Wananga o

Awanuiarangi students who are undertaking a degree in environmental studies.

And, an update on some of the statistics since we started our project:

- Plantings: 2004 – 2, 2005 – 11, 2006 – 13, 2007 – 14, 2008 – 5, and 2009 - 10.
- Plants in the ground: 2004 – 200, 2005 – 4640, 2006 – 6165, 2007 – 4350, 2008 – 3744, and 2009 – 4286; plus extra plantings by Metrowater give us a total number plants to-date of around 29,533.

So, I would say that, all in all, it has been another busy and productive year – on the creek; and it has been wonderful to be a part of this.

I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to the following people for their wonderful support and encouragement:

- David Bowden, Auckland City Parks Volunteer Co-ordinator
- Metrowater & Contractors - Philip Johansen, Emma Comrie-Thompson and Phil & Aaron Cooksley (All Drains)
- Taryn Pierce, our local Wai Care co-ordinator; and Melissa Marler, her predecessor
- Karen Mann and her team, from the Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre
- St Judes Scouts venturers, for their contribution to the reduction of pests along the creek
- John, Lynne, Rowena, Jett, Tom & Prabhir – Unitec Biodiversity students and their ‘supporters’ – for their regular assistance with the monitoring and pest control
- Cindy, Samantha and Lucky and the ‘maintenance team’ at Te Ngahere
- Unitec – for the use of Oakridge House for our meetings and the use of some nursery space
- Our regular volunteers – including Margaret, Tony Tracey, and the wider community for their support, enthusiasm and efforts to assist in growing our vision for Oakley Creek.

And, I would like to say a special thank you to our Committee Members – Ross Ihaka, Dorothy Maddock, Alicia Warren, Adrienne Stanton, Richard Nightingale and Heather Docherty – and the great work they have done – and continue to do.

And, as always, there is still much work to be done, including future planning, encouraging more community support and involvement, and continuing to advocate for the creek, and we hope you will continue to be involved in our project.

Nga mihi nui,  
Wendy John,  
Chairperson  
21<sup>st</sup> June, 2010