

Chairperson's Annual Report 2011

Tena koutou katoa.

2010-2011 has been another busy and exciting year of building on the successes of the previous years. Funding from the Ministry for the Environment, the World Wildlife Fund for Nature and the ASB Community Trust has enabled Friends of Oakley Creek to continue to pay a part-time project manager for the year. This has meant the project has had stability, and has been able to progress and expand.

For the 2010 planting season we put 4795 plants put into the ground – slightly up from 4286 the previous year. This brings us to an overall total of plants along Oakley Creek since our group was established in late 2004 to 34,328. Plantings were undertaken by the local community on our regular monthly Sundays, as well as a number of other groups/organisations from the wider community including:

- Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre
- Gladstone Primary School
- Mt Roskill Intermediate
- St Judes Scouts
- Kodesh Christian Community & A Rocha
- Conservation Volunteers New Zealand – Local & International Teams
- And St Peters students and Waikowhai Scouts – undertaking their 'community service' hours

We held the regular, monthly weeding / plant releasing sessions over the summer months, and another successful community clean-up, organised in conjunction with David Bowden, Auckland Council 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. Anne Duncan Real Estate and the Ministry for the Environment staff participated in clean-ups on the creek during Keep New Zealand Beautiful National Clean-Up Week.

Under the guidance and expertise of committee member, Alicia Warren, we are now into the third year of our monitoring and pest control programme, with rat and possum numbers well down. This programme adds another dimension to our restoration project and gives the community the opportunity to be involved in a range of different activities.

We continue to work in close collaboration with Wai Care to educate school students and the community on the importance of protecting our stream; and the Oakley Creek Wai Care groups have continued water testing along the creek including the Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre, St Judes Scouts and the Kodesh Christian Community.

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

The two SLIPs proposals that we submitted to the Council three years ago, have progressed further, with most of the signage in place, and work on the upgrade of the waterfall will commence in the spring – thanks to funding from the old Avondale Community Board.

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

The efforts of groups such as Conservation Volunteers NZ (CVNZ) have been a great help in keeping up with work that needs doing. And we had Corrections Department teams working 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, including our excellent newsletter produced by committee member Adrienne Stanton. We had displays at events such as the annual Wai Care Expo. For the second year in a row we organised a shared stall with Auckland City and Wai Care at the Wesley Xmas Market. We organised another successful guided tour of the creek in Auckland City's Heritage Festival in September 2010. And we have taken every opportunity to publicise our activities through the local media, and on various websites, including the ARC Eco-Events.

We have had a busy year with submissions and hearings for the Waterview Connection State Highway 20 extension through our catchment. For this, I would like to say a special 'thank you' to Heather Docherty for all of her excellent efforts on preparing our submission and evidence, and 'running our case' during the extensive hearings with the Board of Inquiry. While there is no getting away from the fact that this 'beast' is still a motorway, with the support of a number of experts we feel we made some considerable gains for the creek. However, we will need to remain vigilant from here on. Heather will report further on this.

Further to funding from the MfE, WWF and ASB, we received funding from the Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS) and the old Eden/ Albert Community Board. My thanks to Helen Mellsope for all of the work she has put into funding applications. Funding and support came from, what were, the Auckland City Council and the Auckland Regional Council for our monitoring and pest control programme. Our 'gift a tree' fundraiser contributed to more plants for the creek.

Much time and energy has gone into the co-ordination of activities, networking, outreach, liaison with other stakeholders and interested parties e.g. Auckland Council, Local Boards, Metrowater and Unitec; into responding to enquiries and expressions of interest from a wide variety of community organisations and individuals – including the Kodesh Christian Community, Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi and Auckland A Rocha; and into supporting tertiary students – undertaking a variety of research projects.

So, I would say that, all in all, the 2010-2011 year 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, but not exclusive list of people for their wonderful support and encouragement:

- David Bowden, Auckland Council Parks Volunteer Co-ordinator
- Taryn Pearce, our local Wai Care co-ordinator; and Celene Conn, both from Morphum Environment

- 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 and Jett – Unitec Biodiversity students and their ‘supporters’ – for their continued assistance with the monitoring and pest control – even after they had graduated
- Metrowater & Contractors - Philip Johansen, Phil & Aaron Cooksley (All Drains) and Downer Construction
- The Te Ngahere ‘maintenance team’ for their work to keep the weeds at bay, and for contributing another planting
- Unitec – for the use of Oakridge House for our meetings and nursery space
- Manukau Institute of Technology – for the use of some of their resources at the Unitec campus horticultural facilities
- Our regular volunteers – including Margaret, John, Melanie, Jane, Toby, Ruairi 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 all of our Committee Members – Adrienne Stanton, Alicia Warren, Dorothy Maddock, Heather Docherty, Helen Mellsop, Richard Nightingale and Ross Ihaka, for the great work they have done – and continue to do.

And, as always, there is still lots of work to be done, including 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
20th June, 2011