

## **Chairperson's Annual Report 2014**

Tena koutou katoa

2013-2014 has been another busy and productive year, with lots happening, and the project has grown from strength to strength. Funding from the Ministry for the Environment, the ASB Community Trust and The Trusts Community Fund has been crucial for ensuring the sustainability of the project.

In the 2013 planting season 6459 plants went into the ground. This brings us to an overall total since 2004 to 53,324. Plantings were undertaken on our regular monthly Sundays, with the support of the local community; as well as other plantings with participation of a number of community organisations, educational institutions and business organisations from the wider community including:

- Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre
- Gladstone Primary School
- Mt Roskill Intermediate
- May Road School
- Collectively Kids Early Childhood Centre
- St Judes Scouts
- Waikowhai Scouts
- Auckland A Rocha & Haven (Kodesh) Christian Community
- Conservation Volunteers – Local & International Teams
- Open Polytechnic
- Manukau Institute of Technology
- St Peters College
- BNZ
- Chorus
- Telecom
- Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation
- And more

And, again, it was great to be involved in the continued planting on the Wairaka Stream, in Unitec, as part of the restoration of this key tributary of Oakley Creek.

We continued to hold monthly working bees over the summer months, and organised another successful community clean-up, in conjunction with Auckland Council – an activity that always attracts a good number of people.

We are now into the sixth year of our monitoring and pest control programme, with rat and possum numbers well down – but work is ongoing, to ensure numbers stay down, and to continue to reduce the hedgehog and mice populations (more on this later). The programme adds another dimension to our project and gives volunteers the opportunity to be involved in and understand the complexities of restoring an ecosystem.

Monitoring of the lizards in the Lizard Management Area resulted, again, in us seeing baby Copper Skinks, which means they are breeding successfully.

We continued to monitor for inanga spawning around the 'salt water wedge' area of the creek in spring and autumn, but, to-date, there are no signs of actual spawning activity.

Our water quality monitoring teams - the Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre 'garden group', Eileen Witt at the St Judes Scouts site, Jeff Lang at Cradock Street Bridge, and Jagjeeta and Guntaas Kaur, at the Unitec Bridge, continue with their 3-monthly monitoring, with support from Wai Care. Gladstone Primary School students and Collectively Kids Early Childhood Education Centre children have also participated in sessions. And, a special congratulations to Collectively Kids for winning a Wai Care prize, based on their involvement on Oakley Creek.

We continue to grow eco-sourced native plants in our nursery, for planting along the creek, thanks to the efforts of the Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre team, Mt Roskill Intermediate science students, Open Polytechnic students and Conservation Volunteers.

We have continued to collaborate with the different contractors including Te Ngahere, Envirotech, City Parks Services, Downer and consultants Morphum Environmental, which is crucial to ensure we are all working together to the same end.

The efforts of teams from Conservation Volunteers (CV) have been a great help in keeping up with work that needs doing – including planting and weed control.

We have continued with our outreach, to further raise awareness of the creek and its importance through a variety of avenues, including our excellent newsletter produced by committee member Adrienne Stanton, and our website – maintained by Kim Maree. We organised another successful guided tour of the creek in Auckland City's Heritage Festival, and a guided walk, as part of the EcoMatters EcoWest Festival earlier this year.

With regards to the State Highway 20 / Waterview Connection and SH16 / Causeway Upgrade, we continue to be involved in the Community Liaison Groups.

Further to funding from the Ministry for the Environment, ASB and The Trusts Community Fund, we received funding from the Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS), and Lottery Grants. My thanks to Helen Mellsop for all of the wonderful work she has put into fundraising.

Funding, resourcing and support has also come from the Auckland Council, Albert Eden Local Board and the Puketapapa Local Board, including for site preparation, weed control, plants, monitoring and pest control, and nursery supplies. And, again with funding from the Albert Eden Local Board, work has seen continued weed control in the 'Remnant Mahoe Rock Forest'.

Also, the Puketapapa Local Board is working hard to restore sections of the creek in their ward. This includes the Molley Green Reserve wetland and Freeland Reserve.

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, contractors, Unitec; into responding to enquiries and expressions of interest from a wide variety of community organisations and individuals – including the Haven (Kodesh) Christian Community, Auckland A Rocha, MIT and Open Polytechnic; and supporting students – undertaking a variety of assignments and research projects.

So, all in all, 2013-2014 has been another busy and productive year on the creek.

I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to the following, but not exclusive list

of people and organisations for their wonderful support and encouragement:

- Sarah Peters, Auckland Council Parks Volunteer and Biodiversity Co-ordinator
- John Dwyer, John Maskell, John Stevenson, Jane Shand and Per Nielsen – for their contribution to the monitoring and pest control; and Alicia Warren for her continued support and advice.
- Dorothy Maddock, for the work she is doing to maintain an area in Alan Wood Reserve.
- Kath Read and Kate McPherson, our local Wai Care co-ordinators.
- Karen Mann and her team, from the Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre.
- Sean Carroll and the students from Mt Roskill Intermediate for the great work they are doing to restore and grow native plants for the creek.
- St Judes Scouts venturers, for their contribution to the reduction of pests, the 'scouts' for continuing to restore a section of the creek adjacent to their 'den'.
- Te Ngahere for their work on site preparation and weed control, and for undertaking another planting.
- Manukau Institute of Technology – for the use of the nursery and propagation facilities.
- Our 'weedbusters' team – Jean Barton, Keith Ayton, David Smith, for the great work they do on removing some of our nastier weeds.
- Bruce Edwards and David Stejskal, Auckland Council, for organising tree removal and extra weed control.
- Brent Druskovich, our 'resident archaeologist'.
- The Well Connected Alliance – for their continued support for our project, including help to publicise our events, monitor the Lizard Management Area, and recruit volunteers for some of our activities.
- Our volunteers – including Margaret McConnell, John Allen 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, Helen Mellsop, Ross Ihaka, Kim Maree, Jane Shand and, more recently, John Stevenson, for the great work they have done – and continue to do. And, a special thanks to Heather Docherty and Nigel Mather, who have had to step down due to other commitments.

And, as you will know, this is a 'work in progress' and there is still lots more 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 and support the project in the coming year.

Many thanks.

Wendy John  
Chairperson  
25.6.2014