

## **Chairperson's Annual Report 2016**

Tena koutou katoa

2015-2016 has been yet another busy and productive year, with so many different things happening, and a total of 4051 volunteer hours (that we know of).

In the 2015 planting season we planted 6056 plants, bringing us to an overall total since 2004 to 66,246. Planting was undertaken by members of the local community; as well as a wide range of community organisations, educational institutions and business organisations including:

- Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre
- Mt Roskill Intermediate
- Collectively Kids Early Childhood Centre
- St Judes Scouts
- Auckland A Rocha & Haven (Kodesh) Christian Community / Cradock Street Sustainable Neighbourhood
- Powell Street Sustainable Neighbourhood
- Conservation Volunteers – Local & International Teams
- Auckland International College
- Open Polytechnic
- Manukau Institute of Technology
- Students undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh Awards community service hours
- And more

We continued to hold regular, monthly working bees, and organised another successful annual clean up, in conjunction with Auckland Council and the Waterview Community – removing around 9 cubic meters from the tidal area of the creek in Waterview. Weekly weeding sessions over the summer / autumn months by a small group of dedicated volunteers, saw us take out a minimum of 250 black rubbish bags of bindweed – a problem weed that gets little attention from contractors.

Our monitoring and pest control programme continues – thanks to the commitment of the various teams. Trapping catch numbers are down.

Monitoring of the lizards in the Lizard Management Area resulted, again, in the sighting of a number of Copper Skinks, which means the population is, at least, maintaining. And, a further 22 were translocated from the rail corridor, prior to the commencement of the construction of the new shared. Also, weta numbers are looking good throughout the reserve.

Our water quality monitoring teams - the Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre 'garden group', Eileen Witt at the St Judes Scouts site, and Jagjeeta and Guntaas Kaur, at the Unitec Bridge, continue with their quarterly monitoring, with support from Wai Care. And, Rachel Shearer and her two children, Serge & Sunny, took over from Jeff Lang for monitoring at the Cradock Street Bridge site.

The efforts of teams from Conservation Volunteers (CV) have, yet again, been a great help in keeping up with work planting, plant propagation and weed control.

We continue to grow some native plants, for planting along the creek. This gives us flexibility to accommodate for one-off groups that approach us, wanting to do some planting at short notice.

Outreach is ongoing, to further raise awareness of the creek through a variety of avenues, including our excellent newsletter produced by committee member Adrienne Stanton; and our website and facebook page.

We continue to attend the Community Liaison Group meetings for the State Highway 20 / Waterview Connection, and the Community Advisory Group for the Te Auaunga Awa: Underwood & Walmsley Reserves stormwater upgrade. We have attended a number of hui on the Waterview Shared Path, including to have input into the design of the bridges (to be covered by Rau Hoskins in his presentation this evening), and have been working with the Puketapapa Local Board and iwi to produce a strategy for the Upper Catchment, which will be launched next week.

Funding from Foundation North, the WWF, the Lion Foundation and The Trusts Community Fund has been crucial for ensuring the sustainability of the project. A very special thanks to Helen Mellsop for all of the great work she has put into fundraising.

Funding and support has also come from the Auckland Council, Albert Eden Local Board, the Whau Local Board and the Puketapapa Local Board, including for site preparation, weed control, plants, nursery supplies and monitoring and pest control. And, funding also covers the ongoing work in the 'rock forest' areas.

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 tertiary students – undertaking a variety of assignments, research projects and volunteer hours.

Many hours have also gone into meetings related to the renewal of the Heritage NZ Authority to Modify (ATM) and the new Resource Consent, which is required for the project – thanks to Simon Karl (4Sight) for facilitating these processes, and David Stejskal (AC) for driving this.

And, our new 10-year management plan was completed late last year – a mammoth task, taking up many hours. Thanks to Michelle Dubion from Te Ngahere for a great result.

And, we celebrated, belatedly, our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary including the planting of 10 kahikatea to celebrate the occasion.

So, all in all, 2015-2016 has been another busy and exciting year on the creek.

And, finally, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to the following, but not exclusive list of people and organisations for their wonderful support, efforts and encouragement:

- John Maskell, John Stevenson, Jane Shand, Per Nielsen, Simon Howard, Margaret McConnell, Arthur Heighton, Opal Gordon – for their regular contribution to the monitoring and pest control.
- Dorothy Maddock, for the work she is doing to maintain an area in Alan Wood Reserve.

- Alice Rieger and, now Stacey Bensemman, our local Wai Care co-ordinators.
- Karen Mann and her team, from the Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre.
- Sean Carroll for continuing to work with and inspire the students from the Mt Roskill schools.
- St Judes Scouts Venturers and the Roskill Rovers for their contribution to the reduction of pests, and the St Judes Scouts for continuing to restore a section of the creek adjacent to their 'den'.
- A Rocha and the Haven community who continue to contribute to the restoration of the creek around the Cradock Street Bridge area.
- Our two Sustainable Neighbourhood Groups – Powell Street and Cradock Street, who are doing a wonderful job of restoring the creek and surrounding areas, in their neighbourhoods.
- 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 – especially moth plant.
- David Stejskal, Auckland Council, for organising tree removal, extra weed control, mulch and providing more specimen trees for Harbutt Reserve.
- Sarah Peters and Huw Hill-Male, Auckland Council Parks Volunteer and Biodiversity Co-ordinators
- Brent Druskovich, our 'resident archaeologist', who prepared the updated Archaeological Report.
- The Well Connected Alliance – for their continued support for our project, including undertaking the planting of an extensive area on the west side of the creek; and for monitoring the lizards in the Lizard Management Area.
- Langham Hotel staff
- Our regular volunteers – including Margaret McConnell and Arthur Heighton, 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, Jane Shand, John Stevenson, Leslie Haines, Dominic Hutching and, more recently, Sinead Spedding, for the great work they have done – and continue to do.

And, as you will know, the restoration of Oakley Creek continues to be a 'work in progress' with lots more to be done, including encouraging more community support and involvement, and advocating for the creek - and we hope you will continue to be involved and support the project in the coming year.

And, finally, a very special 'thanks' to Helen, who recently stepped down from the committee. Helen was a founding member of Friends of Oakley Creek. Thanks, Helen, for all of the great work you have done over the years. It's been an absolute pleasure working with you, and we wish you well for the future. (And, we know you will still be helping out with the various activities, as and well you are able.)

Many thanks.

Wendy John  
Chairperson

20.6.2016