

Chairperson's Annual Report 2019

Tena koutou katoa

2018-2019 has been yet another busy and productive year.

Volunteers contributed approximately 5120 hours (that we know of) – up from 3976 last year. In the 2018 planting season 5635 native plants went into the ground, bringing us to an overall total of 82,917 since 2004. Planting, weed control, mulching, rubbish removal etc. was undertaken by members of the local community; as well as a wide range of community organisations, educational institutions and businesses including:

- Collectively Kids Early Childhood Education Centre
- St Judes Scouts
- Pt Chevalier Girl Guides
- Auckland A Rocha Christian Community
- Cradock Street Sustainable Neighbourhood
- Powell Street Sustainable Neighbourhood
- Oakley Loop Group
- Conservation Volunteers
- NZ Language Centre
- BNZ, Salesforce & Davanti Consulting
- Diocesan School for Girls
- Mt Roskill Campus schools
- Civic Trust
- Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu / Correspondence School
- Stantec
- ATEED
- Eastern Institute of Technology
- Auckland Institute of Technology
- Scripture Union
- And more

We continued to hold regular, monthly working bees, including another successful annual clean up, which, this year, was held along Howlett Reserve, in the Waterview Inlet. Weekly weeding sessions over the summer / autumn months by a small group of dedicated volunteers, saw us remove huge amounts of bindweed, and other environmental weeds.

Our monitoring and pest control programme continues – thanks to the dedication and commitment of our volunteers. Trapping catches are being maintained at a low number, with rat numbers well down – as is shown through our monitoring programme. And, we are looking for volunteers to join our teams on a regular basis. If you are, or know of anyone who would be interested, please let us know.

We carried out our annual bird survey, again. And, while, results can depend on the weather, the numbers and range of bird species reflects a healthy environment. Also, weta numbers continue to look healthy.

Our water quality monitoring teams continue with their quarterly monitoring at the four sites in the lower catchment. However, there have been changes of personnel at three of the four sites. So, thanks to all of our volunteers – Jill Pierce & Eric Pedersen (Wairaka Stream), Jagjeeta Kaur (Unitec Bridge), Helen Mellsop (Cradock Street Bridge), and Clare Brown and Suzie Thorp at the St Judes Scouts Den. And, while we are aware of the wider issues of pollutants in an urban stream, we usually find a good range of macroinvertebrates at the different sites. And, freshwater fish expert, Paul Woodard, undertook a survey of a section of the Wairaka Stream, in Unitec, where he netted an amazing number of native fish species in a very short reach of the stream that is protected by bush. These included male and female red-finned bullies, inanga, banded kokopu, smelt and shrimps.

The efforts of the Conservation Volunteers (CV) teams, with their regular visits have, yet again, been a great help in supporting our work.

We continue to grow some of our own plants in the nursery space in Unitec. But, with the change of ownership of some of the land, we will need to move soon. So, we are in conversation with Unitec regarding a new, and shared site for the nursery.

We also continue to be part of the Unitec Ngā Kaitiaki rōpū, whose vision is to - *Maintain and protect the mauri and integrity of the environment occupied by Unitec – Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka*, which includes one of our key tributaries - the Wairaka Stream.

We have continued to be a member of the Community Advisory Group meetings for the Te Auaunga Awa: Underwood & Walmsley Reserves project - which is almost completed. The final community planting takes place on Sunday 23rd June. And, the official opening is on Saturday 6th July. This has been a very special project to be a part of, and has resulted in some amazing outcomes – social, cultural and environmental.

However, there is a constant stream of new developments happening in the catchment that require us to keep a watchful eye on, such as things like silt control, weed control and encroachments onto reserve land.

We continue to be part of a network of community organisations that is working in collaboration with Auckland Council and Watercare to improve the water quality across the western isthmus.

And, we have been party to the production of a new 'tohu' for the awa – sponsored by the local boards, which was designed by Whaotapu Trust, to represent the awa and increase public awareness and engagement with it.

And, we were honoured to be one of the winners of the national Cawthron Institute 'River Story' Awards.

As per usual, much time and energy has gone into the co-ordination of activities, networking and liaising with other stakeholders and interested parties e.g. Auckland Council, Local Boards, contractors, educational, community organisations and individuals. There are some exciting projects in the pipeline, including the translocation of epiphytes and, possible, lichen translocation.

Funding from Foundation North, The Trusts Community Fund, Auckland Council and the local boards has been crucial for ensuring the sustainability of the project. And, thanks to David Bowden, for all of his great work as our fundraiser. All in all, 2018-2019 has been another exciting 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, efforts and encouragement:

- John Maskell, John Stevenson, Per Nielsen, Frazer Dale, Rosemary Phillips, Rosemary Gibson and Gavin Thompson – for their contribution to the pest control.
- 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 / Harbutt Reserve area.
- Our 'neighbourhood groups' – Powell Street, Cradock Street and Oakley Loop (Methuen Road), who are doing a wonderful job of restoring the creek and surrounding areas, in their local neighbourhoods.
- Treescape Environmental for weed control, and for undertaking another planting.
- Te Ngahere – who continue to do work on the creek, funded by the Local Boards.
- Unitec – for the use of the nursery facilities, and meeting room.
- 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 in and around the creek – and beyond.
- Frances & Dave Morgans – for putting our events posters up along the creek.
- David Stejskal, Auckland Council, for managing the ERC contract, and organising the removal of dead trees, extra weed control, mulch etc.
- Huw Hill-Male, Auckland Council Parks Volunteer and Biodiversity Co-ordinator.
- Brent Druskovich, our 'resident archaeologist'.
- Our regular volunteers – particularly Margaret McConnell, Arthur Heighton and Martin Brown, and the wider community for their support, enthusiasm and efforts to assist in growing our vision for Oakley Creek.

Finally, I would like to say a special thank you to our Committee Members – Adrienne Stanton, John Stevenson, Sarah Woodfield and David Bowden, for the great work they have done – and continue to do.

And, as you will know, the restoration of Oakley Creek will continue to be a 'work in progress' - well into the foreseeable future. So, we hope you will continue to be involved and support the project in the coming year.

Many thanks.

Wendy John
Chairperson
19.6.2019