

## **Chairperson's Annual Report 2020**

Tena koutou katoa and welcome everyone.

2019-2020 has been yet another amazing and busy year.

Our volunteers contributed approximately 5325 hours (that we know of) – up from 5120 last year. In the 2019 planting season 6235 native plants went into the ground), bringing us to an overall total of 89,152 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
- Auckland A Rocha Christian Community
- Cradock Street Sustainable Neighbourhood
- Powell Street Sustainable Neighbourhood
- Oakley Loop Group
- Conservation Volunteers, and their Work Skills teams
- NZ Language Centre
- Mt Roskill Grammar & Intermediate
- Diocesan Girls
- Pt Chevalier Girl Guides
- St Lukes Brownies
- Balmoral Scouts
- Forest and Bird Kiwi Care Kids
- Unitec staff
- Scripture Union NZ
- Fraedom
- Kantar
- Mondelez
- Deloittes
- And more ....

As in past years, we continued to hold regular, monthly working bees, including planting in the winter months, and weeding and rubbish removal for the rest of the year. Weekly weeding sessions over the summer /

autumn months by a small group of dedicated volunteers, now happen all year round. Over the summer months, volunteers removed masses of bindweed, and at other times, they have dealt with other environmental weeds and helped with the planting and plant propagation.

Our monitoring and pest control programme has now been running since 2009 – thanks to the dedication of our volunteers. Trapping catches are being maintained at a low number, with rat numbers well down. Although there was a slight rise in catches immediately after the Covid lockdown period. And, contractors have recently finished a 3-night cull of the plague rabbits that has been multiplying over the months / years.

We carried out our annual bird survey, again. And, while, results are often weather dependent, 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. Thanks to all of our wonderful teams – Jill Pierce & Eric Pedersen (Wairaka Stream), Jagjeeta Kaur (Unitec Bridge), Helen Mellsop (Cradock Street Bridge, and Clare Brown 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, volunteers Sarah and Rutu have recently adopted two sites to monitor in the southern end of Alan Wood Reserve.

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 around 1500 plants a year, which gives us more flexibility with regards to accommodating volunteer groups at short notice. And, we are still in talks with Unitec regarding a new, and shared site for the nursery, with the Albert Eden Local Board granting us some funding to set this up.

Ngaio Balfour and Derryn Jacob translocated a number of epiphytes – *Astelia hastatum* from Smith's Bush, Northcote, into the reserve. And, on the most recent survey and maintenance run, some of them 'have roots'!

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. There are currently moves afoot to have a covenant put on the puna (spring) and stream to protect in perpetuity.

As is the norm, there is a constant stream of new developments happening in the catchment that require us to keep a watchful eye on such as things as 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 – particularly on the ‘western isthmus’.

After much to-ing and fro-ing, our new, interpretive signage is in place – thanks to the Albert Eden Local Board. It, looks amazing, and adds much value to those using the walkway.

There has been a lot of tree works done over the year, including another area of tree privet being cleared in the ‘privet forest’, and a number of dead /dying pine and poplar trees taken out.

As always, 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.

Ongoing funding from Foundation North, The Trusts Community Fund, the Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS), Auckland Council and the local boards has been crucial for ensuring the sustainability of the project. Thanks to David Bowden, for all of his great work as our fundraiser.

All in all, 2019-2020 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 Stevenson, David Bowden, Per Nielsen, Demi Meikeljohn, Rosemary Phillips, Rosemary Gibson, Ellice Protheroe, Chris Judd, Ngaio Balfour, Gavin Thompson, Helen Mellsop and Marianne van der Haas – for their contribution to the pest control. And, to David, for setting us up on TrapNZ.
- 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 wonderful ‘neighbourhood groups’ – Powell Street, Cradock Street and Oakley Loop (Methuen Road), who are looking after and restoring the creek and surrounding areas, in their local neighbourhoods.
- Treescape Environmental for weed control, and for undertaking more planting.

- Te Ngahere – who continue to do work on the creek, that is funded by the Local Boards.
- Unitec – for the use of the nursery facilities, and meeting room.
- Our ‘weedbusters’ team – Jean Barton, Keith Ayton and David Smith, for the great work they do of removing some of our nastier weeds, especially moth plant and woolly nightshade in and around the creek – and beyond.
- Auckland Council personnel including:
  - David Stejskal, Regional Arborists and Ecological Manager
  - Huw Hill-Male, Auckland Council Parks Volunteer and Biodiversity Co-ordinator.
  - Theresa Pearce, Healthy Waters Senior Healthy Waters Specialist
  - Bianca Lilley, Graduate Healthy Waters Specialist with the Wai Care programme
  - Don To’o Community Facilities Manager
- Brent Druskovich, our ‘resident archaeologist’.
- Our regular volunteers – including Kseniia Goluban, Sarah Bishop, Martin Brown and Tristan Mulgrew and family, Ida Leimi, Rutu Jani, Pat Scriven, Chris Calvert, Jason Brown, Glen Smith and members of the wider community for their support, enthusiasm and efforts to assist in growing our vision for Te Auaunga.

Finally, I would like to say a special thank you to all of our Committee Members – Adrienne Stanton, John Stevenson, Sarah Woodfield, David Bowden and, more recently, Marin Adams, who has taken over the role as secretary, for the great work they have done – and continue to do.

And, as you will know, the care and restoration of Te Auaunga 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  
20.7.2020