

Project Manager's Annual Report 2021

Tena koutou katoa.

As David, has mentioned, 2020-2021 has been yet another busy and productive year.

However, – in spite of COVID, our volunteers contributed approximately 3460 hours (that we know of), and 8074 native plants went into the ground). Planting, plant propagation, 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 (Methuen Road)
- Conservation Volunteers, and their Work Skills teams
- Diocesan Girls
- Pt Chevalier Girl Guides
- St Lukes Brownies
- Mondelez
- And more

We continued to hold regular, monthly working bees, including planting in the winter months, and weeding, mulching and rubbish removal for the rest of the year. Regular, Friday Working Bees are a great help in keeping up with task that need doing.

Our monitoring and pest control programme has now been running since 2009. And, this past year, David set up an extra set of traps to control possums in the heritage oak tree areas – which was well worth the effort, with 15 possums caught in 10 traps in the October-November pulse period, alone. Including these results, the overall trap catches for the year were – 70 possums, 44 rats, 9 rabbits, 3 mice and 2 hedgehogs. This does not include predators that would have died from our quarterly baiting regime. So, ongoing / regular trapping is critical to protect our native biodiversity. And, Auckland Council now has a regular rabbit control programme. (Unitec is also controlling them on their land, which is most welcome.)

Our southern circuit team undertook a four-month visual survey of their trapline, with a camera borrowed from Manawa Taiaio / Urban Ark. There were no conclusive results from this, but it did show where there were rats and possums; and that there are cats regularly wandering in the bush that will have an impact on our bird and invertebrate population.

We carried out our annual bird survey in 2020. And, while, results are often weather dependent, the numbers and range of bird species continues to reflect a healthy environment. The increased number of sightings of kereru and ruru calls is very encouraging. Also, weta numbers continue to look healthy.

Our water quality monitoring teams continue with their quarterly monitoring, and we are now up to seven sites across the catchment. Thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers – Jill

Pierce & Eric Pedersen, Jagjeeta Kaur, Helen Mellsop, Clare Brown & whanau, Sarah Bishop, Rutu Jani and Lynda Burnside.

The ongoing efforts of Conservation Volunteers (CV) teams, with their regular visits (6-weekly) have, yet again, been a great help in supporting our project.

We continue to grow native plants, with numbers up this past year to around 3000. This gives us greater flexibility with regards to accommodating volunteer groups at short notice, and growing diversity species for the creek. With the proposed development on the Wairaka Precinct (ex Unitec land), we have recently signed a Licence to Occupy (LTO) with the Ministry of Education to establish a new nursery in the grounds of Waterview Primary School. Thanks to the Albert Eden Local board for granting funding towards this, and to the School Board Chair, Margi Watson, and the School Principal, Brett Skeen, for helping to get this across the line. However, there is much work to be done, now, and we are able to stay where we are in the interim – thanks to the Waitemata Health Board / Mason Clinic, who now own the land our existing nursery is on.

Ngaio Balfour and Derryn Jacob's epiphyte – *Astelia hastatum* project continues with the plants establishing well in their new homes. We look forward to seeing them flower in the not-too-distant future. Sarah Bishop undertook a vegetation plot monitoring survey, and a Pollution Risk Assessment across the catchment.

Path upgrade – the Albert Eden Local Board is funding the upgrade of our walkway, with the first stage – steps and paths entrances to the walkway almost completed.

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.

As is the norm, there is a constant stream of developments happening in the catchment that require us to be ever vigilant. These include the extensive works that Kainga Ora is doing across the catchment; and the proposed development of the Wairaka Precinct, which is about to start.

We 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.

And, our involvement continues with a network of community organisations that is working in collaboration with Auckland Council and Watercare to improve the water quality across the western isthmus.

Ongoing funding from Foundation North, The Trusts Community Fund, the Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS), Auckland Council and the local boards – Albert Eden, Puketapapa and Whau, 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, 2020-2021 has been another exciting 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, Wayne Forsyth, Chris Brown, Chris Judd, Ngaio Balfour, Krispin Balfour, Gavin Thompson, Helen Mellsop and Marianne van der Haas – for their contribution to the predator control.
- St Judes Scouts for continuing to restore a section of the creek adjacent to their 'den', including a Kainga Ora section.

- 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 land around the creek, in their local neighbourhoods.
- 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.
- Chris Brown – for doing an amazing job of recruiting friends and whanau to remove rubbish out of the creek.
- Auckland Council personnel including:
 - David Stejskal, Regional Arborists and Ecological Manager
 - Sarah Gibbs, Senior Ecological Advisor
 - Huw Hill-Male, Parks Volunteer and Biodiversity Co-ordinator
 - Theresa Pearce, Colleen Brent, Jack Dickens and Amy Donovan, Healthy Waters
 - Ahsan Kamal, Senior Project Manager
 - Bianca Lilley, Wai Care / Wai Ora, Healthy Waters
 - Don To'o, Community Facilities Manager
 - Ross Cowie, Conservation Advisor
- Brent Druskovich, our 'resident archaeologist'.
- Treescape Environmental for weed control, and for undertaking more planting.
- Te Ngahere – who continue to do site preparation and weed control for our planting sites.
- Downer – Alf Fish and team, for helping to keep our creek clear of blockages and rubbish.
- Unitec – for the use of the nursery facilities and meeting room.
- AIM Services – Mumtaz Ali and team, for weed control - including moth [plant, rubbish removal etc.
- Our regular volunteers including Tristan Mulgrew & Martin Brown and family, Jason Brown, Pat Scriven, Glen Smith, David Smith, Krispin Balfour, Ka Meechan, Lynda Burnside, Gina Hefferan, Prue Cruickshank & Ferooz Afshar, Bev Crosby and members of the wider community for their continued support, enthusiasm and efforts to assist in growing our vision for Te Auaunga.
- Chris Calvert and Lynley Rivers – for baking to help nourish our volunteers.

Finally, I would like to say a special thank you to all of our Committee Members for their continued support.

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
 Project Manager
 14 June 2021