



Friends of Oakley Creek

Te Auaunga

June Update, 2016

Vol. 9, Issue 2

New award won by Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga

Auckland Council recently hosted an evening networking event to acknowledge the International Day for Biological Diversity and the valuable community conservation work being carried out in the wider Auckland Region. As part of this acknowledgement, Auckland Council has established the Biosecurity and Biodiversity Awards to recognise, and celebrate, the efforts and achievements of Auckland region volunteers in protecting and restoring our unique biodiversity - and Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga won the inaugural Group Award! Thank you to everyone for your contribution to our wonderful project.

Many kind messages of support and congratulation have been received, including the following:

Your group has always been a model for STEPS to follow. Keep up the fantastic work on the beautiful Oakley Creek. Elizabeth Walker, Chair, St Lukes Environmental Protection Society Inc www.meolacreek.org.nz

I have no doubt that if it wasn't for your efforts Oakley Creek would probably be in a big mess. I am delighted that you have received this award for all your hard work. Congratulations and very well deserved. John La Roche, volunteer at Kepa Bush.

Congratulations on your award! I'm really pleased your work has been recognised and that you won the inaugural award. We feel quite chuffed to be counted among such august company. April Glenday, Friends of Maungawhau <http://www.maungawhau.co.nz/>

Friends of Maungawhau were group category finalists, along with Motutapu Restoration Trust <http://www.motutapu.org.nz> and [Shah Satnam Ji Green S Welfare Force Wing - New Zealand](#).



Biosecurity and biodiversity in action at Oakley Creek: - provide the right conditions, such as planting native seed sources, providing canopy cover and controlling pest plants and animals, then natural regeneration by natives will do the rest!!

Photo: W. John

Subscriptions are now due

We are now welcoming 2016/17 membership renewals, new memberships (\$10.00) and/or donations towards the work we are doing to protect and restore our wonderful urban 'taonga' - Oakley Creek Te Auaunga Awa. Donations over \$5.00 are tax deductible. Online banking: Friends of Oakley Creek A/c 38-9003-0978224-00. Thank you!



Fruiting in pigeonwood, porokaiwhiri, Hedycarya arborea, usually occurs in mid spring and summer. However, at Oakley Creek this year, there are unripe green fruit in May! Is this a testament to the unusually warm autumn? *Photo: W. John*

Hedycarya: from the Greek, hedys, meaning sweet, and karyon, meaning nut, in reference to the succulent fruit (Taylor, M. 2002. Meanings and Origins of Botanical Names of New Zealand Plants).

Te Whangai Trust native plant nursery project under way

As part of the Auckland Council upgrade of Te Auaunga Awa: Walmsley and Underwood Reserves Project, and its aim to provide greater social outcomes, Te Whangai Trust will be working with the Council, Wesley Intermediate, Mana Whenua, Project PETER organisations and the local community to establish a native plant nursery social enterprise, based at Wesley Intermediate. The nursery will provide native plants for the reserves project. It will also provide life skills, training and work readiness opportunities to the local community, with a focus on young people and adults not in education, employment or training.

Amy Donovan, from Auckland Council Community Empowerment Unit, has noted that it is anticipated that there will also be plenty of opportunities for other activities to take place at the nursery for the wider community and local schools. A steering group for the native nursery is being created and part of the group's role will be to support the native nursery to integrate into the local community and further the ideas generated at a hui, planned for late June, which will be attended by Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga. For more information about the Trust, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRrhGg_VNbQ.

Archaeological ATM and resource consent granted

Good news! The new Authority to Modify (from Heritage NZ) and the Resource Consent (from Auckland Council) for works at Oakley Creek have just been granted, so this season's plantings along the Walkway can now proceed as planned.

The process went very smoothly under the guidance of Simon Karl, Planning and Policy Consultant from 4Sight Consulting. He wrote about the benefit of working with Friends of Oakley Creek - *Great to be involved in a positive project like this. And thanks for sharing your valuable 'on the ground' knowledge, which significantly helped to translate the planning 'theory' into real world terms.*

Welcome Sinead!



We would like to welcome Sinead Spedding, who has recently joined the committee and agreed to take on the role of Secretary, for the time being. Sinead is a Unitec student studying Biodiversity Management and also works part time at Oratia Native Plant Nursery. She already spends many hours volunteering at Oakley Creek working bees - bravo and many thanks!

Please note that we still need new committee members for a variety of roles, including assisting with fundraising, education, submission writing, website management, publicity and promotion, as well as for unspecialised general help.

If you can help with any of these things, either within or outside of the committee, please contact Wendy John, thanks.

Dates for your diary

Bring your family and friends - and spread the word about these upcoming events:

Monday 20th June, 7:00pm: Annual General Meeting
Unitec Building 32. Guest speaker: Rau Hoskins, Director, design TRIBE Architects, on the creative design of the Alford St Bridge as part of the Waterview Shared Path.

Saturday 25th June, 9.00am: Annual Bird Survey.
Meet at Unitec Student carpark, by Building 76. This is undertaken at permanent locations along the creek as part of the national Garden Bird Survey, which is also celebrating its 10th anniversary. Please consider doing your own survey in your garden at home as well. See <http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/science/plants-animals-fungi/animals/birds/garden-bird-surveys> for more information, including past survey results.

Sunday 26th June, 10.00am-1.00pm: Community Planting. Meet at Freeland Reserve, Freeland Avenue (off May Road), Mt Roskill. Wear gumboots and bring garden gloves and a spade (if you have them).

Sunday, 3rd July, 10.00am: Community Planting
Sunday, 7th August, 10.00am: Community Planting
Sunday, 4th September, 10.00am: Community Planting

See www.oakleycreek.org.nz or contact Wendy John, email: info@oakleycreek.org.nz or phone: 815 3101 or 027 232 6454, for more information.

Monitoring and pest control

Lizard monitoring

Under the Lizard Management Plan (part of the consent conditions for the Waterview Connection / SH20 project), over 150 copper skinks (the only native lizard found in the area) were relocated in 2012, from Alan Wood Reserve into the Lizard Management Area - in Management Unit 3A, below Unitec. This year's results, under the annual monitoring programme by Tonkin and Taylor, are presented below.

A total of 24 skinks were found under the monitoring ACOs (Artificial Cover Objects) - 11 of these were copper skinks (ranging sub-adult to adults), 4 rainbow skinks (juvenile - adult) and 8 were seen, but not caught. Most of the lizards that were uncaught were likely to be rainbow skinks. This is the first time that pest rainbow skinks, which compete with the copper skinks, have been recorded in the area.

Tonkin and Taylor ecologists have recently relocated more copper skinks to the Lizard Management Area. This latest translocation was of 22 adults from the rail corridor area upstream of Harbutt Reserve, as part of the consent conditions for the new Waterview Connection Shared Path. Unfortunately, also found during the capture process in the construction area were 54 rainbow skinks ...

Possum control

Our volunteer trapping teams do a great job of keeping the possums (and some rats and hedgehogs) at bay along three trap lines. The weekly job involves checking each trap, removing any prey (gloves are provided!), re-setting and re-baiting each trap, laying a scented flour lure and recording the trap prey data and any maintenance requirements. Thanks to the teams from Roskill Rovers (around 16 volunteers), Mt Albert St Judes Venturers (another 6 volunteers), Bruce Henry, John Maskell, Per Nielsen and Simon Howard.

*Mt Albert St
Jude's Venturer
Tessa Boyd uses
the trap tool to
re-bait the trap.*

Photo: W. John



Controlling pests in New Zealand's conservation estate requires killing between 5 and 12 animals per hectare per year.

Robbie van Dam (2016)

from '100 ways to kill a rat'. *NZ Geographic*, 139, 23.



Left: Work has begun on the new Alford St Bridge, part of the Waterview Shared Path. Note that the Walkway in this area will be closed from July 2nd for some months. Photo: W. John

Cultural monitoring

Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga, Mana Whenua representatives (from Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei, Ngāi Tai Ki Tāmaki and Te Kawerau a Maki) and Auckland Council have been working together on the draft Cultural Monitoring Plan (CMP) for the restoration activities at Oakley Creek Te Auaunga. These activities need to be sensitive to the rich cultural landscape of Te Auaunga and the CMP will provide instruction, recording the expectations and agreements within the project team to afford protection to toanga, restore the awa's mauri and establish appropriate protocols. We look forward to learning more about Te Auaunga heritage.

SH16/20 mitigation funding summary

- from SH16/20 mitigation funding - confirmation of projects. Albert Eden Local Board 1 June 2016.

The SH16/20 Waterview connection project is providing revenue in the order of \$3.24M to the Albert-Eden Local Board. This expenditure includes:

- Harbutt path connection (\$20,520)
- Oakley Creek Reserve improvements (\$105,000)
- Howlett Esplanade planting (\$35,000)

In addition the Albert-Eden and Whau Local Boards have a jointly managed fund, currently estimated at \$3,580,069 from the Alan Wood corridor. Initial decisions on the allocation of this funding were made back in October 2013, including the purchase of properties to enhance Valonia Reserve and contributing to the development of a connection of the shared path to Trent St. A further report on 2 September 2015 provided a contribution to the Valonia ablution block, provision for play equipment and other improvements in Alan Wood Reserve and funded a naming project for the reserves and new bridges in the Alan Wood Corridor. In addition the Albert-Eden and Whau Local Boards agreed to allocate \$400,000 to each board from the remaining joint budget. This has left \$184,348 unallocated and it was agreed a decision on this be made early in FY17.

The board discussed allocating this \$400,000 to the Phyllis Reserve improvements at their workshop on 16 March 2016.

Phyllis Reserve - a master plan has been prepared that proposes major redevelopment of the park. Funding has been allocated from all three budget lines to this reserve to deliver increased field capacity, a new road, entrance and parking area, decommissioning and landscaping of the old road access, removal of the dog club building, development of a perimeter loop path, play equipment and a drinking fountain.

Oakley Creek - discussions with Wendy John of Friends of Oakley Creek have identified a number of areas where improvements to paths, connectivity, safety and signage could be undertaken. Scoping of these works is underway.



Above: The Harbutt path connection has been completed. The gravel at the front (left) is a temporary surface until the Waterview Shared Path is built and the two are connected. Photos: W. John



Left: Wendy John, Margi Watson and new Auckland Council Parks Manager, Joby Barham undertook a site visit to look at potential work which could be funded.

Wildlife encounters

A young white-faced heron, *matuku moana*, *Egretta novaehollandiae*, was captured on camera at the wetland in Molley Green Reserve, at the top of the Oakley Creek catchment.

To learn more about this species and listen to their calls, visit the website, <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/white-faced-heron>.

Photos: W. John



In the early days of the restoration of Oakley Creek, from 2004, kereru were never seen, apart from the odd bird flying across overhead. However, in the past two or three years, there have been regular sightings of a pair, and sometimes three, kereru 'hanging out' on the creek. Recently, a pair was observed settling down for the night in a large tree down on the walkway below Phyllis Reserve. What a treat! We look forward to seeing these beautiful birds more often as more of our native plantings mature.

Ngaa Waerea Maaori Paakehaa - rituals to enter the bush and to give thanks on leaving

by Koro Te Paania

These Waerea to Taanemahuta are an emotional cry or wail to Taanemahuta, to clear the way, so there is no blame for past rights or wrongs when entering the forest. They can be chanted by either a male or a female and all the group should join in for the last phrase: *Huiee-taukiriee*. The first waerea should be chanted while standing just outside the bush, before entering:

He Waerea nei haere ki roto te puihi A Ritual to enter the forest

Koo Taanemahuta to Tupuna Wairua
E te tupuna wairua e Taanemahuta,
e inoi ana maatou ki a koe,
kia whakawaatea e koe he huarahi,
Kia pai too maatou takahi
ki runga i taau puihi.
Teena koe

I a maatou e awhiawhi ana,
i waa manaakitanga,
kaa kii atu; huieetaukiriee.

After leaving the bush, give thanks with a mihi waerea:

He warea mihi ki a Taanemahuta

E te tupuna wairua e Taanemahuta,
e mihi ana maatou,
moo taau mahi kaha,
ki te tiaki ia maatou,
i runga I taau puihi.
Teena koe

I a maatou e awhiawhi ana,
i waa manaakitanga,
kaa kii atu; huieetaukiriee.

Taanemahuta is the spiritual elder
Oh spiritual elder Taanemahuta
we are asking you,
to clear a pathway,
for us to go,
into your forest.
Thank you

And as we embrace,
your support,
we say thank you for your blessings.

Ritual of thanks to Taanemahuta

Oh spiritual elder Taanemahuta,
we thank you
for your endeavours,
as you cared for us,
while in your forest.
Thank you

And as we embrace,
your support,
we say thank you for your blessings.



What is this?

Solution at the end of the newsletter. *Photo: W. John*



From the archives ...



MU1B Wairaka Wetland Vista 2006-2014

Take a look ...

at [2016/05/Governance-of-Auckland-5-years-On-Full-report.pdf](#), to see an assessment of the Super-City, commissioned by the Committee for Auckland, and written by The Policy Observatory, Auckland University of Technology.

Internecionem



"From the [strangely familiar] wastelands of planet earth in post apocalyptic times, an ancient society resurrect Abrilina, an elder of the Originati, who has been trapped in spirit form for millions of years..."

Internecionem (Latin for massacre, slaughter, carnage, extermination, and destruction, borrowed from Greek's third declension of a mix of greek and latin case endings, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt4722012/>) is the title of a science fiction movie, with scenes filmed at Oakley Creek in May.

Weed watch

This section of the newsletter features details about weeds that threaten the native plants along Oakley Creek. You can help by tackling these at the stream and in your garden. In this issue:

Cucurbita ficifolia, Cucurbitaceae – Pie melon, fig-leaf gourd

- perennial vine, grows up to 15 m long over ground and up into trees
- smothers native trees, seedlings and ground, preventing native plant regeneration
- short lived
- leaves are fig-like, as described by the species name, *ficifolia*
- separate male and female, yellow to orange flowers may grow on same plant
- can produce roots from leaf axils
- pollinated by insects, such as bumble bees
- 20 cm diameter green fruit, weighing 5 to 6 kg, resembles watermelon, but has white flesh
- a single plant may produce more than 50 fruit, each of which produces up to 500 black seeds
- ancient cultigen widely occurring at higher elevations in Central and South America
- small immature fruit eaten like courgettes, mature fruit used for jam and sweets
- grown in NZ as a vegetable in the late 1800s
- used as a rootstock for cucumber, melon and watermelon cultivation, due to its disease resistant properties
- also known as sharkfin squash in USA, as the fibrous white strands of the mature fruit resemble sharkfin when cooked
- traditional Mexican medicine used extracts as an anti-diabetic, with its efficacy given some credence by modern studies



Photo: M. Wilcox

Take a look at ...
[Pie melon at Onehunga](#), an excellent article by Mike Wilcox.



This year has seen an invasion of pie melon, growing in various places along the creek. The seeds must have been washed down from further up the catchment, during flooding. Contractors spent a good part of a day just clearing this one area, at Waterview Glades, which made up around 1.5 truckloads of vegetation and fruit. Thanks to the Downer crew, for getting rid of this, and freeing up the young plants that were being smothered by it.

Photos: W. John

Control: Dig out all above ground parts, especially stems and fruit, and send to landfill or spray with herbicide before fruit formation. Monitor the area diligently for new seedlings.

Chinese knotweed again

Last seen in 2014, a new incursion of this 'total control' status weed, *Persicaria chinensis*, was recently removed from behind Phyllis Reserve.



Photo: W. John



Left: 'Before and after' photos of a **bindweed removal session** in late March, on the east bank below the waterfall.



Late summer and autumn means it is time to tackle any mothplant that has been hiding. **Weedbusters**, Jean Barton, Keith Ayton and Ann Epston, helped remove many moth pods from Unitec, to reduce the risk of seeds spreading into the reserve, and more generally. This is what it takes to get pods off tall trees (right), rather than just one 'cut' of a plant before it fruits!



Another wattle bites the dust - thanks to Arthur.

The **weekly weeding crew** moved up to Alan Wood Reserve, recently, to deal with some of the nasty weeds in one of the bush areas - wattle, woolly nightshade, flowering cherry, Chinese privet and more ... Thanks to Arthur Heighton, Margaret McConnell and Dorothy Maddock for their efforts.



A Rocha held another successful working bee at the end of April at their site near Cradock St.



Left: *Coprosma robusta* in fruit.



Right: See how they have grown ... these parataniwha plants have flourished in the last seven months.



Nature is wont to hide herself.
Heraclitus

So - keep your eyes open to the small and cryptic!



In mid-May, Titirangi Ward of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints youth group spread an amazing 30m³ of mulch (three truckloads) around the plantings in Harbutt Reserve, in just three hours.



Thank you very much! And, thanks to David Stejskal, Auckland Council, for providing the mulch.



Conservation Volunteers helping out at the Nursery – May 2016



Rodent baiting (and rubbish collecting) teams - Opal, Margaret, Bruce and Said (above right); John, Ariana, Will, Joe and Frazer (right); Frazer and John (below right); and, Will, Joe and Ariana (below left), who are signalling the 'three Rs' - reduce, reuse and recycle. Very cool.



For a recent rodent baiting session (many are needed) we were joined by a number of young people (far left) who are involved in the Sir Peter Blake Trust. They also collected any rubbish they came across, along the way, and sorted before disposing of it. It was an absolute delight to see the enthusiasm of these young people for protecting the environment - they are our hope for the future.

What is this? - solution



This (top left) is the 'egg' stage, that is, the immature stage, of a stinkhorn fungus fruiting body (such as the one pictured above). For more information, see <http://fungalguidel.landcareresearch.co.nz>.

Here are some other fungi spotted by Wendy this autumn ...



We gratefully acknowledge the support of Foundation North, The Trusts Community Foundation, The Lion Foundation and Auckland Council, Albert-Eden, Puketapapa and Whau Local Boards and the Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS).

Next Newsletter: Contributions and comments for the next newsletter are welcome - email info@oakleycreek.org.nz

New Members Welcome, Donations Too!

We welcome more members (\$10.00) and/or donations towards the work we are doing to protect and restore our wonderful urban 'taonga' - Oakley Creek Te Auaunga. Donations over \$5.00 are tax deductible.

Contributions and gift plant orders can be made directly into our bank account:

Friends of Oakley Creek - Kiwibank - A/c 38-9003-0978224-00

or cheques, made out to 'Friends of Oakley Creek', can be sent to: 4/65 Woodward Road, Mt Albert, Auckland 1025.



Chairperson: Wendy John Treasurer: Jane Shand Secretary: Sinead Spedding
Committee: Leslie Haines, Adrienne Stanton, John Stevenson, **Volunteers needed**
Newsletter Editor: Adrienne Stanton

Ph. 09 815 3101 or 027 232 6454 info@oakleycreek.org.nz www.oakleycreek.org.nz