



# Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga

W I N T E R 2 0 2 0

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Annual general Meeting 20 July (page5)
- Renew your membership (page 5)
- Community plantings (page 2 and 5)

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Tree planting 2

Water monitoring 2

Tree works 3

Seasonal gallery 4

Notices 5

Pictorial 6

## Editorial

Welcome back to the Friends of Oakley Creek newsletter! After a bit of a break, we're happy to again be sharing news and images of the great work going on to restore Te Auaunga which so many of you contribute to.

Many of us will have been out and about on the creek walkways more often during lockdown, and noticed some unexpected but welcome changes - when did the waters of Te Auaunga last run so clear and clean? Autumn saw the creek the cleanest it's been for decades, likely due to the drought reducing stormwater flows and COVID-19 halting traffic and development work. However, the drought seems to have broken now, and we're back to muddier waters.

Some highlights from this first issue include an update about the tree planting work we've been doing (page 2), and info about tree works to clear some of the invasive species like privet (page 3).

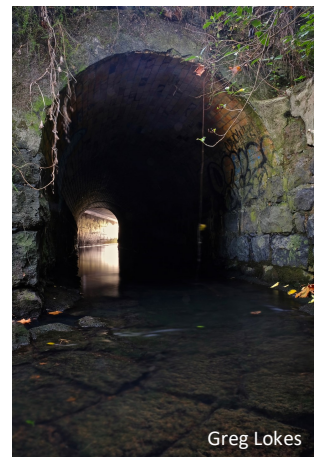
We have great news about the native fish we're finding in our streams and our water monitoring activities (page 2). You can find notices about upcoming

events on page 5 and some gallery pics of seasonal fruits and fungi on page 4. On page 6 you can read about local photographer Greg Lokes journey from culvert to culvert down Oakley Creek. The photo below gives you a taster!



Wendy John

**Redfin bully found in Wairaka Stream, a Te Auaunga tributary**



Greg Lokes

**Culvert under Great North Rd, Waterview**

## Fern revival

The botanists say 'if you provide the right conditions the ferns will arrive'. Ferns such as kiokio, lace fern and ponga are proving them right! These native ferns have begun to establish on the steep clay banks downstream of the new Te Piringa Bridge, on a site which was previously covered in

large pine trees. The ferns will provide excellent habitat for native insects - if you're lucky, you can also find tiny, solitary native bees here. NZ native bees, like many bees around the world are under threat from habitat loss, insecticides and introduced competitors.



**Native fern regeneration**

## 2020 plantings



Community planting  
7<sup>th</sup> June

The turnout for the first community planting of the season was fantastic - approx 36 people turned up on 7th June to put 600 plants in the ground (left). The plants were mostly early successional species typical to the area, such as manuka, kanuka, karamu, mapou, mahoe and whau, with a selection of broadleaved shrubs, and occasional forest canopy trees such as puriri, kohekohe and totara. Two more events will be held in coming months.

Because the Oakley Creek esplanade reserve sits under a Heritage NZ/ Pouhere Taonga 'authority to modify', one of the things we are required to do under the authority is arrange for an archaeological assessment of all of the proposed planting sites. We managed to get our archaeologist, Brent Druskovich, to do this prior to lockdown. Have a look at the [archaeological protocols for Oakley Creek](#) if you'd like to find out more.



Archaeological assessment  
with Brent Druskovich

*Te Auaunga has one of the longest water monitoring records in Auckland*

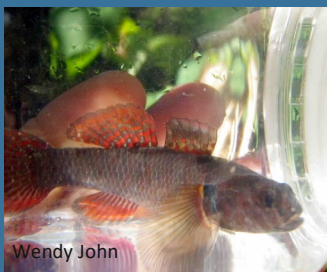
## Water monitoring

Friends of Oakley Creek has four regular water monitoring sites along the lower part of the creek, as part of the Wai Care programme. Tests are done quarterly and results are loaded onto the WaiCare database. Data collected includes: air temperature, water temperature, water clarity, turbidity, pH, dissolved oxygen, nitrate, nitrite, phosphorous, phosphate and aquatic

invertebrates. Te Auaunga has one of the longest water monitoring records in Auckland and has relatively consistent water quality. However, that can change quickly with just one person dumping pollution into the creek. If you see or smell anything unusual about the creek call the Auckland Council hotline on 09 377 3107.

In this photo (right), local volunteers Clare, with baby Es-

ther, and Kseniia sample for aquatic invertebrates near the St Judes Scout den.



Wendy John  
Redfin bully

## Native fish

Last year Paul Woodard, a fresh water fish expert, carried out a fish survey in a shaded reach of the Wairaka Stream - one of the main tributaries of Te Auaunga. An amazing number and range of native species were found including Redfin bully - both male and female, smelt, banded kokopu, inanga

and freshwater shrimp. Native fish cannot climb the waterfall, so Wairaka Stream is ideal for them. Wendy John, Chair of Friends of Oakley Creek, said it "showed the importance of waterway networks and riparian plantings since they provide shade, habitat and food for native fish to thrive".



Wendy John  
Banded kokopu

# Tree works



Wendy John

Thanks to Auckland Council, Tree Tops have completed 10 days of tree works on the creek, including removing dead / dangerous trees and branches and weed trees including a very large Coral Tree

## Finishing touches to a felled coral tree

towards the north end of the walkway. You may have also noticed large tree works along the creek late last year: Auckland Council carried out safety work to remove dead trees and limbs, and felled old pine 'soldiers' that were at risk of falling across the path or onto pedestrians. Large poplar trees by the waterfall were also felled for the same reason.

Meanwhile, the next stage of the privet transition work has been completed on the large 'privet forest' in the northern part of the creek. More recently work has commenced on the 'privet forest' in the south-western corner of Harbutt Reserve. Cleared areas will be replanted with natives. Privet is listed as a plant pest by Auckland Council, and has prolific flowers and fruits.

Felled tree logs are left to rot and make great homes for insects and fungi.

# Weta homes

Once a year volunteers check our weta homes to see how many weta have taken up residence in them. We also do an annual maintenance run to carry out any repairs and/or replace any of the homes that may have rotted - sometimes the homes rot away and need to be replaced. This year monitoring was carried out on 11 July.



**Kseniia Goluban helps with maintenance of weta homes**

*Watch out for weta homes on your next walk at Oakley Creek. You'll find them on and around tree trunks at about chest height.*

# Cubs herbarium

St Judes Cub Scouts have been busy collecting specimens for their herbarium (right). Friends of Oakley Creek committee member, Adrienne Stanton led two sessions to teach the cubs how to collect, prepare and press plants for a herbarium collection. The collection will be kept at the scout den. The scouts new herbarium skills count towards their Conservation Badges.

Friends of Oakley Creek doesn't have it's own herbarium but the Auckland Botanical Society carried out a detailed survey in 2009. You can read an [excellent article about the fieldtrip and see the species list here](#). The species list is updated as people find new plants, but feel free to email [info@oakleycreek.org.nz](mailto:info@oakleycreek.org.nz) if you know of species that you think should be on the list.



**Cubs putting their plants in the plant press**

# Fungi season



*Amanita muscaria*



*Amanita muscaria* (upper),  
*Mycena* genus example  
(below)

Do you know the names of  
these fungi (below)?

Turkey tail fungi (upper),  
Boletes (lower)

With rain finally  
arriving, so too has  
fungi season -  
these fungi have  
been snapped at  
Te Auaunga

## What's growing?

A landscape architect couldn't have designed a better sign for Howlett's Reserve with its *Muehlenbeckia complexa* fringe (left). Close up of its typically small flowers below.

Kohekohe seeds – 'fruit of the gods' for tui.

Pukatea seedlings – from one of the trees that were planted by clients from the Buchanan Rehabilitation Centre, in 2006. It is a rare treat to find these beautiful trees in the centre of the city.



Lockdown *Muehlenbeckia*  
haircut on a sign at Howlett  
Reserve



# Notices

**Annual General Meeting: Monday 20th July 7.00-9.00pm, Building 170 – Room 1055, UNITEC.** Enter campus through Gate 3, off Carrington Road. Follow 'Farm Road' through to the T-junction at the end, turn left into the carpark. Building 170 is at the south end of the carpark.



**Friday working bees** – we are back to ‘business as usual’ post lockdown. Contact Wendy on [info@oakleycreek.org.nz](mailto:info@oakleycreek.org.nz) if you want to be on the email list to receive notifications about these (photo left: **Friday weeding crew take a break**).

**Monthly community working bees** – first Sunday of each month. We are putting around 5000 plants into the ground this planting season, and the next community planting is on 2nd August.

**Annual subscription reminder** – Due by the AGM. \$10 for individuals and \$20 for families. Account - Friends of Oakley Creek - 38-9003-0978224-00

For more information about any events, contact [info@oakleycreek.org.nz](mailto:info@oakleycreek.org.nz) or Wendy on 027 232 6454; or check out our Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/OakleyCreek>

## Friends of Oakley Creek and A Rocha

We've been working in partnership with A Rocha for the last 10 years to restore part of the creek. *“A huge thank you to all those who came to the working bee last month. The number of people (young and old) who came ready to work was amazing, and it was such a lovely day. We planted close to 300 trees, and took out some rubbish and weeds as well. 25 adults and young people stayed for lunch. Phew!”* (Sarah Woodfield, A Rocha)



# Culvert to Culvert

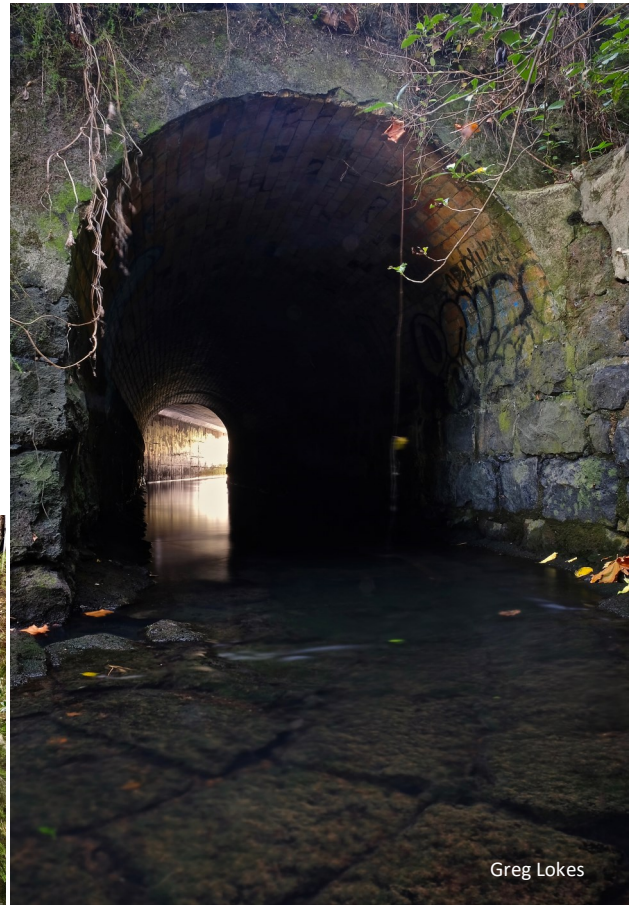
There are some lovely old culverts on Oakley Creek, but you need to get off the beaten track to see them. Lockdown provided the perfect excuse for Greg Lokes and his kids. They started near railway tracks at the culvert close to Soljak Place, off New North Road. Along the way they found “mini waterfalls” (photos: below). They felt as though they could be in the Waitakere Ranges and Greg said “there’s just nothing else in the central city like it, you wouldn’t think there was a major road so close”.

They continued along the creek all the way to the culvert at Great North Road (photo: right). The water was very clear due to the drought, and you could see the basalt blocks that lined the base and lower walls of the culvert. These came from the dam that helped to drive the waterwheel at the old mill near the mouth of the creek. And, the bricks that lined the arch were made locally.

Greg has lived in the area for 30 years and is very happy it’s so much easier to get to the creek now, due to weed clearing by Friends of Oakley Creek.



Greg Lokes



Greg Lokes

If you’d like to see more of Greg Lokes work, visit his photography Facebook page at [https://www.facebook.com/Gregs-Eye-2180581698675099/?ref=py\\_c](https://www.facebook.com/Gregs-Eye-2180581698675099/?ref=py_c)



Greg Lokes



Greg Lokes

# Friends of Oakley Creek

**Chairperson:**

Wendy John

**Treasurer:**

Sarah Woodfield

**Secretary:**

Marin Adams

**Committee:**

David Bowden, Adrienne Stanton, John Stevenson,  
Cate Ryan, Ngaio Balfour

**Newsletter Editor:** Cate Ryan



Next Newsletter: Contributions and comments for the next newsletter are welcome – email [info@oakleycreek.org.nz](mailto:info@oakleycreek.org.nz)

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: 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

**You can also find us at <http://oakleycreek.org.nz/>**

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

