

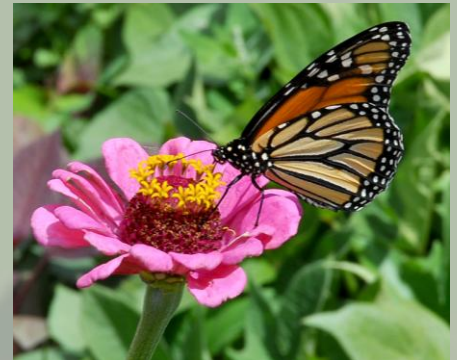


A lesser wanderer butterfly *Danaus petilia* has wandered well off course! by Janet Wade

My route took me past Unitec at the beginning of March, so since it was a gloriously sunny day, I stopped off for a walk around the Eco-Sanctuary community garden - located towards the northern end of the Unitec campus, just above the Oakley Creek Te Auaunga walkway.

I was taking photographs of monarchs enjoying themselves on some bright zinnias, when I saw what looked like a small, pale monarch flitting about.

Trevor Crosby, retired entomologist and co-co-ordinator of the sanctuary, was on hand working in the garden. He identified this butterfly as a lesser wanderer - rarely seen in New Zealand. A lepidopterist from Landcare Research has further identified it as a female, which has blown across from Australia. Lesser wanderers also occur in other parts of the Pacific, but these are a browner colour.



See the difference - monarch butterfly (above) and lesser wanderer (below).
Photos: J. Wade



The lesser wanderer caterpillars and pupae look similar to those of a monarch - although sometimes the pupae can be a pinkish colour.

One of the host plants of the lesser wanderer is swan plant, but, while it is possible for one generation to be produced later in the summer, they can't survive the winter.

Painted lady butterflies (*Vanessa kershawii*) are common summertime visitors from Australia, and I have seen the occasional blue moon butterfly (*Hypolimnys bolina nerina*) after an autumn storm. Like the lesser wanderer they don't feed on economically important crops and haven't been able to establish in New Zealand, making them more welcome visitors than the likes of the Queensland fruit fly and painted apple moth.

Happy 10th Anniversary ... Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga Inc Soci

It was ten years ago, in 2005, that Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga was established, with the vision "to have Oakley Creek Te Auaunga and its environs protected and restored as a natural ecosystem incorporating a range of wildlife habitats, and recreational amenities for present and future generations".



Happy Anniversary - everyone!!! Thanks for everyone's contribution to the project.

And, a wee reminder that this year's membership is now due - payment details at the end of the newsletter.

'Adopt-a-Site' or 'Adopt-a-Weed' ... at Oakley Creek Te Auaunga

If you and your family and friends enjoy walking or riding along the creek and could spare an hour every month or so, how about adopting an area to care for?

Controlling weeds and caring for recently planted areas is an ongoing task on the creek and it makes the world of difference if people can get actively involved in 'loving the creek'. Maintenance is usually needed once a month during the spring and summer, but less frequently for the rest of the year. The area you adopt could be as large or small as you are able to manage.

Training will be given so that you are able to recognise weeds and native plants and how to care for the site. And, you will have a chance to get to know the birds, bugs, fishes and other gems living in your spot.

To get on the adoption list, contact Wendy John at ph 815-3101 or email info@oakleycreek.org.nz.

Dates for your diary

Bring your family and friends - and spread the word about:

Saturdays, 16th, 23rd May, 9.00am: Rodent control
Meet at the Unitec student carpark, near Building 76.

Sunday, 7th June, 10.00am: Community Planting - under the pines, west side of the creek, up from the waterfall.

Monday, 15th June, 7.00pm: Annual General Meeting

Sunday, 5th July, 10.00am: Community Planting

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



Guntaas planted this baby puriri seedling in May 2013 - they have both grown a lot since then! Photo: W. John



Roskill Rovers win award for service ... congratulations!

Roskill Rovers have won the 2015 Baden Powell Lodge No. 381 Rover Crew Service Award Shield, a national award which is presented annually for the best service to Scouting and the community. Like other Rover groups, Roskill Rovers provide leadership for younger scout groups as well as other help around their local community -

painting Plunket rooms, working on school grounds and classrooms, helping run community events, and more.

However, a key point of difference that saw them win the award this year, was their regular commitment to running a trapline at Oakley Creek. Congratulations for a well-deserved award!

Roskill Rovers meet on Monday nights at the Blockhouse Bay Community Centre and welcome new members aged 18 to 26. As well as doing service, they also learn new skills and do other things just for fun - such as camel hunts, mud bash paddock racing, car rallies, tramps and camps. For more information, email crew@roskillrovers.org.



Above: CVNZ volunteers clearing the trifid bindweed from young kahikatea in Harbutt Reserve. This is an example of the impact this weed can have on our young plants, if it is not controlled.

Right: some of the Well Connected Alliance team.

Photos: W. John



Help needed for plant propagation please

Did you know that Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga has its own nursery space at Unitec? And right now, down at the nursery, there is seed which needs sowing and seedlings which need potting on for the next years' planting along the creek. It would be really great if a regular schedule could be established for this work to be done. If you are able to volunteer in this way, please contact Wendy John, ph 815 3101 or 027 232 6454.

Summer weeding of bindweed

Over 316 volunteer hours were undertaken, in a three week period in January, to remove approximately 122 black rubbish bags of bindweed, just from the Lizard Management Area. Thanks, heaps to Arthur and Margaret, for all of the hours they put it, and thanks to other volunteers, including the Well Connected Alliance 'comms team' who took a morning 'out of the office' to help with this important job.



Eddie, Arthur, Margaret, Sandra and Dejun - after a hard morning's work removing bindweed.

Monitoring and pest control

Possum Monitoring Feb 2015 by Jane Shand

Thanks to the team - John, Margaret, Dejun and Leon - we have results from our latest wax tag monitoring exercise on the creek.

What these results are showing us is that (given that we had one more wax tag out this year (80 compared to 79):

- possums biting the wax tags have increased by 7.2%

- rodents have decreased slightly (5.58%)

No rabbit bites were identified in these results. This could be due to inaccurate analysis, but two of us did the checking. There have been rabbits seen about on the creek this year. This is interesting, as there were many rabbits sighted in the previous year and the wax tags did have rabbit bites.

We continue to do pest control throughout the year. If anyone is interested in joining in, we are happy to train volunteers for trapping and/or monitoring of pests to help preserve our native flora and fauna. Contact Wendy John, ph 815 3101 or 027 232 6454.

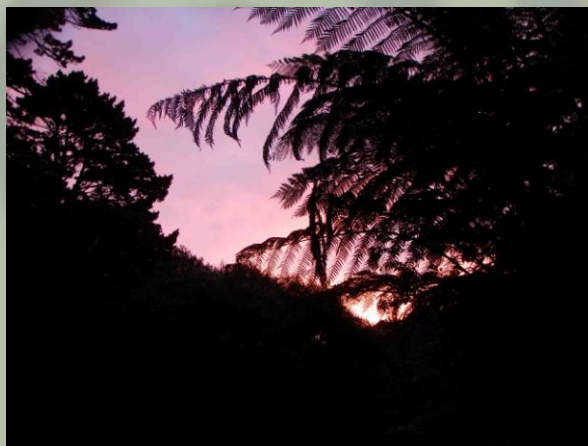
Right: After the summer break, regular volunteer John Maskell did a maintenance run and reset the traps along the east side of the creek. The Roskill Rovers have also been busy maintaining their trap line, further up stream between Phyllis Reserve and the rail corridor. It appears that the possums have all moved up there, as the Rovers are trapping possums in good numbers, while the traps remain mostly empty in the lower part of the creek - which, we hope, is a sign that there are now fewer around there.

Results of Wax tag bites Feb 2015				Tags Bitten					
				Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
	Area	Line	Set	Possum	Possum	Rodent	Rodent	Rabbit	Rabbit
Feb-14	West	Line A	40	4	10	26	65	5	12.5
	East	Line B	39	4	10.3	9	23.08	2	5.13
			79	8	20.30%	35	88.08%	7	17.63
Feb-15	West	Line A	40	8	20	21	52.5	0	0
	East	Line B	40	3	7.5	12	30	0	0
			80	11	27.50%	33	82.50%	0	0
Difference									
2014 to 2015			+1	+3	7.20%	-2	-5.58%	-7	-17.30%



Above: Leon, learning the ropes about possum monitoring.

Photos: W. John



Summer scenes - summer sunset; a rose in the rubble - found on a vacant site on the edge of Oakley Creek; and summer fun at the waterfall.

Which *Coprosma* is that?

Now you can find out, also from Landcare Research, with the new *Coprosma* key app, available free on the Android Google Play Store at <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.lucidcentral.mobile.coprosma>. This is the first in a planned series of LucidMobile plant id apps, to include native and naturalised grasses, native orchids, flowering plant genera and weeds of New Zealand.

Take a look ...

... at the new Landcare Research [Long-Term Ecology Lab](#) website. The Long-Term Ecology Laboratory is dedicated to studying long-term ecological processes (over decades to thousands of years) to help further our understanding of the dynamics, function and trajectories of present-day ecosystems.



Auckland lava field rock forest - what is it? by Adrienne Stanton



Rare rock forest remnant at Almorah Rd, Mt Eden.

Photos: A. Stanton

Mahoe rock forest occurs at Oakley Creek Te Auaunga in six small remnants through Phyllis and Harbutt Reserves, and possibly in very small areas further upstream. As this basalt lava field forest type is now rare on the Auckland isthmus, these remnants are being protected by a weed control programme, funded by the Albert/Eden Local Board, and by pest control undertaken by Roskill Rover Scout volunteers, in association with Friends of Oakley Creek. Restoration planting in the understorey is also being carried out because of the loss of biodiversity - the characteristic rock forest species have mostly become locally extinct. So what are these characteristic species; what is Auckland rock forest?

Auckland Museum botanist, Ewen Cameron, has researched the historic records, including early herbarium specimens, and studied lava field remnants, particularly the three largest, which are found on Mt Eden Maungawhau ([E.K. Cameron \(1999\). Mt Eden Rock Forests, Auckland City. Auckland Botanical Society Journal, 54\(2\), 46-53.](#)). The following information is all sourced from this work.

Distinctive elements of the forest include the following species, in no particular order:

canopy trees - mangeao *Litsea calicaris* (a tree which is more commonly found in coastal dune forest); titoki *Alectryon excelsum*; puka *Griselinia lucida* - which usually grows as an epiphyte, but can also be found on Rangitoto Island growing directly on the lava; mahoe *Meliclytus ramiflorus*; pohutukawa *Metrosideros excelsa*; karaka, *Corynocarpus laevigatus*; kohekohe *Dysoxylum spectabile*; pigeonwood *Hedycarya arborea*; ngaio, *Myoporum laetum*; puriri *Vitex lucens*;

understorey trees and shrubs - rangiora *Brachyglottis repanda*; houpara *Pseudopanax lessonii*; coastal karamu *Coprosma* aff. *macrocarpa*; kawakawa *Piper excelsum*; whau *Entelea arborescens*; poroporo *Solanum aviculare*;

epiphytes and vines - white rata *Metrosideros perforata*; kiekie *Freycinetia banksii*;

ground layer - *Peperomia urvilliana*; *Collospermum hastatum*; *Astelia banksii* and *A. solandri*;

ferns - leather fern *Pyrrosia eleagnifolia*; lance fern *Anarthropteris lanceolata*; hounds tongue *Microsorium pustulatum*; spleenworts *Asplenium lamprophyllum* and *A. oblongifolium*; tarawera *Pellaea rotundifolia*; filmy ferns, *Hymenophyllum dilatatum*, *H. flexuosum* and *Trichomanes endlicherianum*.

Some of the ground layer species also grow as epiphytes. Mosses, such as *Champtochaete pulvinata* and leafy liverworts, such as *Lepidolaena taylori* cover many of the basalt boulders.

Also notable are the species which appear to be absent from this forest type, such as tree ferns and many climbers.



Peperomia urvilliana at Withiel Thomas Reserve.

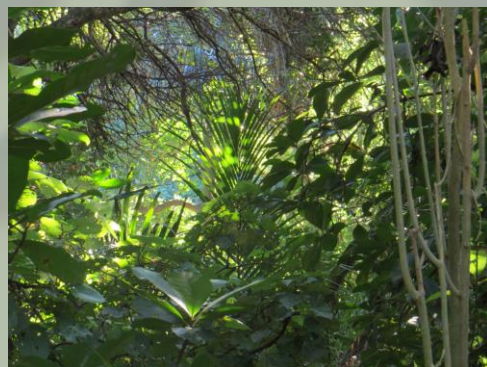


Mangaeo tree in flower at Almorah Rd and as a seedling at Withiel Thomas Reserve.

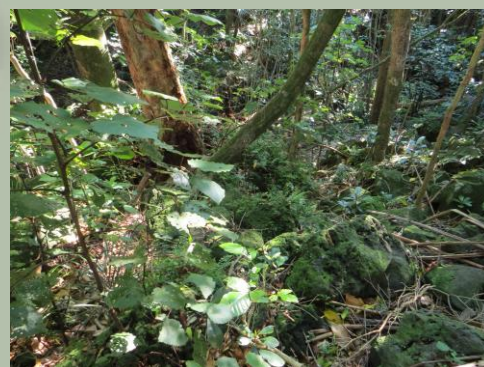


Weed Watch

This section of the newsletter usually features details about weeds that threaten the native plants along Oakley Creek. This issue we challenge you to take the [Weedbusters online weed quiz](#) to test your knowledge. How many of the weeds have you seen at Oakley Creek? Are you a weed jedi? Remember to brush up on the ones you did not recognise, using the information on the [Weedbuster website](#).



Lush growth at the Almorah Rd remnant



It is not just the species composition which characterises Auckland rock forest. Despite the lava field looking like it would be a challenging habitat for plant survival, in 1871, Thomas Kirk noted a surprising 'luxuriance of growth', especially of some ferns, including filmy fern species. This luxuriance can still be seen at Mt Eden now.

Further reading: - W. John (2012). Remnant mahoe rock forest. Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga June Update 5(2). - A. Stanton and M. Marler (2012). On biodiversity ... what future for Oakley Creek? Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga October Update 5(3).

The Oakley Creek Te Auaunga Awa Game

Aim: In this game, participants learn about stream dynamics.

Participants and Equipment:

A group of people, a large clear area to move about in, some objects or extra people to represent topographic features. Two long ropes or tapes to form streambanks can also be helpful.

Set up:

The instructor explains to the participants that they are all now water molecules. Gather the water molecules at one corner of the playing area - the stream source at the top of the catchment. Instruct them that, just like real water molecules, on the word 'freeze' they must freeze - stop and listen.

Play:

1. Ask the water molecules to walk slowly and in a straight line to the diagonal opposite end of the clear space - the sea. When the first molecules reach the sea, call 'freeze'. Discuss with the molecules how they might get back to the top of the catchment - useful key words: evaporate, waft in the wind or blow back, rain. Individual molecules can decide on their own actions to demonstrate these concepts.

2. 'Freeze' the water molecules when the first ones reach the sea for the second time. Erupt Mt Roskill and Mt Albert, using objects or extra people in the upper and mid catchment respectively. Discuss how the stream will now have to flow around the volcanoes, instead of flowing in a straight line.

3. Now that the basic movement, from top of catchment to sea and evaporation back, has been established, repeatedly 'freeze' and apply any or all of the following 'Events', discussing them with the group as necessary, being guided by the age and knowledge level of the group.

Events:

A. Weather:

1. Drought - Water molecules move slowly in a narrow flow, evaporate fast, slow to rain.
2. Flood - Water molecules overflow the streambanks, moving very fast, evaporate slowly, rain heavily.

B. History:

1. Wairaka - Thirsty Wairaka stamps her foot to create a new spring - assign a few water molecules to the new Wairaka tributary stream flowing into the main stream.
2. Star Mill - A mill is built to use the stream's water power. Divert some water molecules to flow through the water wheel to power the mill, perhaps over and under a chair or invent your own action.



December high flow!

Photo: W. John

C. Environment:

1. Roads - Roads are built next to the stream. Polluted water runoff into the stream makes the stream 'sick' (water molecules may particularly enjoy acting out vomiting to show this event!).
2. Car wash - Someone washes their car on the drive and the detergent flows into the stream, again making the stream 'sick'.
3. Rubbish clean up - Here comes a Kea Scout (adapt to suit particular group), picking up rubbish. 'Happy' stream - perhaps some water molecules could become leaping fish or undulating eels.
4. Weeding - Here comes a Scout, pulling out weeds so the native plants can grow. 'Happy' stream.
5. Planting - Here comes a Cub Scout, planting native seedlings to shade the stream and filter water. 'Happy' stream.
6. Pest control - Here comes a Venturer Scout, setting traps for possums and rats, so the native plants can grow. 'Happy' stream.

Extra for experts:

1. Think up and add more of your own events and actions.
2. As participants learn the events and actions, call them out faster - water molecules slow to respond correctly are 'out' until there is one or a small group of winners.
3. Learn about another river or stream and apply its own particular geography and history events.



Kanuka flowers at Te Auaunga.

Take a fabulous flight ...

... from Mt Roskill, through the fantastic tunnel which saved Oakley Creek, out and up above Waterview by viewing the drone fly through at

<https://www.facebook.com/AliceTBM>

Wildlife encounters



Oakley Creek fantail all a-flutter, wax eye chicks and a millipede (millipedes have 2 legs per segment; centipedes 1 leg). *Photos: W. John*

Out and about ...

Photos: W. John (unless stated otherwise)



Above: Powell St Sustainable Neighbourhood had a fun time at their farewell to BJ & Pavla - woofers from the Czech Republic, who have done an amazing job of helping to transform the land adjacent to Oakley Creek. The last task that was carried out by BJ & Pavla was to build a picnic table from timber recycled from an old fence on the property. We wish them well in their travels around Aotearoa. The party also celebrated the fruits of the communities' labour - a work, very much, in progress.



Below right: Whau Local Board and support staff visited the Powell Street Sustainable Neighbourhood site on Oakley Creek, as part of their tour of environment projects they support, in their ward. Alice Reiger, WaiCare (in orange vest), showed the group how to sample macro invertebrates from the creek. Powell St Sustainable Neighbourhood resident, Ian Everett, is fourth from left, at the back.



Below: Volunteers at the December working bee hunted out the weeds between the native grasses and sedges.



Left: Children, parents and staff from early childhood education centre, **Collectively Kids**, were treated to a guided walk along the creek, ending with a picnic at the waterfall. Collectively Kids children visit the creek on a regular basis, planting, picking up rubbish and observing the wildlife as they go.



Through the **New Zealand Mentor** programme, two groups of young Korean 'weed busters' helped remove a heap of bindweed on the creek. This formed part of their cultural education in New Zealand.

Near left: Logan, Johnny and students.



Fine summer weather was helpful for the investigatory drilling for the **Waterview Shared Path** project.



There is a new pine park bench by the creek - thanks to **Asplundh arborists** for making use of part of one of the felled pine trees, upstream from the waterfall. Take a break, and enjoy the relaxing sounds of the water.



One of the benefits of being involved with Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga is the opportunity to participate in our **specialist guided walk series**. There were many keen observers looking for **spiders** on the night walk with arachnologist, David Court in December (left). For photos of some of the spiders at Oakley Creek, see past newsletter issues: March 2010 3(1), July 2011 4(2) and December 2013 6(4) at <http://oakleycreek.org.nz/resources/newsletters/>



Above: Regular volunteer, Margaret McConnell, removed many dock *Rumex crispus* seed heads during some **summer weeding**.



Above: **Archaeologist** (and occasional contributor to our newsletter), Brent Druskovich (centre), with Michelle Dubion (Te Ngahere) and David Stejskal (Auckland Council), assessed planting sites for 2015.



Below and left: Oakley Creek's very own 'trash to treasure' fashion - a woody cased caddisfly. And more fabulous fashion, Wendy in waders ... at the **NIWA research project** macroinvertebrate monitoring session in December.



Good cheer and good food abounded at the Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga **End of Year picnic** in the park, held to celebrate the achievements of the past year.

From left in foreground, three of the many wonderful volunteers whose names begin with J - Jane Shand, John Stevenson and John Allen.



Left: Pukupuku, *Blechnum parrisiae* (formerly known as *Doodia australis*) on the root ball of a fallen pine tree.

Below: John Stevenson and Rhiannon Overton braved the wet to clear bindweed at the **February working bee**, on the floodplain below Phyllis Reserve.



This morning tea break for the **moth plant weedbusters** was well deserved. They had been working hard on the north west corner of Unitec / NW Cycleway, to stop the moth plant from spreading into Oakley Creek. From left: Keith Ayton, Wendy, David Smith and Margaret McConnell.

Photo: J. Barton



Friends of Oakley Creek participated in the **Albert Eden Local Board 'Kids in Parks'** series of events with a 'scavenger hunt' for the children.

Feedback from one of the parents was *'This is a great idea. We usually just walk along the creek with the children, without taking the time to actually explore it.'*

Above: Wendy John and Albert Eden Local Board member, Margi Watson. Left: Friends of Oakley Creek committee member, Helen Mellsop helped provide information about the creek to participants.

There was a great turnout, a great job done, and a great time had by all at the **March special Weedbusters Working Bee**.

Bottom right: Note John's wonderful 'dock installation'.



**March 2015
Weedbusters
Working Bee**

Jeff Lang has been undertaking the **water monitoring** by the **Craddock Street Bridge** for over two years, but is needing to move on to undertake his Masters degree. Thanks, heaps, Jeff, for your wonderful contribution, and we wish you well for the future. Jeff is going to be replaced by Craddock St Community / Sustainable Neighbourhood member, Rachel Shearer and her two children. They are very excited about being involved and learning more about the life that lives in our stream.



Jeff Lang and Alice Rieger, Wai Care examined a water sample for invertebrates and found this damselfly, shown here on a plastic spoon.



Above: Friends of Oakley Creek committee member Dominic Hutching helped Eileen Witt with **water monitoring** at the **Mt Albert St Jukes Scout den site**.

Below: This hive of activity at the waterfall was a crew preparing to **film gospel music** late last year.



There are always jobs to be done in the nursery and volunteers from Leslie Haines' **Open Polytechnic class** (left) and **CVNZ International group** (below) helped out there, over the summer.

Summer weeding statistics (by end of February):

- 508 volunteer hours**
- 217 rubbish bags of bindweed!**





At the creek mouth, the **Well Connected Alliance** is now working on the path linking **Howlett and Waterview Reserves**, with planting to take place this winter. Here are some 'before' photos, taken a year ago - note the fine placement of the weedy woolly nightshade trees around the marine sanctuary information sign and the decorative tyre features. We look forward to seeing the new path very much!

Photos: A. Stanton



ASB Community Trust
Te Kaitiaki Putea o Tamaki o Tai Tokerau
supported by ASB



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

Next Newsletter Contributions and comments for the next newsletter are welcome - please send to 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: Dominic Hutching
Committee: Helen Mellsop, John Stevenson
Newsletter Editor: Adrienne Stanton

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