



Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga

WINTER 2023

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

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Editorial

"Awesome stats, I'm very impressed."

That was the response from our local Community Parks Ranger when he received the report he'd requested on the number of community and corporate activities that we had run over the past year.

I am writing this editorial at Matariki. For me, our home-grown celebration brings a whole new energy and joy to our task of caring for Te Auaunga. It's a privilege – rain, hail or shine. It has scarcely stopped raining since the beginning of the year, but our amazing volunteers are undaunted, and this winter edition celebrates them. There are some gloriously muddy photos to share with you.

There's an entertaining article on making the transition from full-on muddy volunteer to fundraising eco-warrior. We also have feature articles on two fascinating plants that we have on the awa – the *Pellaea* fern family and *Scutellinia*, the Eyelash cup fungi.

So, if Matariki is inspiring you to get more involved, you don't have to start in the mud – we are looking for a new secretary. You get to work with a friendly, inspirational and efficient bunch of people. Our organisation produces impressive results! For evidence of these, check out the before and after pictures of the Powell Street end esplanade reserve on this page.

You'll find our contact details at the end of this newsletter.

Enjoy!

Gina Hefferan, Editor



Photo (above): Before – Powell St end reserve in 2014



Photo (above): After – Powell St end reserve in 2023

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."
Anne Frank

Volunteers

By Wendy John

Volunteers are at the core of any successful community project. They are definitely essential for all the different aspects of restoring our precious awa. There are those who attend regular activities and are happy to do whatever needs doing. There are those who have specific tasks, who quietly get on with their work behind the scenes. And then there are those who are involved in more than one activity. It is wonderful to know that the wheels of our project are so well oiled and rolling along smoothly with all this wonderful support.

Some of our regular activities and volunteers include:

Pest control – trapping weekly, and baiting quarterly:

- Howlett & Waterview Esplanade Reserves – David Blackall (Team Herdman)
- Northern Circuit – David Bowden, Carole French & Craig Martin
- Mid Circuit – Chris Judd, Gavin Thompson & Crispin Balfour
- Southern Circuit – Rosemary Phillips, Chris Brown & Wayne Forsyth



Photo (above): Nursery team enjoying the newly installed shade sail (thanks to John)



Photo (above): Rock forest before FoOC started restoration work

- Rodent Baiting – John Stevenson, Helen Mellisop, Marianne van der Haas & Leslie Haines
- Trap maintenance – Tony McNeil

Water monitoring – quarterly at seven sites along the awa:

- Wairaka Wetland / Stream – Jill Pierce & Eric Pedersen
- Unitec Bridge – Jagjeeta Kaur & whanau
- Cradock Street Bridge – Helen Mellisop
- St Judes Scouts Den – Clare Brown & whanau
- Kukuwai Park (Oakley Creek & Stoddard Rd Tributary) – Sarah Bishop & Rutu Jani
- May Road – Sarah Bishop & Lynda Burnside

Nursery – weekly sessions:

- Gina Hefferan, Bev Crosby & Margaret McConnell



Photo (above): Tony staking trees post flooding



Photo (above): Rock forest now

Monthly Working Bees - Planting season well underway

By Wendy John

“The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit.”
Nelson Henderson

Time waits for no-one, and the planting season is in full swing with lots of plants going in the ground. However, with all the rain we have been having these past months some sites are proving rather challenging. The recent (July) community planting saw people slipping and sliding on the slopes – fun for some and not so for others.



Photo (above): Mulching crew



Photo (above): A job well done (Martin Brown)



Photo (above): Martin & son, Hugo



Photo (above): Mulch lined up and ready to go



Photo (above): Conservation Volunteers migrant group helping with planting in the 'rock forest'



Photo (above): Noah, Joshua & Matt enjoying some delicious home baking after a fun and challenging tree planting

We also did another planting in the 'rock forest' in Harbutt Reserve in June. Over the past ten years, with a lot of help from Auckland Council con-

tractors, as well as our wonderful volunteers, this area is slowly being transitioned from an overgrown jungle of climbing asparagus, privet, ginger and wattle, with a smattering of natives, to a beautiful area of native bush. Apart from the planting this also includes an increasing amount of natural regeneration, now that there is a seed source available. See the transformation in the photos at the bottom of page two.

And then, of course, there is all the extra work that goes

on to ensure the activities run smoothly. That includes: the planning – months in advance; the site preparation, which is done by ecological contractor, Te Ngahere; and getting the plants to the site and co-ordinating the plantings.



Photo (above): Te Ngahere site preparation squad

Friday Working Bees

By Wendy John

Our Friday mornings continue to be very productive, thanks to the efforts of our wonderful regular volunteers, as well as a number of corporates who have joined us recently (see Corporates and Beyond). We planted up a riparian area in Harbutt Reserve, with sedges that will help to prevent erosion, and have been busy continuing with clearing woolly nightshade and moth plant, as well as weeding and mulching more of the Mayor's Million Trees across the awa.



Photo (above): Harry and Helen doing riparian planting



Photo (above): Chris C, Tristan, Helen, Tina, Harry and April after a hard morning's work in the rock forest

Matariki planting – We decided to go ahead with our Friday Working Bee on Matariki Day – slightly later than usual so that people could attend early morning Matariki events beforehand. We only expected a few people but ended up with 10 volunteers – keen to do something positive on the day. We put around 100 plants in next to the awa in Waterview Glades. It was a lovely, celebratory occasion.



Photo (above): Rena and Rebecca at the Matariki planting



Photo (above): Alison and Tom at the Matariki planting



Photo (above): Chris Matariki planting



Photo (above): Tina and Kerry Marariki planting

Annual General Meeting

By Wendy John

We ticked off another successful AGM this year – our 19th. We are grateful to Dr Wes Webb for an entertaining presentation on birdsong. Who knew that the bellbirds on each of our Hauraki Gulf Islands have different dialects; or that bellbird hatchlings start with a full repertoire of song but narrow it down to a range appropriate to their sex as they grow?

It was great to see all our committee standing for another year – David Bowden (Chair), Matt Hall (Treasurer), Adrienne Stanton, John Stevenson, Marin Adams, Chris Brown, Cate Ryan, Gina Heferan and Wendy John (ex officio).



Photo (above): AGM crew (Margi Watson)

Te Auaunga ‘Community Group’ Activities

By Wendy John

St Judes Scouts – another successful working bee was held in June at the ‘den’. Much effort went into clearing the floodplain from the storms earlier in the year – fallen trees, bits of broken fences and lots of other ‘flotsam and jetsam’, while some of the scouts cleared weed in the planted area above the culvert. The session finished with planting some of the floodplain with riparian plants. A great effort all round.



Photo (above): St Judes Scouts working bee

A Rocha – one of our key partner groups joined us for their first working bee of the year on the ‘peninsula’ in the northern end of Harbutt Reserve. This area, where A Rocha helped with some additional planting in 2022, was severely affected by the flooding. In one place, the water took a short-cut across the top of the peninsula knocking over a number of good-sized trees and causing erosion. The team did an amazing job of tidying the site up and planting the gaps, including the riparian edge on the upstream side of the peninsula – to help prevent further erosion.



Photo (above): A Rocha team



Photo (above): Shanti and Simon, A Rocha

Collectively Kids (CK) – the clouds cleared, and the sun came out just in time for our lovely CK whanau’s Matariki planting. This year, because the walkway is still officially closed, the tamariki did their planting at the Waterview Heritage Area. The occasion started with the children singing a beautiful waiata. Then they got on with the planting. It’s always a delight to work with these young eco-warriors. And it’s lovely to observe them being so easily distracted from the task at hand, when they find worms in the holes.



Photo (above): Collectively Kids group

Pt Chevalier Girl Guides – It’s always a pleasure having team leaders Sarah and Rosemary and the girl guides helping out on the creek – which they’ve been doing since 2014. The site they have adopted is in the northern part of Waterview Glades, and it’s really starting to take shape. At their recent visit to Te Auaunga they helped with some much-needed weeding and did a rubbish clean up. We look forward to them coming back in August to put more plants in the ground.



Photo (above): Pt Chevalier guides

Corporates and Beyond Volunteers

By Wendy John

The corporate groups continue to roll in – again, some approach us directly, and some come through Volunteering Auckland. And some come back to help out on a regular basis, either annually or more regularly. Their contributions are very much appreciated.

The weather was kind to us on each occasion when the Sika team joined our Friday group, and then Stantec came to help us with plant releasing and mulching of the Mayor’s Million Trees planting.

We have had several Ernst Young teams helping out on different days and at a range of sites. They did a great job doing a post-storm cleaning up. (Refer also to Sandra’s article.)



Photo (above): Sika AM team



Photo (above): Sika PM team



Photo (above): Stantec group



Photo (above): Ernst Young group

And a team from Cyma, along with a couple of our ‘locals,’ braved the weather to help with some more plant releasing and mulching in Waterview Glades.



Photo (above): Cyma group

Outreach Report

By Sandra Maclean

Wet weather hasn't kept our corporate volunteers away. We've had teams turn out in some pretty wild conditions. Fleet Partners, ANZ and GN Construction all worked hard on the cyclone clean up below the BP filling station. We've now done the worst of the debris clearing in that area and have started planting in the gaps. There's lots more to do in terms of planting, but we can still entertain groups keen on saw work by getting them to take out more privet.

In the Waterview Heritage Area (WHA) we asked Programmed, Auckland Council contractors, to prepare an area for planting. They accidentally did the wrong bit before they did the right bit, so we ended up with a bonus area. Given this happy accident coupled with the vast amount of work Martin Brown, one of our regular volunteers, has done clearing privet, we were able to get a sizeable area planted up and mulched. Corporate groups from Crombie & Lockwood and Beam



Photo (above): Crombie and Lockwood at WHA



Photo (above): Financial Markets Authority cyclone clean up session



Photo (above): Beam Suntory planting at WHA

Suntory helped our regular Tuesday morning volunteers get this done. Three extra sessions were run at the Waterview Heritage Area with our seasoned weed campaigners focusing on privet, woolly nightshade and wattle, upstream and downstream of our main focus area.

We ran another session at Waterview Apartments clearing privet from the natives – another session to run there shortly. And we ran a rubbish clean-up at the Kainga Ora development at 1550 Great North Road. Below this development there is a strip of bush which a vast amount of single use rubbish had blown into. We also pulled out large items such as fish tanks and kids' bicycles which had been dumped over the fence. Nasra, one of the residents, made us all soup and bread which was hugely appreciated after the event, as it was a pretty filthy morning weather wise.



Photo (above): Fleet Partners cyclone session

At the Odyssey House site on Bollard Avenue, we are down to the last 10% of the site in terms of the initial weed knockdown. This last bit will take some time though, as it is something of an impenetrable thicket of honey-suckle and muehlenbeckia that would make even the most seasoned weed campaigner quail. Flamethrower anybody?

Water Monitoring on the Awa

By Wendy John

Since the flooding and storms there appear to be fewer macroinvertebrates showing up in our monitoring sessions on the creek. We hope numbers will pick up in the not-too-distant future.



Photo (above): Harguun and Jagjeeta (Unitec Bridge)



Photo (above): Jill and Eric (Wairaka Stream)

Tradescantia Yellow Leaf Spot Fungus Release

By Gina Hefferan

“What are you up to on this part of the creek?”
“We’re just planting some tradescantia.”

Anyone who has battled this rampant, difficult to control weed in their own garden will understand the look of horror that crossed the onlooker’s face at this point. Yet that is what we were doing – planting *Tradescantia fluminensis* along our precious awa.

But this was no ordinary tradescantia. These plants had been infected with the yellow leaf spot fungus (*Kordyana brasiliensis*). Te Auaunga, along with Waititiko / Meola Creek, had been chosen as the latest release points to spread this important biological control. As representatives of Friends of Oakley Creek, Wendy and I were pleased to participate.

Tradescantia is a problematic weed throughout the North Island and in some parts of the South Island. It smothers low growing natives and prevents regeneration of native forest. It is hoped that the fungus will weaken the tradescantia, allowing native seedlings to emerge.

Ruairi Flynn of Auckland Council’s Biosecurity team explained that the reason tradescantia was such a problem was that it was introduced to New Zealand alone, without any of the controls

which keep it in check in its native South America. Biocontrol can be seen as the process of reuniting a plant species with its natural controls.

The release was the culmination of a painstaking process. Host range testing was necessary to ensure that the fungus would not infect other species. Landcare Research determined that it was safe. It was first released in New Zealand in 2018. And, on further investigation, we have found that the fungus has already made its way to the creek, particularly on the moister floodplains, where it is thriving.

The fungus release is the last stage of the tradescantia control programme. There have been three earlier releases of beetles which target the plant. The tradescantia leaf beetle (*Neolema ogloblini*) which damages the leaves, the tradescantia stem beetle (*Lema basicostata*) which attacks the stems, and the distinctively striped tradescantia tip beetle (*Neolema abbreviata*) which attacks the growing tips. There have already been sightings of one of these beetles on the creek, so the process of the various biocontrols spreading is well advanced. However, beetles, if they are on the floodplain, are susceptible to being washed away in a flood. Whereas the fungus will be more resilient; indeed, it is spread by water.



Photo (above): Auckland Council’s Ruairi and Ross release infected plants



Photo (above): Tradescantia infected with yellow leaf spot fungus

Te Auaunga self-guided tour map

By Wendy John

We were fortunate enough to receive a grant from Auckland Transport's Community Bike Fund, to produce a touring map of the catchment for cyclists and pedestrians to enjoy our precious awa. Designer Vic Segedin, of Dragonfly Design, has done an amazing job of putting this together.

The recently refurbished Bike Hub Mt Roskill – <https://www.facebook.com/RoskillBikeKitchen/> and PATH (Puketāpapa Active Transport Haven) – <https://www.path.net.nz/path-about> have also supported us with the production of a brochure – copies of which can be picked up from the Bike Hub at the Wesley Community Centre.

Key

- Toilet
- Cafe
- Flora and fauna
- Community garden
- Notable trees
- Views
- Heritage site
- Art gallery
- Sculpture
- Mural
- Bridge
- Playground
- Bike repairs
- Sports field
- Basketball court
- Steep path

Walking and Cycling Te Auaunga Oakley Creek

Visit the many points of interest along this extensive walking and cycling path following Te Auaunga Oakley Creek – nature, heritage, art and architecture, playgrounds and sports facilities, and three stunning maunga nearby.

Scan for information about the rides and walks, and all the points of interest.

Or visit our website: oakleycreek.org.nz

Points of interest along the awa

- 1 Waterview Heritage Area
- 2 Te Auaunga Oakley Creek Walkway
- 3 Te Auaunga flora and fauna
- 4 Sanctuary Mahi Whenua
- 5 Te Piringa (The 'Connection') Bridge
- 6 Pou / Sculpture (Te Piringa Bridge)
- 7 Unitec notable trees
- 8 Te Auaunga Waterfall
- 9 Kōkopu (Native Fish / Galaxids) Bridge
- 10 Pou / Sculpture (Kokopu Bridge)

Other points of interest nearby

Follow bike paths and calmed/back streets to discover the many interesting parks and maunga, and lots of art, architecture and heritage.

- 1 Eric Armishaw Park
- 2 Kuaka Park
- 3 Ōwairaka Maunga
- 4 Alberton House
- 5 Fearon Park
- 6 Te Tātua-a-Riukiuta / Big King Maunga
- 7 Freeland Reserve
- 8 Puketāpapa Maunga
- 9 The Arts House Trust at the Pah Homestead
- 10 Monte Cecilia Park, including notable trees
- 11 Taumanu Reserve

This map was made possible with the kind support of

Partnering with

Additional linked cycle and walkways

NORTH WESTERN CYCLEWAY
Te Whāu, Te Ahiu, Waikūmētē Stream to Henderson, Massey and Westgate
Pt Chev, and onto Light Path and Grafton Gully

TE ARA O NEW LYNN KI AVONDALE
New Lynn to Avondale
A path that follows the railway as well as taking you along calm leafy streets

SOUTH WESTERN CYCLEWAY
Avondale to Onehunga
A path following the motorway, taking you through Taumanu Reserve

NGĀ HAU MĀNGERE WALKING AND CYCLEWAY
Cross the New Old Mangere Bridge
Connect with the Ambury to Waikaraka Path

Photo (above): OakleyCreek-Map-A0

Auckland parks awarded prestigious Green Flag

Recently, a number of parks across the Auckland region were acknowledged as some of the 'best green spaces' in the world through the Green Flag Awards. These included Underwood and Walmsley Parks – https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/news/2023/05/three-new-auckland-parks-awarded-prestigious-green-flag/?fbclid=IwAR07eme5rhA17x0kdHx_hT18oqyLMSTnflz8aa7_GVri3W2i3zCTAXxBWN4

It is great to see the wonderful work that Auckland Council has done of restoring our awa - with support from mana whenua and the local community, being recognised on the international arena.

You can enjoy this area next time you explore the awa – using the new map (above).

Volunteering Without Getting Your Hands Dirty

By Marin Adams

I usually write stories for the newsletter about volunteers who work on the creek, but in this issue I am going to interview myself. I am a volunteer but have transitioned from one who used to get muddy to one who now keeps clean.



Photo (above): Marin (rt) – the once muddy volunteer with friend Caroline



Photo (above): Marin's favourite place on Te Auaunga (Marin Adams)

Q Reflecting back, Marin, tell me about some of the volunteers you have interviewed, who work on the creek?

Well, there was the unforgettable Oakley Loop Group who cleared and planted in the rain and the children who could confidently wield a saw or sharp spade. Then the St Judes Scouts who worked in, as well as, beside the creek. Both groups picked up lots of rubbish, and then weeded and planted.

Then I remember Helen, Tony and Gary who are all enthusiasts driven by a determination to protect the birdlife on the creek. They help to control the rats and possums that search at night for anything edible, including eggs and baby chicks. Gary made me aware of the predatory mayhem that occurs each night in the bush, whilst humans, oblivious, sleep safely in their homes.

Caroline propagated putaputaweta and parataniwha, before planting them along the banks of the creek. She felt privileged to be able to help. I learned from her that volunteering was about giving AND receiving.

Q Would you say you have become a bit obsessed with Oakley Creek?

Yes, probably I have. It brings so many rewards. As Frank Lloyd Wright said, "Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you."

Q Marin, you're getting on a bit now. Are you doing any voluntary work yourself, apart from writing about the hard work of others?

Well, that was observant of you. I guess my grey hair was a giveaway. Luckily you can't see my sore hip or fear of toppling down a bank. So yes, I am volunteering, but in a different way. You see Friends of Oakley Creek need to raise around \$54,000 a year and I put my hand up to help.

Fundraising is probably just as challenging as digging out blackberry, but in a different way. It's scarier, as failure will have disastrous consequences. What will happen to the creek without any leadership or resources?

Q So how do you think raising all that money will be possible?

I think we will have to ask a lot more people to contribute financially than we have done in the past. We know Auckland Council is very constrained at the moment and may be for some years to come. Grants may not be so easy to obtain in the future. I am sure there are lots of people living near Oakley Creek who value the native bush and birds and, if asked, would be happy to give donations, rather than digging holes, clearing out madeira vine or setting traps in the bush. I am hoping that readers, particularly those who like to keep their hands from getting muddy, will respond and "Givealittle". Our native biodiversity, including the bush and birds are just too precious to lose. If you, too, care about our awa, please donate.

Just click on this **Givealittle** link.

The Pellaea Whanau on the Awa

By Wendy John

As mentioned in a previous article on ferns by Chris Brown – ‘... they are an ancient group of plants (over 3 million years old); reproducing not by flowers and fruit or seeds, but by spores. Spores are easily spotted, when in season, as dark powdery spots on the underside of the fronds. They are contained in a casing called sporangia, and grouped into bunches, called sori.’

In this issue we are looking at a family of ferns of which there are two varieties in Aotearoa – *Pellaea falcata* and *Pellaea rotundifolia* – both of which we are fortunate to have growing on the creek – albeit in very small numbers. The *P falcata* may have been planted, but the *P rotundifolia* was definitely not, so has found its own way here.

I recall, quite some time ago, an ecologist advising us not to waste resourcing and energy on purchasing and planting ferns. Rather aim to provide the right environment and they will just arrive. In the case of *P rotundifolia* (and many other ferns) the ecologist was correct, and we must be on the right track with our restoration efforts.

Family – Pteridaceae

Pellaea – Dark fern; from the Greek pellos; dark leaf and leaf stalk

Both are terrestrial or rupestral (growing on rock) ferns with a creeping stem (rhizome) bearing erect, glossy and leathery fronds. And, yes, they just happen to be growing in one of our rock forest areas on the creek.

The main difference between the two is the shape of the pinnae / leaflets:

P falcata – oblong-curved with short stalk, smooth margins, gradually tapering to a point

P rotundifolia – rounded to oblong with short stalk; minutely toothed margins, abruptly tapering to a short sharp point.

***Pellaea aff. falcata* / Sickle Fern**

Falcata – From the Latin falx – ‘scythe’ or ‘sickle’, meaning sickle-shaped.

Threatened status – At risk, declining.

Distribution – Indigenous / Non-endemic. Primarily found on northern offshore islands, but also known from a few locations in Northland, Auckland and Coromandel. Also common in eastern Australia.

Habitat – Coastal in short scrub, on cliff faces and in open forest. Often on small islands, also inland on scoria and basalt rocks around Auckland City.

Features – creeping stem (rhizome) bearing erect, narrow and leathery fronds with oblong, sickle-shaped (falcate) leaflets.



Photo (above): Te Papa image – *Pellaea falcata*

Pellaea falcata (R.Br.) Fée, collected 1995, Marakoopa, Australia. Gift of Pamela Lovis, 2018. CC BY 4.0. Te Papa (P031745)

***Pellaea rotundifolia* / Tarawera / Button Fern**

Rotundifolia – round leaf, from the Latin rotundus and folium

Threatened status – Not threatened

Distribution – Endemic. Found from the Three Kings Islands south to Dunedin on the South Island.

Habitat – dry rocky areas.

Features – creeping stem (rhizome) bearing erect, narrow and leathery fronds with rounded to oblong leaflets.

Button fern, *Pellaea rotundifolia* (G.Forst.) Hook., collected [Christchurch] Riccarton Bush., New Zealand. Gift of Pamela Lovis, 2018. CC BY 4.0. Te Papa (P030179)

Ref:

University of Auckland: NZ Plants <https://www.nzplants.auckland.ac.nz/en.html>

NZ Plant Conservation – <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz>

Te Papa – <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz>



Photo (above): Te Papa image – *Pellaea rotundifolia*



Photo (above): *Pellaea falcata* growing at the creek



Photo (above): *Pellaea rotundifolia* growing at the creek

Scutellinia - Eyelash Cup Fungi

By Wendy John

It's fungi foraging time. And, what a treat it was finding this wee gem on a rotting log recently. According to the INaturalist website – <https://inaturalist.nz>, it can be found right across the country, but is so tiny it's very easy to miss.

On the UK First Nature website – <https://www.first-nature.com/fungi/scutellinia-scutellata.php> – it describes the Eyelash as a remarkable ascomycetous (sac) fungus. And because it is so tiny, despite it being quite common it often goes unnoticed. The largest cups are a mere 4mm across, and many barely reach half that size when fully developed. Perhaps 'barely' is an inappropriate word in the context of this fungal species and its close relatives, because what makes all of the *Scutellinia* fungi species (and there are several within this genus in various parts of the world) so special, is the fringe of hairs around the edge of each cap.

Scutellinia likes damp places: as long as there is plenty of moisture and some well-rotted timber to eat it can thrive. Because of this it is one of the most widespread of the world's fungi, truly deserving the description ubiquitous. While common in Britain and Ireland, the Eyelash fungus is also found

not only throughout mainland Europe and North America but also in many parts of South America, Asia and Australasia – including Aotearoa / New Zealand.

Common Eyelash *Scutellinia scutellata* was described by Carl Linnaeus – <https://www.first-nature.com/fungi/~biog-linnaeus.php> in his *Species Plantarum* of 1753, when he named it *Peziza scutellata*. And it was given its present name in 1887 by the Belgian mycologist Jean Baptiste Emil Lambotte (1832-1905).

The specific epithet *scutellata* is Latin and means 'like a small shield', which seems quite accurate except for the fringe of eyelashes, which I have never yet seen on any shield other than one intended for covering the eyes. The common name needs no explanation, but in some English-speaking countries alternatives such as Eyelash Cup, Molly Eye-winker, and Eyelash Pixie Cup are used instead.

It can be found on humous-rich damp soil, damp long-dead wood and other well-rotted vegetation; also occasionally on the dung of horses, cows and other ruminants.



Photo (above): *Scutellinia*



Photo (above): *Scutellinia* close-up

Buffer Zone Weed Management Programme Update

By Wendy John

The contractors have finished the weed control programme on private properties in the Te Auaunga 'buffer zone' for the year. They initially focussed on priority properties within the buffer zone, then moved onto the remaining properties within the polygons as identified by Friends of Oakley Creek.

Of the pest plants targeted, climbing asparagus, moth plant, wild ginger, blue morning glory and jasmine were by far the most prevalent. Combined they represent 96% of the pest plants controlled this season.

Some stats from their final report include:

- Number of properties completed – 311
- Number of properties fully cleared of target weeds – 163
- Area of targeted pest plants controlled – 466.34ha

This programme is making a huge difference to reducing the risk of some of the most invasive pest plants spreading back onto the creek.

We would like to express our appreciation to the local boards for their support for this critical work.

Seasonal gallery

The kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*) is in flower in Harbutt reserve. Unusually kohekohe flowers appear on the trunk and branches of the tree which, apparently, is more convenient for pollination and seed dispersal by ground-dwelling creatures.

Other sightings on the creek include puriri flowers and berries; taraire berries; a fantail up close and personal; hairy curtain crust (*Stereum hirsutum*) and psilocybe mushrooms.



Photo (above): Kohekohe flowers in Harbutt reserve

From left to right: Puriri flowers and berries; taraire berries; a fantail; hairy curtain crust (*stereum hirsutum*) and psilocybe mushrooms.



Post Storm Update - Patience is the current 'name of the game'

While we all enjoy spending time on the creek, unfortunately the walkways from Phyllis Reserve to the northern end of the walkway, and Howlett Reserve are still officially closed. This is owing to the ongoing

risks from slips, fallen trees and broken or missing bridges – and the huge backlog of work that Council has to work its way through. However, there are lots of other parts of the creek that you can explore.

Vacancy - Secretary

A good secretary is worth their weight in gold! We are seeking the help of a methodical and organised person to help us prepare agendas and take accurate notes at our monthly committee meetings. The role requires an eye for detail and an ability to attend (online or in person) committee meetings once a month to take notes and circulate them to committee members.

A good knowledge or experience of committee procedures would be helpful but is not essential. We have an enthusiastic committee who will support you in every way possible. If this voluntary position interests you, please contact David Bowden (Chairperson) on 027 249 1873 or info@oakleycreek.org.nz for further information.

Notices

Monthly Community Working Bees: As per normal, our monthly working bees are held on the first Sunday of each month – 10.00am-12.00noon.

Tuesday Working Bees: Tuesday mornings 9.30am to 12.00pm. This exciting project is looking for some more regular volunteers. For more information contact Sandra – 021 166 7647

Friday Working Bees: Friday mornings 9.00am to 12.00pm. We work in different locations on Friday mornings, depending on the need at the time. If you're interested let us know and we'll include you in the Friday email list so that you can join us when you are free, or contact Wendy – 027 232 6454.

Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga

Chairperson:

David Bowden

Treasurer:

Matthew Hill

Secretary:

To be confirmed

Committee:

Marin Adams, Wendy John, Adrienne Stanton, John Stevenson, Cate Ryan, Chris Brown

Newsletter Editor: Gina Hefferan

Newsletter Photos: Unless otherwise credited, all photos are by Wendy John



Newsletter contributions and comments are welcome – email info@oakleycreek.org.nz

Subscriptions and Donations – If you haven't already paid your subscription this year, there is no time like the present to do it. And we welcome new members (\$10.00 [individual] or \$20.00 [family]) and/or donations towards the work we are doing to protect and restore our wonderful urban 'taonga' – Te Auaunga – Oakley Creek. Donations over \$5.00 are tax deductible.

Contributions can be made directly; our bank account number is 38-9003-0978224-00

You can also find us at <http://oakleycreek.org.nz/> and <https://www.facebook.com/OakleyCreek>

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