

Restoring Rotopounamu Conservation Project Secure with Further Funding Confirmed

For Immediate Release - 19 Dec 2011

Project Tongariro is pleased to confirm that several grant applications have recently been successful, to the tune of \$40,000, which secures the 2011/2012 summer forest restoration programme at Rotopounamu. The grants are from Huckleberry's Sports and Charitable Society, Sir John Logan Campbell Residuary Estate, and Pharazyn Trust.

Since 2003, Project Tongariro, supported by the Department of Conservation, has led an intensive pest control and forest restoration programme at Rotopounamu, just south of Turangi. Rats raid bird nests of eggs and chicks and impact on forest ecosystems at many levels by eating a wide range of plants (seeds, seedlings, flowers, foliage) and animals (insects, lizards, and birds). Stoats are another major predator.

Each year, during the bird-nesting season (spring/summer) a network of 1100 bait stations are refilled, and dozens of rat and mustelid traps are cleared and reset weekly, until the young birds have fledged and the main danger from predators is over. Regular monitoring and survey work are vital aspects of the project and these show excellent results. There has been a major decline in predator numbers and a big increase in numbers of birds and bird species and insects including weta.

Karen Williams, Project Tongariro President says the recent grants are a strong show of support for what has become the most significant forest restoration project in the district. "The rats and stoats have been hit hard and many of the birds are making a come back. Rifleman and the North Island robin are often seen and the larger birds like kaka, kereru and falcon have returned."

Project Tongariro launched an 'Adopt a Hectare' initiative earlier this year to encourage local people to take an interest in helping to maintain Rotopounamu as a safe haven. "We've already had about 40 people sign up to adopt a hectare at \$100 per year" said Karen Williams. "The rewarding thing is you can go for a short walk in the bush at Rotopounamu and see and hear the difference for yourself."

If you wish to 'Adopt a Hectare' at Rotopounamu, go online to www.tongariro.org.nz/adoptahectare .You will receive a certificate to acknowledge your support as a guardian of a 'virtual' hectare and know that your contribution is playing an important role in local conservation.

-Ends-

About Project Tongariro

Established in 1984, Project Tongariro is a non-profit organisation that has been active in the region for more than 25 years. It's a community group who works in partnership with the Department of Conservation on many projects and whose goal is to promote a wider knowledge and appreciation of the unique natural heritage, historic, educational and recreational values of Tongariro National Park and its environs.

Media contact:

Kim Manunui
Project Tongariro
Tel. 021 545 693
kim@kmms.co.nz