



TONGARIRO TIMES

The newsletter for the Tongariro Natural History Society
July 2010

Prepared by Sarah Gibb

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to 2010 - 2011! Yes, for us it is a new season beginning.

This is a big mailing to send out to you but we have a DOC Annual for everyone, produced by DOC with some articles from Tongariro Natural History Society in it. DOC generously covers the cost of the mail out so we chose to make the most of it and send out lots of goodies at once – including your subscription renewal of course!

Our season starts with a bit of a heavy heart – our major sponsor of three years, Land Rover is unable to continue their support from August 2010. This sponsor has been wonderful and helped us to build our profile as well as develop some of our conservation projects, especially Rotopounamu. Their brand manager Gary Upson, who had to give us the news is as saddened as we are and wishes us well in finding a replacement.

We are working hard on that one and hope to announce something at our AGM in October.



THANK YOU LAND ROVER!

So here we are giving you:

- The DOC Annual.
- Your TNHS membership renewal form.
- A chance to win a weekend for two near Thames kindly donated by one of our members. **Just pay your fees before September 6th to go into the draw.**
- The Tongariro Natural History Society Annual Report for July 2009 – June 2010.
- Registration for the AGM on October 16th.

Notice of AGM for 2010 OCTOBER 16, 4.30pm at the Whakapapa Holiday Park Lodge

Apologies for both the date and venue change.

The first date chosen, the 9th is school holidays and has proven too tricky logistically.

COMING EVENTS :

A full programme will be sent to you with your 2010-2011 subscription receipt and member card, but here are some mouth watering dates for your diary over the next few months:

October 7 – 9. In to the Historic Waihohonu hut to give it some deserved TLC and also do some planting around the brand new Waihohonu hut, to be opened on October 22.

October 16. The AGM weekend at Whakapapa that always offers a walk in the park.

November.

December 11 – 12. Back in time. Walk the Ohakune Old Coach Rd Heritage trail and celebrate 100 years of Blyth Track, walking the original route.

January 1, 2011. Kite Flying at Whakapapa.

April. Field trip to Tiritiri Matangi.

OPENING OF THE RUAPEHU TO WHANGANUI NZ CYCLE TRAIL – The Ohakune Old Coach Rd Section.

This was held on July 2nd and society members were proud to support DOC and the Ohakune 2000 group on the completion of this route.

A decade ago this was an idea to open up Old Coach Rd as a walking track through the Tongariro National Park and as an opportunity for economic development for Ohakune.

After TNHS got involved with DOC in the restoration of the Hapuawhenua Viaduct as a gateway to the park, for walkers and cyclists and a link track was made to the Old Coach Rd, the project got impetus with increased interest from the local and central governments.

John Key announced that a 'National Cycleway' was to be built and DOC was able to secure some of these funds to get the Old Coach Rd completed through to Horopito.

This piece of completed cycleway was the first to be officially opened in the country. Prime Minister John Key said "this trail is the beginning of a network of inter-connected trails that will pass through some of NZ's most spectacular and historically significant scenery".



Mayor Sue (Ruapehu District Council), John Key and Dana Blackburn (Ohakune 2000).

Photo : Dave Bamford



Photo: Shirley Barton

John Key is ready to cut the ribbon. Conservation minister Kate Wilkinson looks on.



TNHS was there too. We set up a display on the DOC advocacy trailer (it looks like Waihothonu hut) with historic photos of the Old Coach Rd and the viaduct.

Our executive committee members were there in force in support and a few members too who walked up to the viaduct and greeted the riders on the first official bike ride.

Bad weather had beaten the finish of the cycleway, some bridges were not in place and so the ride just went to the viaduct and back. That suited the 100 odd riders as it meant they could get back to a sausage sizzle sooner !



Photo: Frank Katavich

Annette Dench and Maureen Chatterton swap gossip with cyclists on the viaduct.

LAHAR! LAHAR! from eruption to dam burst

Published by Tongariro Natural History Society, DOC and Taupo Museum 2009.

Ruapehu has a summit Crater Lake located at 2529m and a long history of volcanic mudflows (lahars) from this source. From time to time, lahars threaten ski fields, hydroelectric power facilities, rail and road infrastructure and people.

It took two years but this educational resource (PC DVDROM) captures images of the awe-inspiring eruptions of Mt. Ruapehu during 1995-1996 which built an ash and debris barrier (tephra dam) at the Crater Lake. The DVDROM follows events, issues and management strategies as they unfolded during this period including the ultimate resolution provided by collapse of the tephra dam and the resulting major lahar of March 2007. Mitigation work and warning systems ensured minimum damage and no loss of life.

It features TV footage, interviews, articles and photos going back as far as 1945. The DVD is interactive and can only be played on a computer. The bulk of it was compiled by Harry Keys and Dave Wakelin and the DVD is a resource of significant historic information.

Schools are interested

The making of it was sponsored by Genesis Energy and Horizons Regional Council and then this year, Genesis gave us another \$1000 to get some of these DVD's distributed to school through the NZ Board of Geography Teachers. In the past fortnight we have posted out over 80 copies and most of those schools indicated they either study the volcanoes of Tongariro or any better, visit the park on field studies. Thank you Kevin & Beth Griffiths for doing all the packing and posting!

The DVD is available for a donation of \$15.00 plus \$5.00 postage and handling.

To purchase: go to www.tongariro.org.nz/cart and order online or send payment to Tongariro Natural History Society, P O Box 238, Turangi. Ph 07 3866499

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ARCHAEOLOGY is the study of past human societies, primarily through the recovery and analysis of the material culture and environmental data which they have left behind, which includes artifacts, architecture, biofacts and cultural landscapes. (source: Wikipedia)

....and so there was a lot to take in when Kaye Rabarts and I attended the national conference of the NZ Archaeological Society in Westport last month.

We were there by invitation of DOC and to report on the history of the Ohakune Old Coach Rd and the findings being made there.

For us it was a good place to network with other history buffs and in particular connect with a couple of universities as we hope to offer an internship to an archaeology student this summer for them to work with Kaye on recording the significant historic features of the Ohakune Old Coach Rd route.

Since construction began on the cycleway two sites of accommodations have been found along with bottles and other artifacts.

MEMORIAL AWARD RECIPIENTS FOR 2010

Two students studying for their Masters and compiling their research in Tongariro have been awarded \$1000 each.

Moniqua Nelson - Tunley:

"investigate the genetic dynamics of the Small-scaled skink in order to answer some questions about how the species got where it is today, and how vulnerable it is due to its current distribution".

Emma Phillips: her study outline here

"Forecasting the consequences of the failure of the eastern rim of Crater Lake, Mount Ruapehu"

The instability of the eastern crater rim of Mount Ruapehu, located in the Tongariro National Park, poses a significant hazard risk. The eastern rim (including Pyramid Peak), one of the steepest parts of the active volcano, is made up of a sequence of unstable volcanic deposits which are under outward pressure from the Crater Lake.

Geological evidence shows that similar failures of hydrothermally altered flank materials on this side of the volcano have happened at least twice (at c. 4000 years and c. 26 000 years B.P.). The proposed hypothesis is that a sudden failure of this 40 million m³ rim would generate a debris avalanche, almost certainly followed immediately by a break-out lahar that could be 8-9 times the size of the March 2007 event, and would have the potential to cause significant damage.

The focus of this study is the eastern rim of Ruapehu, particularly Pyramid Peak. The main objective of this research is to carry out a quantitative hazard forecast for partial or full collapse of the crater rim and the subsequent cascade of events likely to follow. The main research aim is to apply state-of-the-art computational modelling techniques to a hazard management problem in New Zealand.

The information acquired from this will be used to define the resulting impact on the environment of the Whangaehu River catchment and Tongariro River catchment, which contains Lake Taupo, one of New Zealand's key tourist attractions and the source of up to 17% of the current national power supply.

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SO HOW DOES THE KIWI CHICK GET BACK TO TONGARIRI FOREST? On a quad bike of course!

Kevin Griffiths retells his day to return a kiwi chick to Tongariro Forest after its stay at Kiwi Encounters in Rotorua. We had delivered it there months ago as an egg and this was going to be the full circle of 'Operation Nest Egg'.

This is what Beth and I do in our spare time !!

On Thursday 17th June we were asked to go to Rotorua to pick up a kiwi and bring him to Whakapapa, for DOC ranger Antonia and I to take him in to the forest to release him. We went in from National Park on the 42 Traverse and then off on one of the numerous side tracks.

The quad bike ride was for about 30 minutes in the bush and only fit for quad bikes! It was very cold on the back, holding on to the kiwi box - even with 2 coats on !!

The kiwi, "Apollo" is 6 months old and must weight 1 kg before DOC can release them to the forest. His father's name is Rocket and lives about 1 km away. Apollo was taken from here in December last year.

Note from Sarah: There are strict protocols for transporting the kiwi eggs and chicks. Two people must make the drive to and from Rotorua with an egg, the car warm and no loud noise in the car. It is a big responsibility and DOC is always grateful when we can provide drivers and not take the rangers away from their other work.

Photo: Kevin holds Apollo for Antonia to fit a transmitter before their ride to take Apollo home.

