



TONGARIRO TIMES

The newsletter for the Tongariro Natural History Society
March 2010

Prepared by Sarah Gibb

YOU CAN SEE THE DIFFERENCE NOW.

What was once an idea to restore the Waimarino wetland near Motuoapa has grown....

Let me introduce you to 'Te Matapuna o Taupo Moana', Te Matapuna the source of waters on Taupo. Working with DOC, private landowners and iwi our vision is to conserve and protect 'Te Matapuna o Taupo Moana' for the generations to come so that the mokopuna can see, listen and watch what we enjoyed about the wetland in our youth from Oruatua to Waihi.

Have you noticed those dead willows and pines that you can see from SH1 near Motuoapa, looking towards the lake. We made those! Aren't we clever.

And have you seen the 2000 trees we planted alongside the Waimarino River. This is on private land where the owners share our desire to have a demonstration area of the how to and how not to do in restoring this wetland area. The site was chosen as it is one of the few areas with easy access so people could actually see what is going on.

Our own local members, people from neighbouring marae, DOC staff and volunteer hut wardens all joined in over a couple of days to get the plants in. These are the same plants we grew on from root trainers 3 years ago and have been nurturing in our nursery. Thank you, Linda Dyck, for regularly giving these plants your time – it has paid off.

Now, best news till last. The Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust, who has supported our project to restore the Waimarino wetland for the last 5 years, has agreed to continue to fund us on our bigger goal. \$40,000 is promised for 2010 with an opportunity for us to secure that amount for a further 4 years on the production of a strategy and operational plan.



From Left: Hopu Hepi, Sarah Gibb, Kerenapu Hepi and Grant Sim (Acting Turangi/Taupo Area Manager).

UPDATE FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: 5 Year Strategic Plan *Facilitated by Mark Davies*

The purpose of this Strategic Plan 2010 to 2015 is to set out the 'pathway and journey forward' for the society, its Executive, Director, Members and Supporters. It will assist the society and ensure we are focused on the priority programmes and projects that will take the society successfully into the next five years and beyond.

It will ensure we continue to evolve and grow with the changing circumstances and environment and allow us to 'make and take' opportunities along the way as they present themselves while maintaining a set of priorities that deliver real benefits to *Tongariro National Park, the Place and its People*.

Traditionally we have worked with one partner, the Department of Conservation, but now we are increasingly being asked to form new relationships with other community groups, agencies and councils. The sharing of ideas, resources, people and funds is ensuring the delivery of projects and conservation outcomes for all parties. The society wants to be lasting!!

The executive will present this new strategy to the members at the AGM in October.

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LAND ROVER TUSSOCK TRAVERSE – An entrants view, by Mike Watson

Entrants in this years Land Rover Tussock Traverse might be wondering if the TNHS has a direct link to a higher power.

For the fifth year in a row 305 walkers and runners were greeted at the Tukino Road start line on January 30 in stunning conditions-a bright blue sky and fine sunny weather for the 2010 event.

Only a slight south easterly breeze marred an otherwise perfect morning.

The breeze would help cool down the runners and walkers as they made their way 27 kilometres across the rough volcanic surface to the welcoming sight of The Chateau in a range of times between two hours and seven hours.

While it's not an event for winners and losers-more an event to participate in-first man home Kerry Suter deserves a mention for not only finishing in near record time (2hours 10minutes), but completing a total of 54 kilometres.

Suter, an ultra marathoner who last year waded waist deep across a raging South Island river to safety, was not content just to run the event one way.

He ran to the start line from the Chateau before running back again.



For the majority of the entrants it was simply setting personal target and enjoying the day. While some ran others stopped for a bite to eat, savouring the scenery.

After the opening steep climb runners found their way across the volcanic rock track, dropping down into dry river beds, before clambering up clay banks to more sandy surfaces, and scrub, over bog patches jumping

down steps and striding across man made boardwalks.

The sun was hot on the back but bearable, plenty of competitors chose to walk, others jogged, staggered, limped and sweated their way around.

The boggy sections sucked the energy, while the boardwalks provided a spring to the steady pace.

Along the way race marshall's supplied energy sweets, played rock music, and shouted encouragement to flagging spirits.

At the end everyone had a smile, knowing they had achieved their goal, faced up to the challenge and for most beaten it.

This event raised \$3500 for the Society.

FIELD TRIP TO MANGAITI HUT

Shirley Potter and Terry Burrell

The Saturday of our TNHS trip had to be rated as the most perfect day weather wise. Our group of nineteen met on time (thanks everyone), adjacent to the DOC office on the Turoa mountain road. A road closure due to reconstruction of the bridge at the 9km point threatened to add several kilometres to our walk. However we were fortunate to have the use of an RAL van and Sarah as our coach driver. We were shuttled up the Mountain to the Blythe Hut car park. From there the group walked in to the historic Mangaiti Hut. Terry, our guide for the day, had brought along some old photos and maps which set the scene for the retracing of old routes from days before the mountain road was even thought of. There was much discussion and information sharing about Mangaiti Hut from some very knowledgeable folk. A fine morning tea was had by all and from here the group split three ways.

Those who opted for the round trip headed off on a compass bearing, following an old ground trail used over the years by trampers heading up the mountain via the Mangaturuturu Valley. In a few places there were ancient markers but for much of the route it was a case of spotting the gap between trees and the vague depressions left by many feet in earlier times. The ground trail only goes as far as the Waipara Stream and from there to the Makotuku River the network of animal trails helped us across scrub and tundra. Some bush bashing through the wooded sections and

some good old compass and map work brought us successfully to the Horopito. Amongst this group we had a couple of agile young TNHS members from Palmerston North who are keen orienteers. These lads lead all the way and their energy was inspiring!



Members outside Mangaiti Hut

Our lunch stop was on the main east ridge before the Horopito track drops onto the Mangaturuturu Valley... interesting conversations around the different experiences on the mountain of the diverse but highly experienced party members. Also some interesting comparison of the old 260series maps with the Topo50 map of the area.

The former showing that section of the Horopito track significantly further east than it is currently. Perhaps a change of route...who knows. The walk up the river bed and the Mangaturuturu hut were quite delightful. A short rest by the memorial seat in front of the hut then a clamber up the cascades (our fit young lads seemed not to notice the climb at all and left us in the dust...stopping for a swim in the upper pool). Impressions of the round trip would have include the diversity of landscape and vegetation we traversed during the day.

From tundra, tussock and scrub to subalpine bush then to the alpine rocks and scoria slopes, via stream beds and river valleys. A stunning 5 hour round trip.

Others who had lingered a little longer at Mangaiti, took a shorter walk around the hut and a smaller group went looking at Alpine flushes up at Turoa.

Several of us joined up for dinner in Ohakune before heading our separate ways. A great day for a walk.



GENERAL INFORMATION ON MANGAITI HUT AND TONGARIRO TRAMPING CLUB

The Tongariro Tramping Club was started in 1936, by trampers in the Waimarino area, and in its early years it was a flourishing club, active in Tongariro National Park and nearby tramping country.

Mangaiti Hut was built by the Club in 1939/1940, providing a base for activity on the south-western slopes of Mount Ruapehu at a time when access to the area was much more difficult than it is today. Parties walked in from Horopito, along the lower section of the current Horopito track and climbs of Mount Ruapehu were made from Mangaiti Hut, either using the route our TNHS group explored in February or another route that leads northeast from the hut. With the extension of the Ohakune Mountain Road in the 1950s, Mangaiti Hut became less important as a strategic base for tramping and mountaineering and club activity dropped off, a few members acting as custodian and managing the club from Wellington. In 1988, the Club made representations to the Park Board which eventually agreed that the Club should continue to operate the hut as a club hut, on an understanding that it would be fully maintained and preserved by the Club. In our maintenance and management of the hut we have worked progressively to reduce the impact on the environment, and to reduce the risks of loss or damage by fire. Gas cooking reduces use of the pot belly stove, electric lighting is provided by battery and solar energy, a roof water tank reduces the need to draw water from the marsh ponds, and members are required to carry in kindling and coal for the stove. The hut is increasingly obscured by regenerating scrub and bush; the track to the hut has a minimum of markers and it is not heavily trimmed. The Club's primary function is maintenance of Mangaiti Hut, and encouragement of use of the hut by members. TTC is keen to involve new members who share a passion for the TNP area and a philosophy of low impact recreation. Interested people should contact the club president, Terry Burrell. Her email address is terry.burrell@gmail.com.

WE ARE SO HAPPY TO SEE THIS LITTLE MISTLETOE BECAUSE:

- In 2007 we propagated about 20 fruit onto this one pittosporum
- We probably put out 100 in total around the place
- We knew success rate was only going to be around 2%
- We are trying to reintroduce white mistletoe to Rotopounamu
- Mistletoe presence is a good indicator that possum numbers are low



2007 members propagated the seed from Pukawa to Rotopounamu



January 2009 we watch this little fellow lovingly

Notice of AGM 2010 9th October at National Park

OUR KIWIS THREATENED

Last week we heard eleven kiwi chicks were found dead in the "kiwi creche" facility called Warrenheip in Waikato. Some of these kiwi are the ones that our volunteers transported this season as part of Operation Nest Egg. They are thought to be the victims of a predator attack.

Two remaining kiwi in the reserve were rescued and transferred back to Rainbow Springs in Rotorua. That is where we take the eggs to be hatched and reared before they go to Warrenheip.

Waikato Conservator Greg Martin says the fenced reserve has been free of threats to kiwi for several years and had provided a nursery for kiwi chicks, allowing them to reach a kilogram in weight, at which size they were generally able to fend for themselves in the wild.

All the dead kiwi were brought to the reserve from Tongariro Forest. Rob Hood, Programme Manager Biodiversity Assesses at Ruapehu Area has told us there are still five chicks at Rainbow Springs. Flygirl, our latest delivery is one of those.

CHATHAM ISLAND FIELD TRIP Expression of Interest

The response to the Field Trip in 2009 was so good that we have asked Kaye Rabarts to lead another adventure to the Chathams.

She is suggesting a similar programme of 10 days, somewhere in mid October to mid November, for 8 people. Cost is approximately \$2500 including flights, accommodation, most meals, island transport and Kaye's time.

GRAB THE OPPORTUNITY! It is doubtful this will happen again.

Contact Sarah at the office to indicate your interest including approx dates that would suit by April 30, so we can decide whether to go ahead with planning or not.

07 3866499 or sarah@tongariro.org.nz