



TONGARIRO TIMES

The newsletter for the Tongariro Natural History Society
November 2010

Prepared by Sarah Gibb

PROJECT TONGARIRO:

Our vision is: Promoting a wider knowledge and appreciation of the unique natural heritage, historic, educational and recreational values of Tongariro National Park and its environs. **In its 26th year!**



OUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPOINTED AT THE 26TH AGM ON OCTOBER 16.

Name	Home phone
Karen Williams <i>President</i>	07 3771962
Maureen Smith	07 3860838
Roy Dench	07 8236816
Kaye Rabarts	07 8668006
Shirley Potter	04 5643407
Paul Green <i>Conservator</i>	07 3868600
Frank Katavich	09 6206650
Dave Bamford <i>Past president</i>	04 5686088
Peter McNaughton	0211264308
Mark Davies	07 3788070

Our thanks for their time and skill to Bob Stothart Maria Stables-Page and Margaret Jefferies who retired from the committee this year.

MEMBER OF THE NZ ORDER OF MERIT:

Congratulations to Project Tongariro's honorary solicitor **John Nankervis** (Nank) who was recently awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit for his services to mountaineering.

The award is a well deserved acknowledgment to Nank's long standing to mountaineering and both national and international mountain communities.

His citation especially acknowledges his long contribution to Tongariro National Park through his mountain instruction work with the Tararua Club and New Zealand Alpine Club, his three terms on the Tongariro-Taupō Conservation Board and his role as honorary solicitor for the Tongariro Natural History Society since 1991.

Nank continues to be very supportive of activities in the Tongariro National Park and is well known by many of our members.

(Dave Bamford)



Photo: Nank on the right - recently high in the Swiss Alps (Matterhorn behind) with his rope mate Dave Bamford

MEMBERS GOT TOGETHER for the AGM at Whakapapa on October 16

President Karen Williams showed a power point presentation of the 26 years of Project Tongariro (Tongariro Natural History Society). It highlighted our beginnings as a result of the helicopter tragedy that killed 5 people and then our many achievements – offering study grants to students doing field research in the park, our hands on conservation projects, interpretation at specific sites such as Whakapapa Visitor Centre and our efforts to preserve park history through the restoration of Waihohonu hut and the Hapuawhenua viaduct.

Recognition was given to Bob Stothart and his wife Margaret. Bob has stepped down from the executive committee having given 23 years of service to the organisation! We'll still see them both in the park. Look out for them at Whakapapa Visitor Centre and they'll be making kites with the children on kite day.



Photo: Margaret and Bob help out in our nursery in Turangi

ACTIVE IN THE PARK – DOC summer programme 2011.

The programme can be seen and booked at www.doc.govt.nz/tongarirosummer or phone the office to get a hard copy sent to you.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

The membership renewals have been coming in well over the last couple of months but there are still plenty more to come.

Myllys Hartley of Milford, Auckland won the prize draw to go to Thames for a very relaxing weekend at Chartre Manor. A huge THANK YOU to Pauline and Dennis for providing this prize.

For those of you who have forgotten to send your membership renewal in, please dig it out and post it or go on to our website to renew on line.

<http://www.tongariro.org.nz/membershipform.html>

We really appreciate your continued support.

Call the office if you can't find the form and we can sort you out.

Our bank details are:

Tongariro Natural History Society
a/c Kiwibank 38 9009 0387388 00.

NEW DESTINATIONS FOR SARAH GIBB

I have resigned as director of the society with my last day being the 26th November. Thank you for the wonderful experience that is Tongariro National Park and the natural history society. It has been fantastic but after an 8 year stint with the society it is time to try something new and for someone else to develop Project Tongariro.

I begin a new job based in Hamilton at the end of this month. I will be working with community groups throughout the Waikato, helping them with the governance of their organisations. I hope some of them will be conservation groups!

I leave with exceptional memories and many long time friends and look forward to seeing you all in the park.

Sarah

PS: BUSINESS AS USUAL

The office will be staffed over the summer so don't hesitate to phone or email us. My position is being advertised in February 2011.

CONSERVATOR PAUL GREEN BECOMES LIFE MEMBER OF PROJECT TONGARIRO

Tongariro/Taupo Conservator Paul Green became our ninth life member at the society's 26th AGM. Paul was nominated for life membership by Karen Williams in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the society since his appointment as an honorary member of the executive 24 years ago.

Paul, in his capacity as chief ranger of Tongariro National Park initially, and for many years as Conservator, has assisted the society to build on one of its founding documents - a Heads of Agreement with the Department of Conservation which is unique in this country.

Karen noted Paul's involvement had enabled the society to work constructively in support of the department's activities in and around Tongariro National Park for decades. His ongoing involvement had been vital to helping the society fulfil its original vision of supporting a wide range of heritage and natural history projects in this area. Everything from publications, to recreational events to research grants, she said.

Paul's nomination was seconded Bob Stothart who stated Paul continues to provide outstanding service to Project Tongariro in all capacities, as executive member, mentor, and with his hands on involvement in the local summer nature programme.

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FUTURE FIELD TRIPS :

Contact the office to express your interest

December 10 – 12 Ohakune Heritage Trails
Original Blyth Trail and Ohakune Old Coach Rd.
Only 6 spaces left on this one !

February 27 – 28 Tukino Tops

April 16 – 17 Auckland Islands.
Tiritiri Matangi on Saturday and Motuihe Island
Sunday.

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WAIHOHONU HUT x 3

Gone is the old hut which was getting tired after many years of service, and instead trampers will be able to relax and enjoy the magnificent scenery of the park from a new and well equipped hut in a stunning new location, officially opened on October 22, 2010 by our own John Newton.

John was a ranger in the park in 1968 and was part of the crew that built the old hut. Then in 1998 he led a group in restoring the 'historic' Waihohonu hut. It was the first hut built in Tongariro National Park, and now the oldest recreation hut in New Zealand.

The new hut site is on the true right of the Waihohonu stream directly opposite the existing tramping hut. The riverside camping site will be retained because it is so popular and different to other parts of the Tongariro Northern Circuit, and is linked with a new direct bridge and track.

The latest hut is the third in the area, all with the same name.

The second hut is still there but closed and will be removed from the park in the near future.



The stunning new Waihohonu hut with its picture windows to the park.

COMING EVENTS:

Can you help with marshaling at The Goat?



Saturday
December 4

(postponement date
December 5)

This is a technical run around the flank of Ruapehu, from Iwikau to Turoa. By volunteering though, you just get to walk in from the Iwikau side with a picnic and first aid kit. We marshal the first half of the course and then another community group comes in from the other side for that half. Our role is to support the runners on the day, providing direction mostly and giving out the odd jet plane. Project Tongariro is a benefactor of the event with entrants making donations to us when they enter and we also receive \$1000 for our marshaling. So if you feel like helping, please contact Sarah by email on info@tongariro.org.nz. We can probably arrange accommodation for you.

KITE DAY January 1st 2011.

10.30am onwards on the golf course of Chateau Tongariro at Whakapapa. BRING YOUR KITE.
It's such a fun way to start the new year!

TUSSOCK TRAVERSE January 29, 2011

(postponement date January 30)

Similar to The Goat really, except that we marshal the entire event, and look after the entrants when they finish with a great BBQ. It's all good fun and we are the sole benefactor. This is our major fundraiser for the year and we raise in the region of \$5000. Please let us know if you can help out on the day by contacting the office on info@tongariro.org.nz.

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ROTOPOUNAMU UPDATE

Jo Nash, Biodiversity Ranger

It has been a busy start to the season up at Rotopounamu involving lots of rodent control and monitoring. With Spring well on the way the birds are out in abundance and the lake levels have dropped back down to ordinary level.

Contractors have been employed this year to undertake the baiting operation and new bait called PestOff 50D is being used. The contractors started in September, initially with fortnightly re-fills of bait stations, and are now re-filling stations on a monthly basis with the next fill due in mid November.

To determine how many rats and mice were in the bush prior to the season's bait distribution, tracking tunnels were run in early September resulting in a rat density index of 69% and mice densities at 49%. After the first week of bait distribution, a second tracking tunnel operation was run with fantastic results. Rat densities had dropped to 5.7% and mice down to 30%. November tracking tunnels have just been run with more good news. Rats are now at a density of 1.4% and mice at 2.9%!! This result meets one of the conservation objective's that ship rat populations are maintained below a 5% footprint tracking index during the months of October – February.

The fifty DOC200 traps around Lake Rotopounamu have been set for the season and have been baited with eggs and salted rabbit meat. So far 6 rats and 2 stoats have been trapped. These traps are a last line of defence but also a good advocacy tool for talking to members of the public about our project.

A big thank you to Kevin, Beth, Shirley and Karen and their families who have been out running tracking tunnel lines and checking traps.

Traps up at Rotopounamu need to be checked once a week so if anyone else is keen to help out that would be great – it's a great reason to get out and enjoy the park.