

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

2021



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MIKE O'SULLIVAN

PRESIDENT



As we finish our first full year of the Covid 19 pandemic I would like to reflect on what Project Tongariro and its various partnering organisations have achieved in these trying times. In the last 12 months over 5,000 people have given up weekends, weekdays or taken annual leave to volunteer on our various projects. In doing this we have planted over 41,500 trees and trapped over 12,400 pests which is making a significant impact on the health of the environment in which we live.

This was obvious last month when I observed over twenty Kereru while walking up the Tauranga-Taupo River, a few years earlier I would have been lucky to see two or three. Our staff and volunteers in Taupo have also observed an increase in the bird life which must be associated with Robyn's effort with Greening Taupo and the many volunteers who clear Predator Free Taupo's traps.

I would like to thank our Kids Greening Taupo team of Rachel, Sian and Takoha for the efforts they have made over the last twelve months in educating the next generation to respect and improve the environment in which we live. This was shown to me clearly at a planting day when over 2,000 people turned up to watch school children from throughout our district plant over 2,000 trees. Sian who has been an integral team member of Kids Greening Taupo for the last 2.75 years has decided to relocate to Christchurch to further her competitive climbing career. Though we regret seeing her leave, the effort and passion she has put into her role with us will be fondly remembered. I would like to welcome Takoha to the team, as a fluent Te Reo speaker Takoha will extend the outreach of Kids Greening Taupo into the Kura and Kohanga Reo of our district.

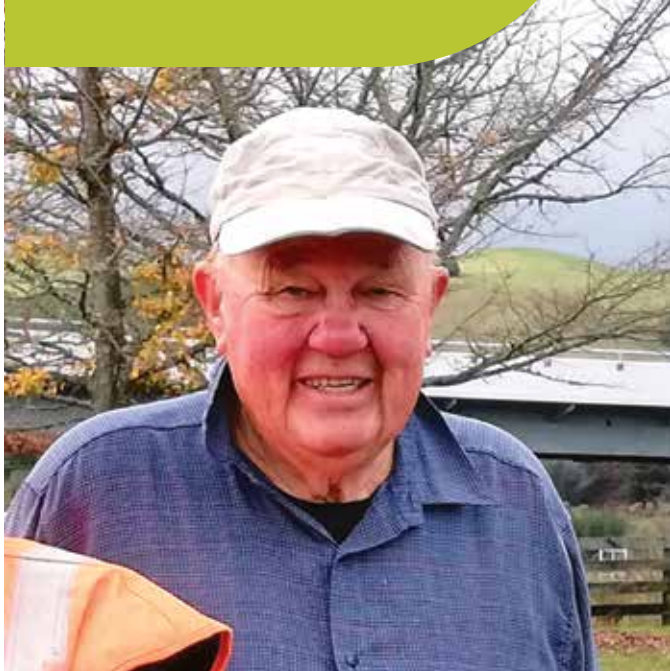
In the last 12 months over 5,000 people have given up weekends, weekdays or taken annual leave to volunteer on our various projects.

I must also mention the efforts of Paul and Kiri who have tirelessly chased down grants and donations while navigating our organisation's path over the last twelve months, a task which cannot be underestimated. Finally, I would like to thank all our sponsors and you the volunteers for making this organisation tick. The money donated and the time and effort you have all put into the various projects is making a difference to the environment and you should be rightly proud of what has been achieved.

Nga Mihi,

Mike O'Sullivan

PAUL GREEN DIRECTOR



Bay Trust, Len Reynolds Trust, Contact Energy and Taupo District Council enable us to fund our staff and overheads vital to our work.



Covid 19 played a very minor influence in our work this year. We caught up on postponed plantings, event marshalling took place and we held our AGM as planned.

A highlight of the year was completing our planned programme of restoration at Waitotaka in partnership with Ngati Rongomai. I overheard a comment from a supporter how they are going to miss that mahi and involvement at the Marae.

Our biggest disappointment was DOC postponing consultation with iwi for the scheduled 1080 operation at Mt Pihanga –Lake Rotopounamu. This puts the biodiversity gains at this special place under great pressure.

We had no staff changes this year. In thanking them for their commitment and achievements I must pay special tribute to Kiri Te Wano who will soon complete 10 years with us. Multi skilled and with a ‘can do’ attitude she has greatly helped the organisation grow and achieve its goals. At a personal level she has helped me unreservedly in my roles as President and now Director.

Bay Trust, Len Reynolds Trust, Contact Energy and Taupo District Council enable us to fund our staff and overheads vital to our work.

And a huge thanks to the Executive for their direction, guidance, support and trust as appropriate.

Finally a huge thanks to all our funders (big or small), members and other volunteer supporters who contribute so much.

Nga mihi,

Paul Green

RECORD OF
VOLUNTEER HOURS
2020-2021

5,245
Volunteers

| Volunteer activity | Volunteer No's | Volunteer total Hrs |
|---|----------------|---------------------|
| Rotopounamu-Pihanga | 20 | 550 |
| Seed Gathering | 2 | 60 |
| Greening Taupo | 2,400 | 8,909 |
| Te Matapuna (Waiotaka River Restoration) | 50 | 800 |
| Waiotaka Correction Hrs | 6 | 3,435 |
| Corrections Nursery Hrs | 10 | 13,321 |
| Predator Free Taupo | 350 | 3,900 |
| Oruatua, Motuoapa & Waitetoko Restoration | 50 | 2,301 |
| Kiwi egg transfers | 0 | 10 |
| Kids GT | 2,060 | 5,922 |
| Events | 82 | 442 |
| Mahi Aroha | 10 | 160 |
| Journal | 60 | 60 |
| Visitor Centre | 120 | 120 |
| Exec Board | 12 | 1,110 |
| Tech support [Nick] | 1 | 200 |
| IT Support (Kim Manunui) | 1 | 100 |
| Director/ Admin [Paul] | 1 | 1,200 |
| Other Conservation Activities* | 10 | 120 |
| Total | 5,245 | 42,720 |

42,720
Hours

PATRICIA TAYLOR TREASURER



TREASURER'S REPORT PROJECT TONGARIRO

For the year ended 30 June 2021

There is a separate full reviewed Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2021 available but it is not included in this bound Annual Report.

The following is a summary of that report.

PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNT

The Profit & Loss Account records a Surplus for the Year of \$53,956 compared with \$32,856 last year. This includes Grants Received during the year of \$376,584 (2020 - \$362,278) and Depreciation expensed of \$12,860 (2020 - \$3,805).

It is to be noted that \$159,285 of the Grants received have not yet been spent but there is a commitment to do so. These commitments are scheduled by project below under Liabilities.

We are very appreciative of all the Grants we receive and in particular the continuing contributions from the Bay Trust and the Len Reynolds Trust. Together they contributed \$168,000 towards the funding of staffing and overhead costs in 2021 and there are commitments for future years.

It is also pleasing to note that there were Donations of \$85,798 compared with \$82,593 in 2020. The public appreciates the work of this organization and its volunteers.

Total expenses were \$504,572 compared with \$539,394 in 2020. The major items are Wages and the direct costs of Purchases of Plants, Materials & Equipment and Subcontractors.

Subcontracting Expenses may be down due to it being a difficult year for planning.

Of course, these reports do not reflect the invaluable contributions of time, energy and enthusiasm from our wonderful volunteers.

Combined Facebook fans across all 4 projects

Social Media Reach

5,924

40% increase

from last years total of 4,243)

BALANCE SHEET

The Equity or Accumulated Funds at Balance Date is recorded as \$304,406.

Current Assets

Kiwibank Accounts and Cash \$237,581
Accounts Receivable \$29,318

Mainly Department of Conservation which was for work done before 30 June 2021 but is only part of a contract, so will be received when contract is completed.

Stock of Publications \$10,400
Unspent Grants \$159,285

Which matches up with the Liability of Unused and Committed Grants.

Fixed Assets

The Book Values are:

3 Motor Vehicles, 2 Trailers and a Tractor \$41,780
Field Plant & Equipment \$11,053
Office Equipment \$1,940

There is a Schedule for these items with the full Financial Statements.

Liabilities

Accounts Payable including GST \$27,827

Unspent and Committed Grants and Donations are as follows:

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
| | \$ | \$ |
| Greening Taupo | 6,967 | 10,611 |
| Kids Greening Taupo | 23,299 | 13,122 |
| Mahi Aroha | 2,411 | 0 |
| Oruatua Trapping & Restoration | 18,708 | 9,200 |
| Predator Free Taupo | 31,125 | 4,927 |
| Rotopunamu Restoration | 22,150 | 20,000 |
| Te Matapuna Willow Control | 0 | 5,000 |
| The Hub Mt Bike Planting | 0 | 12,625 |
| Turoa Alpine Flush | 9,000 | 7,000 |
| Waiotaka River Restoration DOC | 4,578 | 4,733 |
| Waiotaka River Restoration WRC | 1,316 | 8,190 |
| Wairakei Corridor | 31,887 | 42,065 |
| Green Day Donations | 7,844 | 0 |
| | ----- | ----- |
| Total | 159,285 | 137,473 |

Pat Taylor - Treasurer

13 October 2021

Summary
The organisation is in good hands for the applying and receiving of grants and for organising the expenditure of these funds. Donations are received regularly which indicates good community involvement.

KIRI TE WANO PROJECT TONGARIRO COORDINATOR

As I look back over the past year (sitting in another Covid lockdown) I wonder if we will need to get used to this 'new normal'!?

Project Tongariro continued to expand and grow this past year, and I'm proud of its progress. We welcomed four new board members in our November 2020 AGM, all whom I've enjoyed working with! Thank you to Mike who has moved into the President's role with seemingly ease. Patricia Taylor has come into the role of treasurer with a huge amount of experience and skill, and I have learnt so much from her already in this short amount of time! We also welcomed a new DOC representative - Sarah



Participants enjoy a cooling wetland walk Mahi Aroha January 2021 Photo credit; S Potter.

Tunncliffe who has joined Dave Lumley's team as Senior Ranger, Biodiversity. She comes from the Pureora DOC area and is experienced and passionate about community conservation groups, and contributes well at our board meetings.



The planting crew hard at work! Kiri, Rachel and Paul.

Mahi Aroha programme was a highlight for me, with the development of a new booking system integrated into our website - improving user experience, communications, payment and donation giving.

The previous summer's Mahi Aroha programme was a highlight for me, with the development of a new booking system integrated into our website - improving user experience, communications, payment and donation-giving. We also invited the Central North Island Sika Foundation and the Environmental Education collaborative to join the programme, providing experiences for locals and visitors, showcasing their respective areas. We're delighted to partner with them, and DOC again this coming January, in what will be our 58th annual summer programme.

Other highlights include;

A two day not-for-profit conference that Rachel, Robyn and myself attended in Mt Maunganui in May,



Varied landscapes on the Boyd-Oamaru Helihike, Mahi Aroha 2020
Photo credit; C Graham

A wahine-only flight up onto Mt Pihanga to carry out weed control,

The success of various funding bids. One new funder is the 'MacPac Fund for Good', who partnered with us in June 2021 and much to our excitement provided our staff with wonderful MacPac wet-weather gears!



I also must mention our impressive statistics that each year, just keep getting more spectacular! Over our entire organisation (PT, GT, KGT & PFT) our volunteer hours have reached 42,720. That is equivalent to 20.5 full time people working in conservation, and represents a huge jump in our local communities engaging with our projects.

I wish to acknowledge again my colleagues Robyn, Rachel and Sian who make working in this team extremely rewarding and enjoyable. Farewell to Sian who is moving onto a new challenge - and a new community. Thank you for all you've brought to our organisation, we are all the better for it! Acknowledgement must also go to Shirley Potter, Nick Singers, Karen Grimwade, Kim Manunui and Harry Keys (but to name a few) - these are all volunteers who continue to give their time and expertise freely and are crucial to my role. Thank you to Paul who continues to be an inspiring leader. I look with trepidation to the time when he finally decides to step back from the Director's role. Whoever fills these shoes will have a hard time dispelling comparisons!

Finally, thank you to all our partners, funders, sponsors and donors. The support we receive from these people is constant, unwavering and builds confidence. It is a credit to the small community we live in!



Kiri, Rachel and Robyn at Tonic Conference, May 2021, Mt Maunganui Photo credit; K Te Wano.



First Executive Board meeting, February 2021, Trout Centre. Photo credit; K Te Wano.



GREENING TAUPŌ

ROBYN ELLIS

GREENING TAUPŌ COORDINATOR

continued with the annual plantings with Contact Energy, Taupo District Council and Department of Conservation, and recently we have had the opportunity to work alongside Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board and The Taupo Golf Club. Greening Taupō has also supported Kids Greening Taupō with some of their school restoration projects and offering opportunities for young people within community projects. The Wicked Weeders continue to provide great support ensuring that Greening Taupō planting days run smoothly and the plantings are kept in check.

The last 12 months have run smoothly for Greening Taupō. We have been able to plan and host 10 community planting days with over 20,000 native plants going into local restoration projects. We have been able to achieve this with the amazing support of over 2000 volunteers. It has been wonderful to see the numbers of volunteers attending community planting events continue to increase.

It has been exciting to be collaborating with more groups and organisations for our community restoration projects. We have

The annual Arbor Day planting, which this year was Greening Taupō Day, was definitely our most successful planting event.

The Wicked weeders with a few of the donated Mega Mitre 10 products





Setting up the plants at Whakaipo Bay prior to the public planting day.

The first Greening Taupo community planting for the 2021 season was in collaboration with the Taupo Golf Club to launch 'Project Birdlife', a Taupo Golf Club initiative to improve the area surrounding the greens for native wildlife. This season the native plants were provided by Trees that Count and Greening Taupo with fantastic encouragement from the Club manager Cliff Morgan, Club President Grant Hill and additional support from Taupo District Council. For the continued success of 'Project Birdlife', including the ongoing maintenance and preparation of planting sites and annual community plantings, Taupō Golf club is sourcing future funds through a mix of grants, fundraising and encouraging support from the local golfing community along with the ongoing support from Greening Taupō.

The annual Arbor Day planting, which this year was Greening Taupō Day, was definitely our most successful planting event. Our aim was to lift the profile of Greening Taupō and Kids Greening Taupō in the community and we certainly believe we did that with a huge amount of support, engagement and fun on the day.

Shawn 'The Vegetator' Vennell's passion and enthusiasm for Greening Taupo and the replanting of Wairakei Drive is unflagging with preparing 3 community planting sites a season along the drive.

Shawn, along with his supporters with the heavy machinery, including Seays and Aaron from Landclear, have continued to transform more sites along the drive for future plantings in 2021 and 2022.

Shawn also got some great TV time, being recognised as a Good Sort and acknowledgement of his passion and effort along Wairakei Drive. Check out Seven Sharp, Good Sorts for the 24th July 2020 <https://www.facebook.com/sevensharp/posts/10158788146417268>

Greening Taupō continued to provide team-building adventures to Cheal, Mercury and CAMEX, this additional support with many hands is incredibly vital to tackle the larger projects and all helps the success of the restoration sites. Going forward, Greening Taupō is keen to continue to raise our profile and to explore and encourage

more collaboration to maintain sites and restore more of the local environment.

In addition to our long-running supporters such as Wairakei Golf and Sanctuary, who once again donated the funds raised from the annual Locals Day which is a fantastic fundraiser for Greening Taupo, Carolyn George from Tremains joined up with Greening Taupo and has raised enough funds to purchase us a trailer, this is a much-needed addition along with our first vehicle that we were able to purchase with funds raised by Shawn Vennell, Quality Print, the vehicle is all sign written with GT and KGT logos providing another great way to get our brands out there.

In March 2021 we had the opportunity to submit to Taupo District Council's Long Term Plan 2021-2031, which we then presented to the council in May. Along with highlighting that the LTP was almost silent about restoration planting, we stressed the need for additional council resources for GT in preparing and maintaining sites, as the parks and recreation team seem very underpowered. We reminded the council



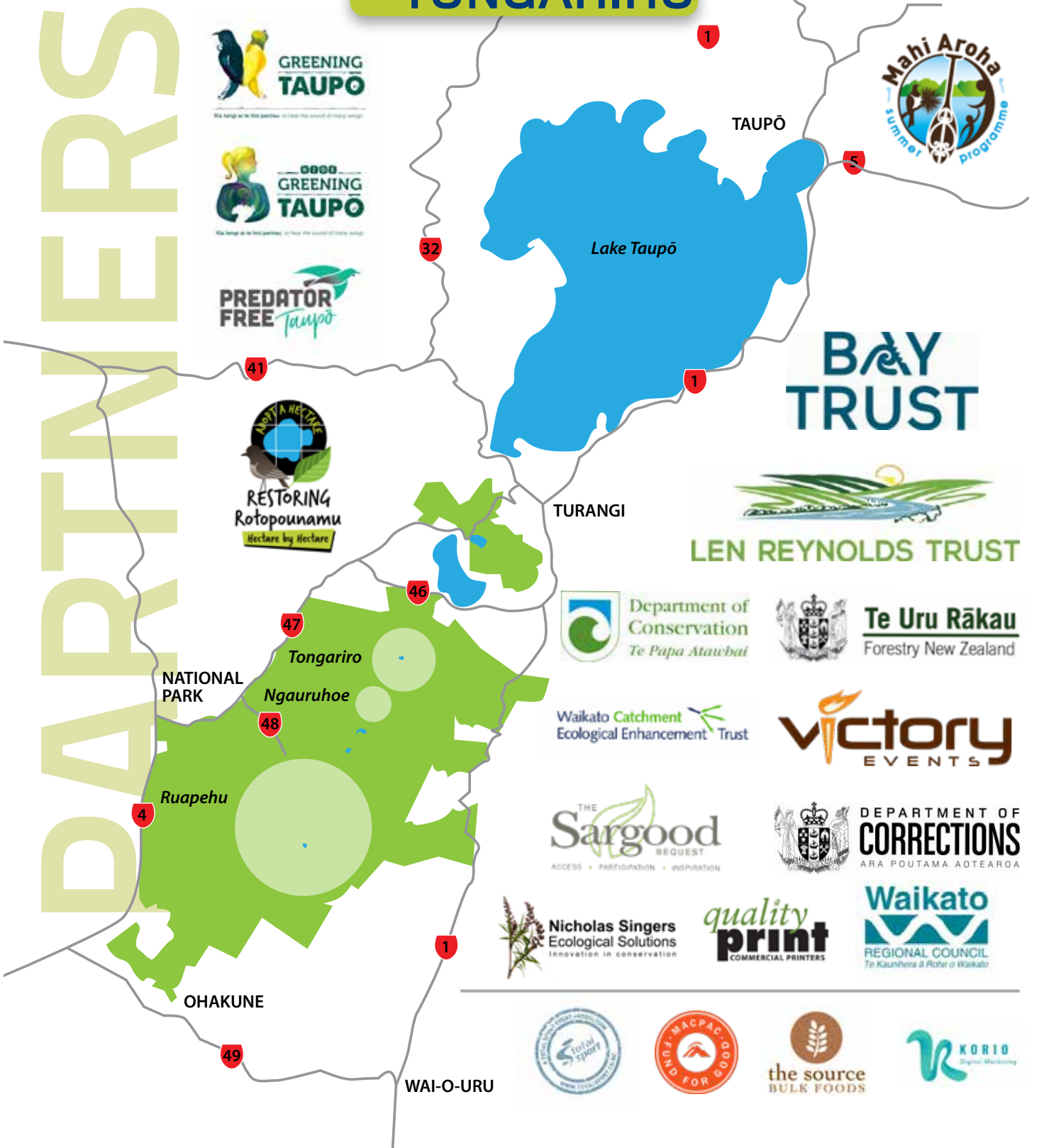
Proud young recipients of their Planting Day Certificates

about their responsibilities with appropriate urban plantings and the lack of planting on the ETA. We also acknowledged their present funding has been very significant in growing Greening Taupo, with their contribution funding the employment of a Greening Taupo Coordinator, which is vital to ensure community involvement. It would be a privilege to continue our partnership with Taupo District Council and maintain our momentum for the environment and the community!

Through the support of these organisations and businesses
Greening Taupo's
 success is made possible!



PROJECT TONGARIRO



PARTNERS



www.tongariro.org.nz
www.facebook.com/projecttongariro



KIDS GREENING TAUPŌ

RACHEL THOMPSON
KGT EDUCATION COORDINATOR



After building our brand and online resources in 2020, this year Kids Greening Taupō (KGT) has focussed on growing our work on the ground. We are very excited to now be officially working with every primary school, intermediate school, kura kaupapa, and high school in the Taupō township! This is a huge milestone for us. We also work with a number of early childhood education centres (ECEs).

Last year, we identified a need for a coordinator who could speak Te Reo Māori to work with the local kura kaupapa and kohanga reo. We found funding for a part time position and are excited to have appointed Tākoha Pitiroi to take on this role. This means we will be able to work with another kura and two kohanga reo, bringing our total number of education centres to 25.

This year we added a junior leadership team to our programme. We now have over 50 students, aged 7-18, from a range of local schools in our student leadership teams.

These are extracurricular teams, meeting outside of school hours to learn about



The team with Ruud Kleinpaste

conservation and biodiversity, while developing leadership skills. These students take the lead in projects at their schools, along with our community planting days and events. They even presented to Taupō District Council this year.

Another goal of KGT has been to work more with at-risk youth. We can see the value in connecting with nature for the mental and physical wellbeing of youth from all demographics. We have begun to support Alternative Education and Pathways Youth

We now have over 50 students, aged 7-18, from a range of local schools in our student leadership teams.



Student leaders planting at the Botanical Gardens



Kid's Greening Taupō students on a mission!

Employment Programme. We've enjoyed seeing the participants learning about biodiversity, New Zealand native flora, and conservation, while also developing practical skills at a weeding or planting session. They are able to connect to nature, feel like they are making a difference, do physical mahi, and give back to the community. It has been a fantastic partnership that we look forward to continuing.

This year we were asked by Blue Light Taupō to collaborate with them on their school programme. We are extremely proud of the gully cleanup that we worked on together at Taupō Intermediate. This involved 360 students working for 2 hours each to clear a jungle of jasmine and ivy to release 50 year old native trees.



Kids Greening Taupō was set up as a pilot project utilising the Collaborative Community Education Model (CCEM). This year we have had people from various parts of New Zealand showing an interest in setting up similar programmes

in their areas. We hosted a CCEM hui for eleven people from from Dunedin, Masterton, Hamilton, and Whakatane. It is wonderful to be able to help these new organisations to get started and to support them on their journey.

We have also expanded our programme this year to work with land developers of the Waipahihi gully area, involving local schools and ECE centres in a collaborative project.

Each term we hold at least one teacher professional development (PD)

workshop and one all-school event. In the last year we have held a Climate Change education workshop, local teacher sharing and celebration evening, bush kindergarten/school teacher workshop, a nocturnal teacher PD session with Ruud Kleinpaste, and a sustainable energy teacher workshop. Our predator free teacher workshop has been postponed due to lockdown.

We finished last year with an awesome mulching event for schools. In Term 1 this year our watering event was also a huge success with 234 attendees from six schools and two ECE centres. Representatives from nine different organisations were there to help out. Taupo District Council and the Kinloch Fire Brigade filled up buckets. It was a fantastic collaborative community event.



Participants at the CCEM hui joining in with a 'Wicked Weeders' session

This was followed closely by a successful Matariki Planting event run in collaboration with Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board, involving 300 school children.

Unfortunately, many Term 3 events have been postponed due to Covid 19. However, our online resources have been used widely by schools and families all over Aotearoa, with over 30,000 page views in the first week of lockdown.

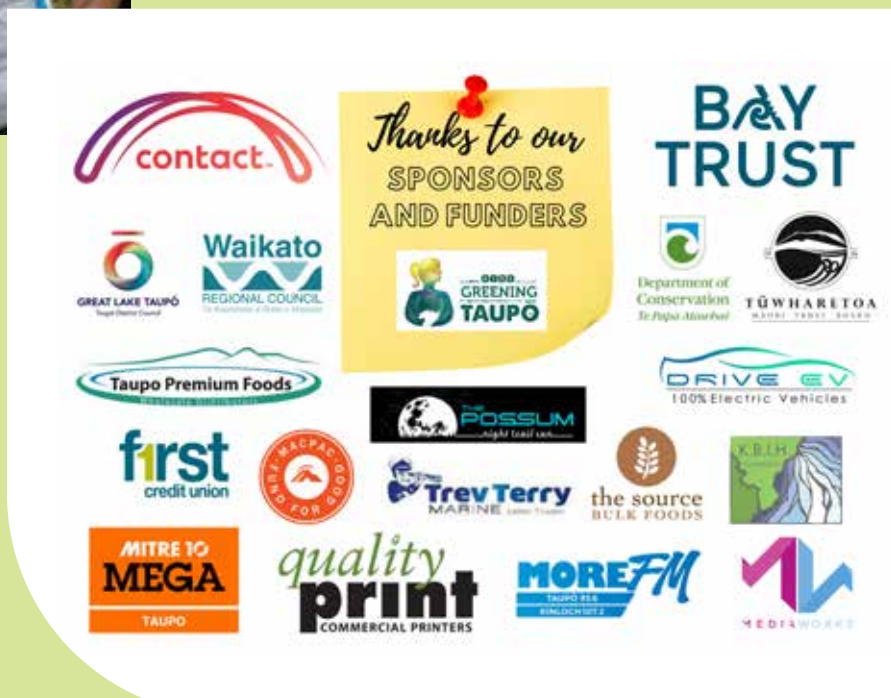
We have been excited by the huge support that we have received from our community this year. By involving children in conservation and restoration work, we are growing a community that genuinely care for the Taupō environment



Restoring a native gully area at Taupō Intermediate with Blue Light Taupō

We have just held our largest and most successful event ever, 'Greening Taupō Day'. It involved every school in Taupō, along with many early childhood centres, local businesses and local organisations.

Over 1000 people attended the main planting event. You can read all about it on our website.



STATS

42,720 hours by

5,245 volunteers

41,634

trees planted across all projects **this year**

12,413

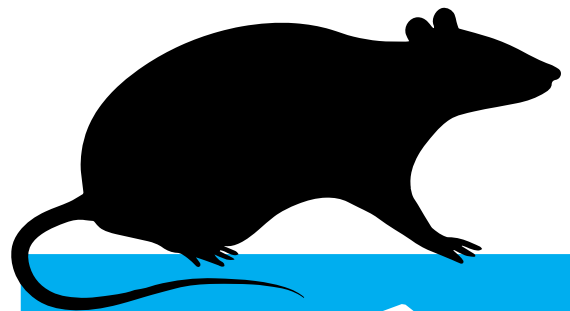
pests trapped across all projects

Total plants planted **so far**

290,500+

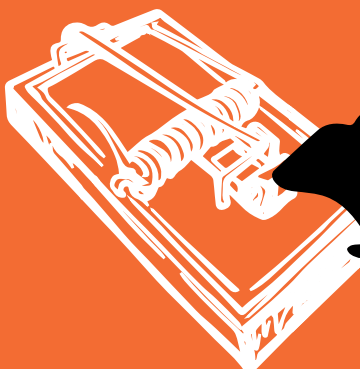
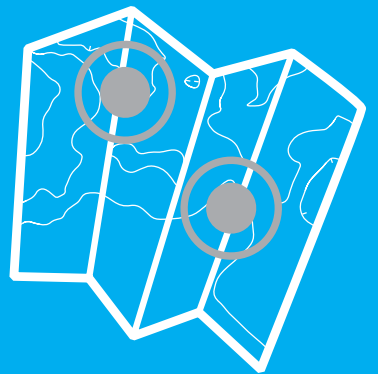
700

new traps built and set by our community **this year**



34

trapping sites



1,952

active traps across all our projects



PREDATOR FREE TAUPŌ

ROBYN ELLIS
PFT COORDINATOR

workshops which are usually crazy busy with young and old keen to build a trap box to take home and put in their backyard. We have had great support, with ITM Taupō supplying the materials for the boxes, and funding from Predator Free Trust and Waikato Regional Council. This has made it possible to give away rat traps and boxes and also provide knowledgeable workshops to teach effective trapping practises. We also work alongside

Many of the project sites are small urban gullies but they all connect together to create a larger trapping network.

Between June 2020- July2021 Predator Free Taupō added another 10 community trapping projects to the local area. These traps are managed and regularly serviced by community volunteers. Many of the project sites are small urban gullies but they all connect together to create a larger trapping network. Along with the many backyard traps that have been set up, native biodiversity is getting more of a chance for survival.

There is still a continual demand from the community that they want to be part of the Predator Free 2050 movement, particularly after the showing of the RNZ Fight for the Wild series shown on TV1. Locally Predator Free Taupō can connect and support groups and individuals that want to do their bit.

Throughout the last 12 months Predator Free Taupō has been busy with many community events such as whanau nature days and the annual Mahi Aroha Summer programme. At these events, we have provided trap building

Cam Speedy presenting a best practise trapping workshop

Kids Greening Taupō and have been engaged with many schools teaching students about pests, how to find out what's in their backyard and all about trapping and building boxes. We have also been present at local markets sharing information and building and selling rat traps in boxes. Predator Free Taupō facilitates an annual winter talk to the community and in October 2020 we heard from Jess Scrimgeour about ferret impacts in the Tongariro Kiwi Sanctuary, and Haydn Steel about his Journey of developing



the AT220 auto trap. Thanks to Wairakei Golf & Sanctuary for once again hosting us for these incredible evenings.

Predator Free Taupō has been successful in supporting smaller groups with funding applications. A DOC Community Fund application for trapping a farmland/conservation estate boundary, Kawakawa Bay was successful. Taupō Forest and Bird leading the Opepe trapping project have been successful with applications for ongoing trapping resources along with the Waikato River Trapping project which has been able to extend their trapping network with donations from the local Wairakei Business community and has extended into the Craters mountain bike park.

Predator Free Taupō has been successful in a funding application from Bay Trust to contribute towards the coordinator's wages, as the Department of Conservation Community grant ended in 2021. Funds from the Waikato Regional Council Environmental initiative have provided trapping resources for ongoing workshops and support for projects.

Predator Free Taupō was invited to a Tauhara Maunga Joint Trusts Working Group, where they welcomed new projects that would progress the goals in the restoration and protection of Mount Tauhara. We advised the establishment of a small pest monitoring network. We then applied for funds and were successful with the WWF community conservation fund to fund this project. This is now finally getting established with the first monitoring to be undertaken over Summer 2022.

We have not yet found a replacement Chairperson since Katy Glenie stood down from the Predator Free Taupō Chairperson role, so please let me know if you know of anyone who could be considered.

Predator Free Taupō is planning many more events and getting more traps out there into



Top - Whio Fun Day trap building.

Middle - Trap building at a Whanau Nature Day

Lower - Trap building resources supplied by Taupō and Turangi ITM

projects and backyards. In the near future we are hoping to see more collaboration happening with key stakeholders and discussions for more landscape initiatives to hopefully then connect and support all the work that's been happening out there, fingers crossed.

Keep your lure fresh, your trap set and happy trapping!

TE MATAPUNA WETLANDS / WAIOTAKA RESTORATION

KIRI TE WANO

Project Tongariro's 'wider' wetland restoration project Te Matapuna is now into its 17th year. Currently we are focusing on three distinct projects in partnership with land owners and funders - willow control in the Waiotaka wetland reserves, Waiotaka River Forest restoration near the Rongomai Marae and Oruatua Reserve restoration (beside the Tauranga-Taupo river).



Waiotaka Wetland reserve boundary with neighboring land, showing the willow control. Photo credit; Kiri Te Wano

The first and longest project sees the finalisation of the latest funding from the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust (WCEET). Over the last 16 years the WCEET Trust have funded over \$684,000 for Willow control in the Te Matapuna (south Lake Taupō) Wetlands. This last project finished previous work controlling willows on the Waiotaka Recreation and Scenic reserves utilizing aerial spot spraying. The Department of Conservation's local office (Turangi) have undertaken to

maintain the gains we've made with WCEETs funding over a wider 71 hectares of public conservation reserve land.

Completing this piece of work is a major milestone as this project was initially started back in 2001! Controlling willows in this important 'kidneys for Lake Taupō' landscape, has meant that wetland biodiversity has been improved and maintained. These areas are important habitat for Australasian bittern (matuku), the spotless crane (pūweto) and the fernbird (mātātā). Looking to the future, we have a few small wetland project plans on neighbouring private land developed by volunteer ecologist Nick Singers that we hope to start in the near future.

Project partners Ngati Rongomai are thrilled with the work completed beside the Waiotaka river on hapu land.

Waiotaka River Forest Restoration update

This 3 year restoration project is coming to the end of this stage of funding. Project partners Ngati Rongomai are thrilled with the work completed beside the Waiotaka river on hapu land. Together with the Department of Corrections teams and land preparation contractors, we have cleared just over 12 hectares of weedy woodland and planted it with 45,000 native trees! All sourced locally and grown in the Tongariro Prison's nursery. Corrections teams have spent over 6,675 hours (or 1,112 days) in the last 2 years preparing land for planting, planting and weeding. 9,750 natives were planted by the community and Rongomai hapu in the last 2 years! School groups, visiting overseas students and corporate groups have also spent countless

hours releasing plants from weeds, enhancing the prospective young forest! We are extremely proud of this restoration project and it highlights what a wonderful community we live in. Thanks to our funders, project partners, community planters and our volunteer project manager Nick Singers, this will be a piece of mahi we will continue to celebrate. We also will look to continue our close relationship with Ngati Rongomai hapu.



Keen Rongomai kids pick up pots on a community planting day. Photo credit; PT



Top left - Nick Singers and Warrick Simmonds laying out plants for a community planting day April 2020

Top right - Paul Green plants a symbolic kowhai for PT as a partner in the restoration project April 2021

Lower - A community planting group is warmly welcomed onto Rongomai Marae April 2020. Photo credits; PT

ORUATUA RECREATION RESERVE

SHIRLEY POTTER

The last year has been full steam ahead with at least another 2000 volunteer hours spent on a raft of tasks including; land preparation, wilding pine removal, hand releasing (weeding), planting and spray releasing of previous year plantings.

Funding to enable the land preparation work has come from Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust (WCEET). Plant funding has

Energy, Perception Planning staff and student groups such as the Nga Whenua Rahui cadets and St Kentigern College. The weather was particularly unkind for some of our St Kent's groups, however despite that they are keen to return this year.

Thanks to the Sargood Trust we were able to employ Nicky Schrader and Suzie Deroles part-

At the end of June 2021, we have planted 22,531 plants since we began our mission in 2014.



St Kentigern College crew on a very cold wet day.

come from Te Uru Rakau (part of the Ministry for Primary Industries billion dollar tree fund), and Waikato Regional Council (WRC). The Sargood Trust, Challenge Service Station and donations from individual locals has been used to pay our two part-time pest plant eradicators.

Hand releasing has been carried out by Project Tongariro volunteers and several corporate groups such as Genesis

time as our main releasing crew, (with me working alongside as a volunteer). Their paid work began in October 2020 as the weeds emerged. Nicky had to 'retire' when her baby bump prevented her from bending over! We spent all the Sargood funding and dipped into our local donations funding (a whopping \$7,900 to date). Nicky and Suzie are both fantastic workers with great commitment to the project (on the volunteer

front as well).

Sourcing our trees from the Tongariro prison is a bonus and I work closely with Murray collecting seeds and seedlings. 2021 has seen them grow 5000 kanuka trees from seedlings we collected on site.

From July 2020 to the end of June 2021 we have planted 5,473 trees. This includes another 500 beautiful trees from Ian and Frances Jenkins.

Highlights

The number of volunteers turning up to our plantings

Miromiro (Tomtit) breeding and remaining resident

Native plants self-seeding in the thousands

Working with Nicky and Suzie releasing over the summer

Finding new wacky 'things' like Dog vomit slime – look that up!

Securing Te Uru Rakau funding for 1 hectare per year for next 3 years as a memorial to local well respected Kaumatua Jim Maniapoto

Hearing that Dave Lumley said at the DOC monthly meeting that my talk to the WCEET board in October was the highlight of his month

Lowlights

Not being able to water plants during the dry period (not enough hours in the day!)

Flood in September 2020 – meant we had to replant a several hundred trees

Plunging my grubber into a wasp nest and paying the price!

We typically have around 50 people at each planting day and this is pretty impressive for our small community. It is very pleasing to see new people turn up each time, especially the holiday home owners. The Lower Hutt Rotary group travelled up again for our planting day in May with 14 people happy to muck in. Over the last year we have had five community planting days.

Bryan Lawrance and his heavy duty machinery continues to enable our progression into the weedy areas and he works alongside Warrick Simmonds to pull over difficult pines. Warrick and friends felled more wilding pines, distributing the firewood to friends and whanau. The number of pines is rapidly diminishing.



September flooding – 10 minutes later the water would have been over William's waist.

Nick Singers help is highly valued and key to keeping the project on task. Ardy, Collette, Sarah and many others are all instrumental in different aspects of this project. Mark Brightwell has moved in permanently next door and is a great help, assisting with weed spraying using our 100 litre spray tank on his quad bike. Our other neighbour, Pauline has become queen of the morning tea on site and our BBQ lunch. Home baking rules supreme at our events now!



Nicky and Suzie have worked releasing our plantings since October 2020.

Thanks to DOC for staff to help on plant layout days and loaning us equipment. Taupo District Council kindly loan staff member, Tania, and a flat deck ute for moving plants onto the site.

Predator trapping continues throughout the reserve (using a lot of fresh rabbit) and the bird numbers keep increasing. Rabbit and hare control is frustrating and an ongoing job. Kereru numbers keep growing. Miromiro (Tomtits) seem to be permanent residents now and it is a joy to be out working with them singing away happily.

A big flood in September 2020 gave us the opportunity to replant around 200 trees! The timing was unfortunately only a month out from our planting. A bonus layer of silt was left to fertilise the plants.

At the end of June 2021, we have planted 22,531 plants since we began our mission in 2014.

The Tongariro Turangi community board funded 13 botanical signs to help educate people about features of some of our plants. It's great to see people reading them.



Installing botanical signs sponsored by Turangi Tongariro Community Board.



Three week old Hendrikus Te Atiawa at his first planting May 2021.

MT PIHANGA - LAKE ROTOPOUNAMU

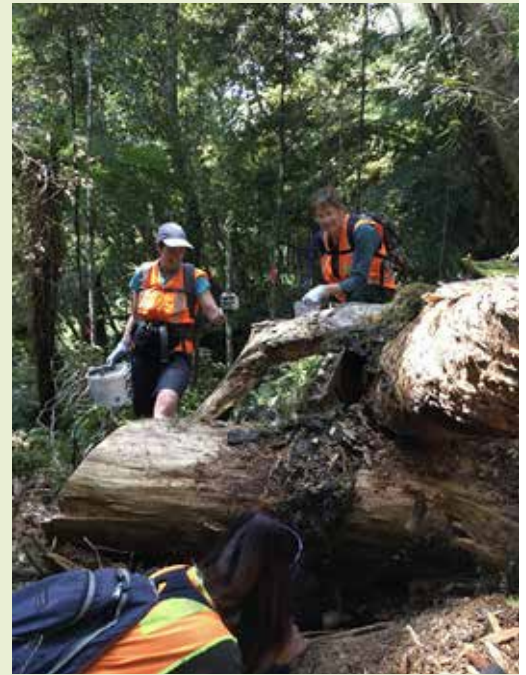
KIRI TE WANO

The Mt Pihanga - Lake Rotopounamu Forest Restoration project is Project Tongariro's oldest running restoration project - now in its 20th year! The crowd-sourcing programme continues to see strong support with the numbers of hectares virtually adopted up nearly 8% on last year, but still lagging behind 2018-19's peak by -21%. This could be caused by our change in how we request donations for this programme and the impact of Covid-19.

We run this forest restoration programme in partnership with DOC. In March 2021 we were invited to the first of a series of hui with Ngati Turangitukua who hold manawhenua over Mt Pihanga - Lake Rotopounamu. Our members were warmly welcomed in a powhiri and we heard from kaumatua about the cultural



*A 'triumphant' Ardy with a stoat.
Photo credit; Shirley Potter*



*Trappers
Helen, Sarah
and Zavra look
for squashed
trap, under a
fallen tree at
Rotopounamu.
Photo credit;
Shirley Potter*

*“I call it my happy place,
especially when in the thick of
the bush doing a trapline. A
peace and serenity descends
whenever I am in the bush.”*

significance of Mt Pihanga and the Turangi township. We hope to continue our relationship and join together to look after the Lake Rotopounamu forest.

Heather control upon Mt Pihanga continued this year with a wāhine-only team being flown up to the top of Mt Pihanga. This control work has occurred over the last 3 years and the annual control is working well. Ngati Turangitukua, PT and DOC made up the 15 wāhine team that worked over two days to 'search and destroy' heather plants and other invasive weeds, with 15ltr knapsack sprayers on our backs! We were encouraged to find much less heather than in past years and believe our weeding work is having an impact. We appear to have reduced the number of large plants and curbed the re-seeding process.



*Left - Joanna Mendonca giving a tool box briefing before the flight. Photo credit; Kiri Te Wano
 Middle - Sisters, Kiri & Nina selfie during the flight to the top. Photo credit; Kiri Te Wano
 Right - The knapsacks carefully being mixed for heather control. Photo credit; Kiri Te Wano*

Unfortunately heather isn't the only pest plant up there, with contorta pine being found as well.

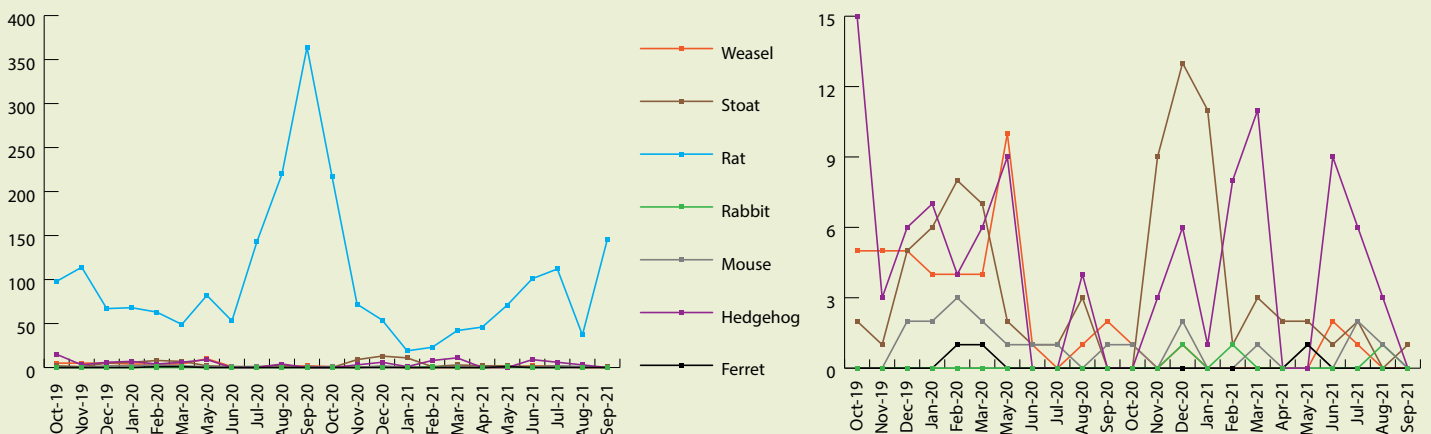
The heather is definitely being contained and we believe annual visits with the knapsacks should continue.

Trapping results at Rotopounamu have seen a steady increase in catches since TBFree NZ finished their aerial control programme in 2019. It is very concerning at present that threats such as possum, mustelids and even encroaching deer are affecting the habitat of our resident birds and insects. Local volunteers and DOC staff check traps regularly, but traps alone cannot prevent pests taking over this beautiful forest.

Our wonderful trappers continue their important work at Rotopounamu. Colette

Taylor, a local volunteer trapper recently put into words why she loves Rotopounamu and why she keeps returning; "I call it my happy place, especially when in the thick of the bush doing a trapline. A peace and serenity descends whenever I am in the bush. I feel a connectedness with nature and a sense of belonging. I am always awed by the beauty of the bush; there is such variety to marvel at from the stature and mana of the giant canopy trees to the tiniest fungi. A highlight is to have meetings and conversations with birds, especially whitehead, tui, bellbirds, robins, tomtits, kaka and the occasional rifleman. I also feel privileged to be enveloped in Pihanga's warmth and care. Trapping is my way of feeding my soul but also helping to ensure our beautiful birds for all to enjoy in the future". I'm sure many of our trappers also feel this way!

Rotopounamu Catches October 2019 to September 2021



Trapping in this area targets in particular mustelids. Those are ferrets, stoats and weasels which are the major predators for native birds and eggs. Rats are the dominant predator which can also be targeted with other means. Mid 2020 a combination of Covid-19 trapping delays and mast conditions resulted in unusual numbers of rats in the area. Leaving out the rats from the graph (right side) shows more clearly the relatively small but concerning numbers of mustelids and other predators.



TONGARIRO NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Sian Moffit

Kids Greening Taupō Education Coordinator

Nick Singers

Technical Advisor (Volunteer)

CONTACT US

PHONE: 07 386 6499

MOBILE: 027 628 8009

EMAIL: info@tongariro.org.nz

WEBSITE: www.tongariro.org.nz

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/projecttongariro

POSTAL ADDRESS:

PO Box 238,

Turangi, 3353,

New Zealand

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:

C/- DOC

3 Turangi Town Centre

Turangi 3334



EMAIL: info@greeningtaupo.org.nz

WEBSITE: www.greeningtaupo.org.nz

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/GreeningTaupo

MOBILE: 027 628 8008

ADDRESS: c/- DOC, PO Box 528, Taupō 3351



EMAIL: info@greeningtaupo.org.nz

WEBSITE: www.predatorfreetaupo.org.nz

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/Predator-Free-Taupo

MOBILE: 027 628 8008

ADDRESS: c/- DOC, PO Box 528, Taupō 3351



Kia tangi ai te tiri parirau. to hear the sound of many wings

EMAIL: rachel@greeningtaupo.org.nz

WEBSITE: www.kidsgreeningtaupo.org.nz

MOBILE: 027 412 7145

ADDRESS: C/- DOC, PO Box 528 Taupō 3351



*Whio from the Turangi
Hardening Facility
being released at Blue
Duck Station with
some of the Project
Tongariro "vollies"
January 2021*



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