

Nga Uruora – Kāpiti Project Incorporated 18th Annual Report 2014 – 2015



Committee 2014 - 2015

Convenor

Malcolm Garnham

Secretary

Paul Callister

Treasurer

Malcolm Garnham

Auditor/accountant

Jenni Borren

Committee

Paul Callister, Ken Fraser, Peter Rankin, Malcolm Garnham, Peter Kentish, John Lancashire, Pete McLaughlin, Philip de Wilde, Ian Cairns and Blair Badcock

Appreciation for support

During the past year many organisations and individuals have helped us with field work, office work and many other activities that make Nga Uruora work. All this help is greatly appreciated. It is difficult to provide a list of everyone, but we would like to thank the following:

- Kim Broad, Richard Romijn, Mike Urlich and Darryl Kee, Greater Wellington Regional Council
- Rob Cross, Kāpiti Coast District Council for advice and support
- Lawrence Silas and Dan Green, Kāpiti Coast District Council for support of our field work
- Pukerua Bay Schools staff, parents and students
- Jenni Borren for preparing the accounts and for her good advice as we have moved to simplify and tidy up after the separation of the contracting business
- Craig Nicholson, New Zealand Transport Agency

Our pest control team continued to keep rats, stoats, weasels and possums under control. We would like to thank Tony and Helen Griffiths, Sue Boyde, Jim Baltaxe, Paul Callister, Pete McLaughlin.

Paul Callister, Vicky Griffin, Gay Hay, and Peter Martin continued to grow plants at Pukerua Bay Nursery or in their home gardens.

We would like to thank the regular Tuesday working bee team including Peter Kentish, Ken Fraser, Paul Callister, Ian Cairns, Steve Mann, Michael Stace and Declan Evans.

We are grateful to Ken Fraser for the many hours he has put into controlling cape ivy, blackberry and other weeds.

Other volunteers included Maria Lute for help with the website and related technology and Ted Coats for all round support. We are also grateful for the on-going support of Carol Reihana of Ngāti Haumia.

Introduction to Nga Uruora- Kāpiti Project Inc.

Nga Uruora Kāpiti Project Inc. was established in 1997 by Fergus Wheeler and the Paekākāriki community to halt and reverse the decline in coastal forest on the Kāpiti – Porirua coast. The vision is to link the conservation successes on Kāpiti and Mana Islands to the mainland coast, to create a ribbon of native forest to bring back the native birds that used to sing in our trees. Our status as a community group allows us to actively initiate conservation on both public and private land. We believe there is huge potential for community involvement in, and appreciation of, conservation.

From south to north we have worked on four different areas:

- The escarpment from Muri Station to Paekākāriki overbridge Betty Perkins Reserve (above the Paekākāriki Hill Road)
- A.T. Clarke Reserve (forest below the hairpin on Paekākāriki Hill Road)
- Sanderson's Reserve (opposite Fisherman's Table)
- Ames Street Reserve

Our flagship project is the escarpment. It consists of all the steep ground between SH1 and the farmland at the top of the escarpment, and it stretches from the north end of Pukerua Bay to Paekākāriki overbridge. In the centre of the escarpment, Bob's Track gives access to the Ecosite which is a large area of remnant native bush.

Convenor's Report 2015

The 2014 – 2015 year was a year of bedding down the significant changes of the previous year and starting to look at how we operate and the role of Nga Uruora.

Following on from those changes, we completed a planning process¹ to identify how to best use our resources in the medium and long term. Such a plan is at best a guide, but much of the activity is in line with the direction signalled.

- We increasingly focused on core activities to lighten the administrative load of office bearers but more to enable us to focus resources on key restoration and conservation activities.
- We agreed to focus less on “trees in the ground” and more on pest control
- We advanced collaboration with the wider conservation movement on the Kāpiti Coast
- We have started a three year programme of contracted weed control, recognising that this is a key activity that cannot readily be undertaken by volunteers

I would like to acknowledge the huge amount of work done by Paul Callister in planting, planning, advocacy and leading the conservation thinking in many areas. In addition he has shouldered a significant administrative burden connected with the keeping the wheels on.

¹ Our strategic document is available on our website.

The Biodiversity Project (reported on below) will be a big driver of much of our efforts going forward. Completing this successfully will require a truly collaborative effort by all the conservation groups involved.

Thank you to all those that have contributed over the year whether on the committee, planting, setting traps, potting up or one of the many other jobs that are needed.

Planting and nurseries

Nurseries

Nga Uruora continued to scale down plant production at the Pukerua Bay nursery. Nevertheless, over 3,000 plants were produced. While we used most of these plants ourselves, we donated nearly 200 plants to Whareroa farm and 100 to KCDC to distribute to restoration groups wanting plants. We also donated plants to Te Araroa for our joint planting program.

Using a grant from GWRC, Nga Uruora arranged the construction of two nursery bays at the Queen Elizabeth Park nursery. However, for a variety of reasons it was decided to not go ahead with the plan to grow plants at this nursery and we donated the new facilities to Queen Elizabeth Park.

Planting

Despite some very wet weather during the winter, planting was completed on both sides of the stream at the start of the Te Araroa track. We have planted over 1,200 plants in this area. Dan Green (KCDC) was invaluable in clearing areas for planting further along the track. As part of this project, Lawrence Silas, also KCDC, employed his chainsaw skills to complete removing tree lucerne.

In mid-winter we transported plants to the quarry. We are grateful to KiwiRail for managing the crossing at no charge.

We also held a successful planting at the lookout. This was a combined Te Araroa-NUKP working bee. GWRC and Peter Kentish provided the transport for the plants to the site. On a perfect winters day we put in over 750 plants. About 200 plants are in a sheep proof enclosure. On the same day, some new traps were laid out on this upper section of the track.

In our plantings we endeavoured to use a diverse range of locally sourced pioneer plants. In the last couple of seasons we have added a small number of secondary species and/or some plants that are rare in our area. This includes matai, northern, rata, totara, tawa, milk tree, *Hebe paniculata*, putaputaweta and pigeonwood.

We are grateful for the carpet donated by Whareroa Farm which we are using in our various sites.

Weed control

Nga Uruora has a major commitment to controlling weeds and this has been our main use of funds during the 2014 financial year. To help make our work more efficient and effective, Nga Uruora agreed to spend \$5,000 annually for three years on weed plant control on the escarpment. This work

will be carried out by Nga Uruora Contracting Ltd² (NUCC) under a contract reviewed annually. The work included Climbing Asparagus, German Ivy, Cape Ivy, English Ivy and Tradescantia control.

Climbing Asparagus was growing on land between the old BP Station on State Highway 1 and the start of the Te Araroa trail. This land is not controlled by Nga Uruora but the weed provides such a threat we decided to fund this work ourselves. NUCC started work during the summer.

We continued with our long term project to eradicate Cape Ivy from the Quarry. We also started a trial to eradicate English Ivy from the slopes above the stream near the Overbridge, and this was largely successful. Growth of German Ivy in the bushy areas was not as strong this year showing that shading it out is preventing it from spreading further south. However the growth of German Ivy in open areas near the Overbridge is as strong as ever. Control of Tradescantia in shady areas is proving to be an annual event. We are not attempting to control major weeds such as fennel and periwinkle.

We are also grateful for the on-going support for weed control provided by the KCDC and GWRC.

Pest control

Supported by a grant from GWRC and supplemented by the investment of membership fees, Nga Uruora purchased 45 DoC200 traps. These have been primarily laid out along Te Araroa trail. The new traps allowed us to extend our mustelid and rat control along the escarpment.

In late 2014 a meeting was held at St Peters Hall in Paekakariki to bring together the pest control teams from QE Park, Whareroa, Nga Uruora, the Paekakariki 'Rat Pack' and Pukerua Bay members of Friends of Mana Island. The aim of the meeting was to share information about current pest control across the region and to begin the conversation about increasing our efforts. At this meeting a presentation was given by GroundTruth about the use of the trap data recording software Trap.or.nz. Two outcomes of the meeting were:

- To set up a 'Kapiti Mainland Island' Facebook page
- For NUKP to transition towards using Trap.org.nz. This combined a mapping and data recording system already used by QE Park and the 'Rat Pack'.

A less formal outcome of the meeting was the energy that it helped give to all those involved and this has been important in moving the pest control effort forward.

In late 2014 a draft pest control strategy document was circulated amongst groups for comments. This document was designed to develop a vision and broad goals for an enhanced pest control program across the region.

Working bees

There has been a transition from weekend working bees to regular working bees every Tuesday. In addition, Nga Uruora members teamed up with Te Araroa to install two seats on the trail. As noted in the planting report, Nga Uruora members also joined with Te Araroa volunteers to plant an area next to the trail lookout area as well as continue some planting along the upper parts of the trail.

Throughout the year a small group of keen volunteers carried out a range of activities including track maintenance, planting and weed control. In early 2015 there was a significant drought on the Kapiti Coast. A major effort was launched to water new plantings and as a result we had very few losses.

² An unrelated business founded by members of Nga Uruora Kapiti Project Inc.

\$200 metres of plastic piping for our irrigation system. This watering effort was greatly assisted by a donation of irrigations piping was donated by LEDA extrusions.

Volunteers have been greatly assisted by a scheme where KCDC supports the work of a range of restoration groups along the Kapiti Coast.

Tracks

In recent years, Nga Uruora has built two tracks. These are Bob's Track up to the ecosite and the Kohekohe Loop Track. In the 2014 financial year, the Tuesday working bee continued to undertake maintenance work on both these tracks. This included keeping weeds off the track and undertaking repairs. This work was assisted by KCDC.

The Kohekohe track begins with a walk along the Te Araroa trail before heading up towards the Paekakariki Hill Road. However, some walkers had trouble finding the start of the Te Araroa trail. To solve this problem, the Kapiti Coast District Council worked with the Te Araroa Trust and Nga Uruora to develop a new sign at the top of Ames Street with information on both the Te Araroa trail and the Kohekohe Loop Track.

Perkins farm/Middle Run

At the end of 2013 Nga Uruora published its Perkins Farm escarpment revegetation plan and this continues to guide our thinking about future use of this land. Nga Uruora continues to work with a variety of agencies regarding the future of the farm. Over a number of months we held discussions with NZTA with regards to a 'Right to Occupy' part of the farm. This agreement was to provide a legal and agreed basis for Nga Uruora to undertake pest and weed control on the land providing specific conditions are met. An agreement was concluded with NZTA in late 2014 and we appreciate the open and cooperative way this was reached.

Ministry for the Environment biodiversity project

Nga Uruora, and in particular Paul Callister, worked with Queen Elizabeth Park and Whareroa Farm to develop a biodiversity funding grant application for the Ministry for the Environment. This initiative was led by the late John Lancashire and after a collective effort was ultimately successful in 2015. This is a significant achievement for the region and will provide strong support for key areas such as pest control. It also has the potential to provide a platform for the future development of biodiversity and conservation programmes on the Kapiti Coast.

Promotion and membership

Membership has remained stable and Nga Uruora has strong tacit support in the community. However, the ongoing challenge is to encourage active involvement by our supporters in hands-on activities such as planting and pest control.

Our focus for 2015-16 will be to explore ways to engage with a wider network of supporters.

Financial report

Both the 2014 and 2015 accounts are provided and both are in the process of being audited. The accounts have been independently prepared by an accountant, Jenni Borren. We would like to

particularly thank Jenni for her ongoing advice and support which has been essential in finalising the changed structure and financials of NUKP.

Given the extensive changes in the operation of Nga Uruora over these reporting years, it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons between years.

However, at the end of the 2015 financial year the finances were in a healthy position and this has been maintained. We note that there is no requirement for audit by the Charities Commission and audit is a requirement under Nga Uruora's own rules. Given that the financials going forward will be very simple, this is a requirement that the committee will aim to amend.