



Ngā Uruora – Kāpiti Project Incorporated 23rd Annual Report 2019 – 2020

30 June 2020



Committee 2019-2020

Convenor

Andy McKay

Secretary

Pete McLaughlin

Treasurer

Steve Mann

Committee

Ken Fraser, Peter Kentish, Pete McLaughlin, Andy McKay, Steve Mann, Drew Kear, Sue Boyde

Introduction to Ngā Uruora - Kāpiti Project Inc.

Ngā Uruora - Kāpiti Project Inc. was established in 1997 by Fergus Wheeler and the Paekākāriki community to halt and reverse the decline of coastal forest on the Kāpiti – Porirua coast.

While the focus of Ngā Uruora has shifted over the past 23 years, the core activities of planting, weeding and pest control have continued. Over recent years, as other community conservation groups have formed around us, activities have become geographically constrained to a 292 hectare strip of land between Paekākāriki and Pukerua Bay.

This area contains the Paekākāriki Escarpment, recognised as an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL)¹ under the Resource Management Act and in accordance with the Greater Wellington Regional Policy Statement.

Within this ONL exists the Paekākāriki Escarpment Key Natural Ecosystem (KNE) which is 118 ha of land that straddles the boundary between the Kāpiti Coast District and Porirua City councils' jurisdictions². The KNE site comprises an exposed, steep coastal escarpment and contains remnant and regenerating coastal forests, grey scrub, and flaxland. The majority of the KNE site is legally protected, either by agreement between KiwiRail and the QEII National Trust, or by being within local council road reserve and recreation reserve designations.

Convenor's Report 2019-2020

It's always a heart-warming experience to look back at the previous years work and see what a small but dedicated team can achieve. Ngā Uruora has continued to punch above it's weight in terms of activities which is great to see.

As always, attracting new volunteers has been a struggle, but with 17 people at the most recent Waikākāriki Wetland Weed Whackers event we may have turned a corner.

Wainuiwhenua, which involves acquiring for public ownership what is left of Perkins Farm once Transmission Gully opens, was a big focus of 2019. Greater Wellington Regional Council is now interested and has included Wainuiwhenua as one of its shovel-ready projects as response to COVID-19. We will continue to be involved in the process and are excited for the potential of this project.

On a less positive note, rubbish dumping along Paekākāriki Hill Road seems to be on the increase. Two cars were removed from Hairpin Gully in 2019 after being abandoned by their owners. And our donation box at Paekākāriki end was removed due to being completely destroyed by a thief. We are now considering options for a more secure donation box.

Each year I like to look through a timeline of the previous years work as it gives a real sense of the scope and huge amount of work that all our volunteers have carried out. This is by no means all the work we have carried out, and I am especially grateful to the Tuesday group who meets every week.

Thank you all so much!

¹ Kapiti Coast District Council Proposed District Plan, Landscape and Coastal Environment Addendum, August 4th 2015

² Key Native Ecosystem Plan for Paekākāriki Escarpment 2015-2018, Great Wellington Regional Council

2019

April

- Planting along Hairpin Gully Stream beside the track.
- Trail camera operating in Quarry Lizard Garden to take lizard photos.
- Quarry Lizard Garden Working Bee.

May

- Conservation Volunteers Wellington planting and releasing at the Pukerua Bay end.

June

- Caught the weasel that had been captured on camera feeding on geckos in the Quarry Lizard Garden.
- Kohekohe Loop Track maintenance.

July

- First planting at the south end of the Waikākāriki Wetland.
- Experimental drone photos of the Escarpment with a focus on long term weed control.

August

- First working bee for the Waikākāriki Wetland Weed Whackers.
- Guided Lance Walker (CEO of the Wellington Regional Development Agency) and a film crew filming a promotional video on the Northern swing bridge.
- Planted Pukerua Bay end of the track around Pamela Meeking-Stewart's boundary.

September

- Hosted QEII National Trust around the escarpment for the field trip component of their national conference.
- Conservation Volunteers Wellington help taking driftwood to the Quarry Lizard Garden.

October

- Expanded the volunteer kit.
- Bob's Track Working Bee.
- Swapped out the SD card on the Cacophonometer bird listening device.
- Took delivery of two AT220 automatic possum traps and 8 new stainless steel DOC200s

November

- Purchased and installed a new automated watering control at the Pukerua Bay School shade house.
- Chainsaw operations at the Waikākāriki Wetland thanks to KCDC.
- Bob's Track working bee
- Goethe-Institut New Zealand international film makers helped to collect driftwood.
- Conservation Volunteers Wellington transported driftwood to the Quarry Lizard Garden.

December

- Paekākāriki Community Board approved \$500 of funding to help pay for plants to go into the Waikākāriki Wetland.

2020

January

- Installation of weed bin at the Waikākāriki Wetland
- Working bee at the Waikākāriki Wetland.

February

- Conservation Volunteers Wellington shift driftwood to Quarry Lizard Garden.
- Sold out of rat traps at the Paekākāriki Waitangi Day Festival.

March

- 2020 Lizard Protection Trial survey (cut short with COVID-19).
- Released two species of tradescantia beetles onto the Paekākāriki escarpment as a biocontrol.

Kāpiti Coast Biodiversity Project

The Kāpiti Coast Biodiversity Project formally incorporated in 2019 and Ngā Uruora remains an active member.

Before incorporation, Ngā Uruora acted as the bank account for \$30,000 of funding that the Kāpiti Coast Biodiversity Project successfully received from the DOC Community Fund 2018 round. This funding finished in September 2019. Projects included an urban trapping report for the Kāpiti Coast and work with trail cameras to capture images of predators, little penguins/kororā and lizards.

Another successful application was submitted to the DOC Community Fund for the 2019 round. This was for a feasibility study looking at a predator proof fence for lizard conservation, as well as more work in the little penguin/kororā space, including user sniffer dogs to count penguin burrows.

Planting and weed control

Planting

We began planting at the Pukerua Bay site in 2017. Vicky Griffin, Steve Mann and Jim Cox have led a watering programme that has meant most of these plants have survived three summers now. However, given the early site is extremely exposed to wind and salt most of these plants have barely made it above their guards. Wetter, more sheltered areas have been much more successful and we have had great success with both plant growth and survival.

Most of our planting at the Paekākāriki end continues to be around the Quarry Lizard Garden. We remain focussed on specialist planting, adding in a number of species to the lizard garden that have been locally extinct for a considerable amount of time.

2019 saw the addition of another planting programme, as part of the restoration of the Waikākāriki Wetland. Weeds are a huge issue but we have managed to get a range of natives in and are in the middle of planting for Winter 2020.

We are grateful for plant donations from the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park, Groundtruth, Paekākāriki School, Finn Michalak and Te Rito Gardens.

Weed control

During the year this work included controlling climbing asparagus, English ivy, pampas and boneseed control and has been undertaken by Ngā Uruora Contracting Ltd₃ (NUCC) under a contract, reviewed annually. We thank NUCC for carrying out a substantial amount of extra weed control work for us free of charge.

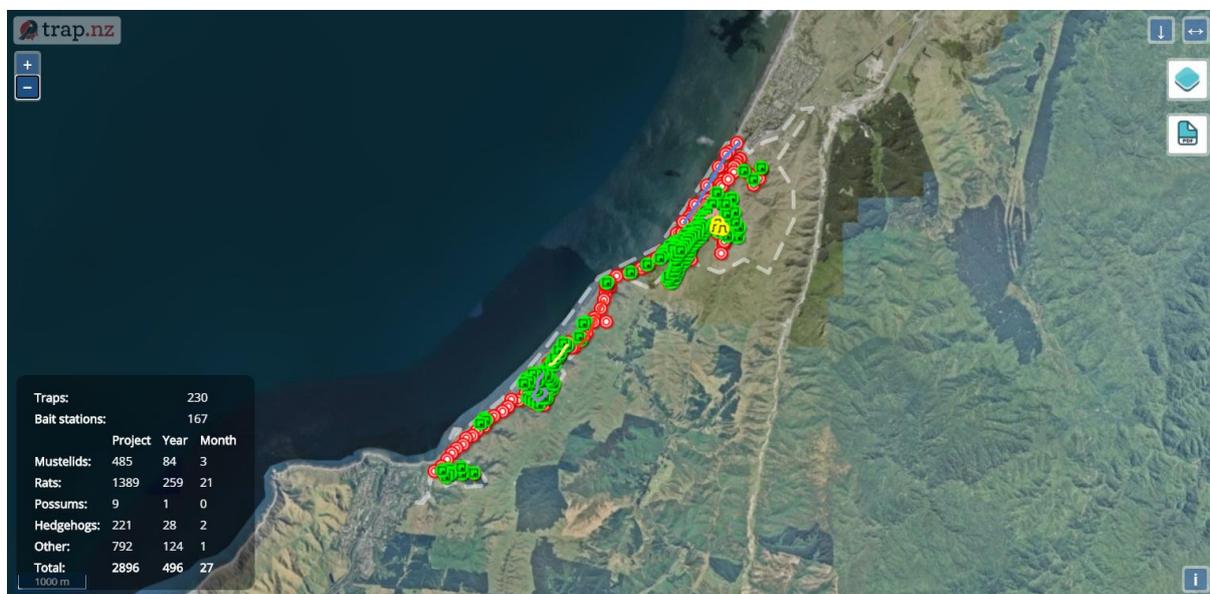
In addition Ngā Uruora has continued work weeding and planting at the Pukerua Bay end of the escarpment as well as controlling wilding pines and boneseed up Fly-By-Wire Gully.

Thanks also to Greater Wellington Regional Council for their weed control efforts on the escarpment.

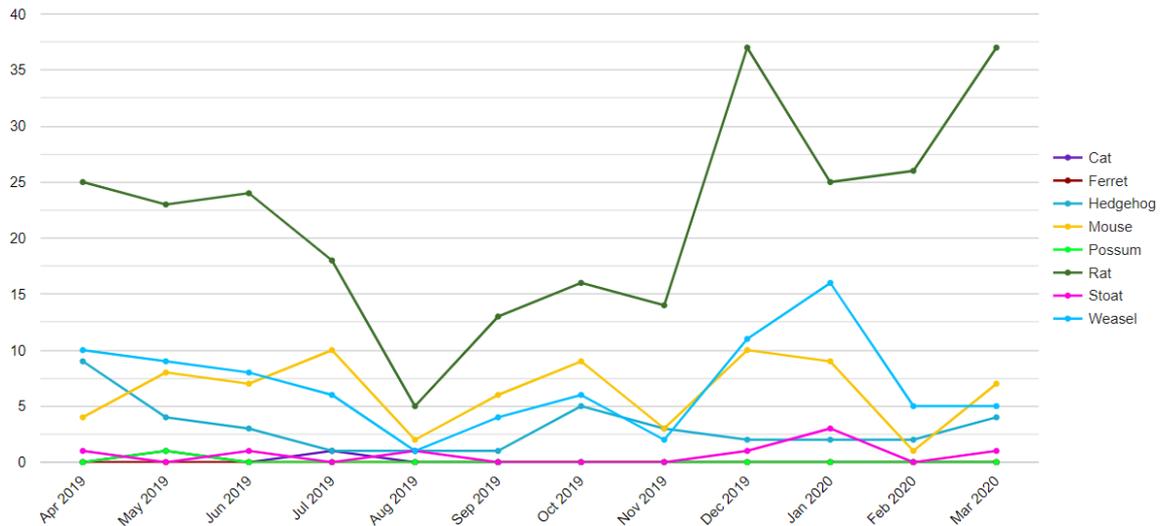
Pest control

We run a network of 230 traps and 167 bait stations and expand this each year.

We continue to look at alternatives to brodifacoum, and trials of Double Tap (Diphacinone and Cholecalciferol/Vitamin D3) appear to have been successful with mouse tracking remaining low at our lizard protection site.



500 pests were caught over the last financial year, with over half of those being rats with the next most common species being weasels at 17%.



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 Ngā Uruora continue to hum. All this help is greatly appreciated.

It is difficult to provide a list of everyone, but we would like to thank the following people and organisations, in no particular order:

- Rob Cross, Kāpiti Coast District Council for advice and support
- The team at Greater Wellington Regional Council for advice and support
- Department of Conservation, especially Angus Hulme-Moir
- Lawrence Silas and John Tesoriero from Kāpiti Coast District Council for supporting our field work
- Trish Sarr and Keith Johnston for their generous financial support
- The team behind the Kāpiti Coast Biodiversity Project - in particular Glenda Robb and John Hay, the project team leaders and Paul Callister
- Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park
- Guardians of Whareroa Community Trust
- Queen Elizabeth II National Trust for their support and engagement over the year, especially Trevor Thompson and Jess Stevens
- All the Pukerua Bay end Tuesday volunteers
- Groundtruth and their generous support of our remote sensor trapping and web camera, and donations of plants
- Conservation Volunteers Wellington for providing lots of volunteers
- NZTA and Kiwirail for ongoing access to their land, and Kiwirail for fencing
- Ted Coates for all his hard work dealing with our sheep issue
- Pamela Meekings-Stewart for allowing us continued access through her farm over many years
- Te Rito gardens for donating plants
- Goodnature for their donation of lures and gas for our lizard garden A24s
- Wellington Zoo for funding assistance for our lizard trial
- Te Araroa, and their funders, for all their work maintaining the escarpment track
- Fly-by-Wire for giving us access via their track for trapping and weed control work.

Our pest control team continued to keep rats, stoats, weasels and possums under control. We would like to thank Drew Kear, Terry Brown, Helen and Tony Griffiths, Sue Boyde, Ruth Doyle, Rob Hawke, Tony Older, Andy McKay, Paul Callister, Malcolm Garnham and Pete McLaughlin for all their hours spent checking traps.

Paul Callister, Ken Fraser, Vicky Griffin and Andy McKay continued to grow plants at Pukerua Bay Nursery, Queen Elizabeth Park nursery or in their home gardens.

Thank you to all the people that were signed up to help with the helped with the 2020 lizard survey. Unfortunately, it was cut short by the COVID-19 shut down. Glenda Robb, Ollie Gibson, Andy McKay, Pete McLaughlin, Sue Boyde, Vicky Griffin, Sally Bain, Bob Zuur, Roy Slack and especially Paul Callister for organising.

We would like to thank the regular Tuesday working bee team including Peter Kentish, Ken Fraser, Drew Kear, Paul Callister, Steve Mann, Michael Stace, Mark Pennington, Victoria Roberts, James Tremlett and Val Little and we are grateful to Ken Fraser and Peter Kentish for the many hours he has put into controlling cape ivy, blackberry and other weeds. Thanks also to the Pukerua Bay end volunteers including Ashley Blair, Janette Tolley, Victoria Roberts, Jim Cox and Vicky Griffin.

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

Financial report

Ngā Uruora - Kāpiti Projects accounts record an equity of \$67,751.20 at the close of the 2020 financial year. The last of the funds help for the DOC funded Kāpiti Coast Biodiversity Project have been allocated according to their instructions. The balance for that account now zero. Also, in this year NUKP held funds for Predator Free Pukerua Bay (PFPB) until the organisation met legal status to hold funds. The PFPB account was zeroed at end of financial year. NUKP's true equity at \$67,751.20 was an increase of \$11,066.02 from the true equity from the previous years \$56,685.18