

Rimutaka Forest Park Charitable Trust Inc.



Annual Report 2013

Presented by the President on behalf of the Executive Committee

This Annual Report is presented to the 25th Annual General Meeting of the Rimutaka Forest Park Charitable Trust Inc. to be held in Wainuiomata, Lower Hutt on 15th October 2013.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on six occasions during the year and considered funding raising, strategic planning, pest control trapping, the Kiwi Translocation Project, the Catchpool Restoration Project, the Dawn Chorus Project and public relations, including arrangements for a 25 year anniversary celebration.

The 2012/13 Committee comprises:

President	Ian Armitage
Vice President	Rosemary Thompson
Secretary	Grant Watt
Treasurer	John Cranefield.
Committee members	Janet Lawson, Melody McLaughlin, Mike White, Kelly Anso, Nikki McArthur and Kirby McLeod (Kirby resigned in early 2013).

Membership

Membership stands at 73 (64 ordinary members, 8 organisations, 1 Life member), somewhat lower than reported last year due to resignations and unpaid subscriptions. Good progress has continued in improving the management of the membership database. We are pleased to welcome new members who have joined during the year and we thank all members for their support to the ongoing work of the Trust.

Community Awards

We are delighted to receive two community awards during the year. The first was an *Encore Award* (Recreation Volunteers Category) made jointly by the Minister of Conservation, the Department of Conservation and the Greater Wellington Regional Council, and we also received a Hutt City Wellington Airport Regional Community Award. Both are a pleasing tribute to the efforts of members and volunteers in practical forest conservation and in helping to make the Rimutaka Forest Park a better place for the Wellington Region community.

Finances

John Cranefield has set out our financial position in the Financial Statements for the year ended 30th June 2013. Our financial position continues to be sound and our funds have been used effectively to implement our various activities. Donations, 'Sponsor a Trap' and 'Sponsor an Egg' schemes continue to provide valuable financial support for kiwi translocation efforts.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of grant sponsorship during the year, namely, from the BNZ Save the Kiwi Fund, Department of Conservation, Pub Charity, Hutt Mana Charitable Trust,

Wellington Community Trust, Pharazyn Trust and Hutt City Council together with generous private donations. We are also grateful for and wish to thank numerous companies, Trusts and other agencies for a range of services and support they have provided. All have helped to advance the goals of achieving improved conservation of Rimutaka forest ecosystems and public enjoyment of the forest park.

We wish to thank our Honorary Auditor, Phil Rundle, for his continuing help in auditing of Trust accounts.

Pest Control Trapping

Pest control trapping is a never ending and critically important task that focuses on the control of small animal pests, primarily stoats, possums and rats, and is enthusiastically carried out by a volunteer team of trappers. Planning, coordination and operational arrangements continued through part of the year led by Kirby McLeod. Within the initial-trapped area best practice activities for operating a stoat-trapping network continue to be met, or are exceeded. Trap repair and testing continues to be led by Mike White who ensures that traps are maintained to a very high standard and recently Grant Watt has commenced a role of checking the operation of all traps in the network. In late 2012 a set of new ferret-capable traps (DOC250 type) were deployed in the Catchpool Valley, on McKerrow Track, on part of Cattle Ridge and in a part of the Orongorongo Valley.

On your behalf I would like to thank Kirby, Mike and Grant for the dedication and effort they provide to the trapping programme that is significant for achieving long-term protection of a large area of native forest in the southern Rimutaka Range. As reported last year, without a consistent volunteer-supported pest trapping effort there would be no brown kiwi translocation programme at all.

Dawn Chorus Project

Closely related to the pest control trapping is the Dawn Chorus Project that continues to control all animal pests that are threatening forest ecosystems, including forest birds, in the vicinity of the Catchpool Valley. It has been reinvigorated over the past two years by Janet Lawson and more recently by Martin Tonks and their efforts build on the pest control efforts of others over many years. Thank you Janet and Martin for your support.

Kiwi Translocation Project

The Kiwi Translocation Project that is introducing a North Island brown kiwi population into the Rimutaka Forest Park continues to be a flagship programme of the Trust. Volunteer work has continued and it is our judgement now that between 80 and 100 brown kiwi are established in the Park and on adjoining land. The practice of leaving some eggs in nests and allowing chicks to hatch naturally has continued and is step towards the establishment a kiwi population that can live with minimal intervention, other than pest control and monitoring. Melody McLaughlin has continued to coordinate the implementation of the kiwi programme. On behalf of the membership I would like to thank Melody for the considerable assistance she has provided in this important role. A short term contract of six months was recently awarded to Ms. Joanna Sim of Ohau to provide a range of ecological services, mainly support for the kiwi programme, over the coming summer months.

Catchpool Restoration Project

The Catchpool Restoration Project that was supported by grant funding from the Community Conservation Fund has made a meaningful difference to the revegetation of parts of the scrubby slopes of the lower Catchpool Valley. Support from this fund has now concluded but work has continued using treestocks held in a small holding nursery at the DoC Catchpool HQ and with support from a range of corporate teams and schools. We are pleased to record that these efforts continue to make a difference in improving the amenity value of the lower slopes near the car park and camping ground and to widen plant biodiversity and provide a richer habitat for birds. Once again I would like to thank

Peter Cooper for the considerable personal effort he has put into planning, the leadership and coordination of this important programme.

25 Year Anniversary Celebrations

2013 marks 25 years in our history as an incorporated society. We were pleased to celebrate this milestone with a dinner in Petone on held on 12 October. It was an enjoyable occasion and enabled many who have contributed since 1988, including two former Presidents and several past and present committee members, to commemorate this significant point in our history. On behalf of the membership can I thank all who contributed to a splendid job in planning, arranging and managing the event. We are thrilled to record that a donation of \$10,000 was made to the Trust by Ms. Nicky Wagner MP, Parliamentary Private Secretary of Conservation who spoke at the dinner. A history of the Trust that documents the main steps in our progress that have led us to where we are at today was compiled.

Strategic and Long term Planning, and Cooperation with the Department of Conservation

During the year the Department of Conservation approached the Trust to initiate a dialogue on long-term planning for the future management of the southern part of forest park, including the Catchpool Valley. Discussions are constructive and are on-going. We will report progress in "The Rag" once policies and programmes become clearer but it is premature to do so presently. The committee has also considered various strategic options on how we can best achieve our objectives but these will inevitably need to consider the outcome of our on-going dialogue with DoC.

Public Relations and Fund Raising

Publicity about the Trust to the wider community has, once again, been promoted during the year. Our website, www.rimutakatrust.org.nz is popular with visitors in New Zealand and overseas and is the major point of access for information about the Trust. Our Facebook page now has many followers and has broadened our public presence to a wider audience. I wish to thank Peter Cooper and Kelly Anso respectively for their technical skill as webmaster and Facebook manager during the past year.

Press releases were issued on various topics, mostly concerning the Kiwi Project. Talks to school and corporate volunteer groups by Trust members further advanced our public relations and four issues of our informative newsletter, "The Rag", were printed and distributed. It has a new style and we hope at least four issues can be distributed over the next year. The Fund Raising sub-committee met several times and considered a range of innovative proposals for raising funds for the society.

Appreciation

On behalf of the Committee I wish to thank all who have helped the Trust to operate successfully as a voluntary community organisation during 2012/2013. Members and non-member volunteers have contributed enormously to pest control trapping, kiwi establishment, Catchpool restoration, fund raising, the 25 year anniversary celebration, public relations and other activities, a big thank you to you all.

I would also like to acknowledge the friendly support of the staff of the Department of Conservation for helping with the implementation of Trust activities; we are most grateful for your support and we look forward to close cooperation into the future. May I also acknowledge the friendly cooperation and support offered during the year by the staff of the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Executive Committee for the thought and effort they have contributed to the effective running of the Trust during the past year.



Ian Armitage
President

15 October 2013