

Gorge Gazette

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams

(Footbridges over the stream are numbered from 1 – 6 going downstream, excluding the old bridge off the side of Wightwick's Field).

DECEMBER 2009

One of these days (probably in a century or two) Trelissick Park will be able to look after itself. Meanwhile.....

Award of Department of Conservation (DoC) Community Conservation Fund

We were successful in our application for \$4336 for restoration of a 1,000m² streamside shelf of blackberry on railway land below bridge 5. We are bolting ahead under a full head of steam. 1,172 plants from Wellington-sourced seed arrived from the Taupo Native Plant Nursery. Then, 1.5 m³ bulk potting mix arrived from The Bark Farm in Upper Hutt. Re-potting from root trainers into larger containers occurred, with some help. Operations conducted from a wheelbarrow in front of the TV set also helped. Wayne Hawkins Contracting was quickly on the job cutting the blackberry and the regrowth has just been sprayed. Roll on next winter for the planting.



A swathe cut through the stream-side blackberry

This planting will provide more shade and nutrient for the fish and invertebrate life in the stream, encourage more bird life and help to

inhibit migration of weed species from the railway land into the adjacent Trelissick Park.

This is all down to Robyn Smith of Greater Wellington regional Council (GW), who originally suggested the application and did the initial writing. Thank you Robyn.

Honda Treefund

When you buy a Honda, some of the money goes towards the provision of trees, as a carbon offset. We have again been successful in our application, through GW. 1,000 riparian grasses, sedges and rushes are coming. Fired by the idea of Marilyn Hester and Carolyn Theiler, these will be planted in ephemeral streams, or downstream from storm-water outlets to help diminish fast run-off and reduce sediment pick-up and pollution.

Upshot of GW Community Environmental Leadership Award

Peter Reimann has contacted three local schools to see if they have any use for the \$500 he was awarded. Ideas from the application for the award were:

- Developing a native plant nursery
- Examining and recording stream life, water quality, effects of pollution
- Studying and producing records on a specific restoration area over a period, such as examining plant growth, weeds, soil and rainfall conditions.

So far, one school has responded, looking to build a propagation hut with the children.

Kaiwharawhara Estuary Study Funding

Frances Lee's hard work has been rewarded with funding success from both Wellington City Council (WCC) and GW for a study on the Kaiwharawhara estuary at the northern end of the Interislander vehicle marshalling area and adjacent reclamation area used by Centreport. This will be carried out by Boffa

Miskell and include ecological, recreational and cultural aspects, also access and ownership issues. This will be followed by developing a plan for future enhancement of the area with “buy-in” by all parties.

Employment Opportunities

No one needs to suffer from boredom over the holiday period. Jobs abound, as weeds grow before our eyes:

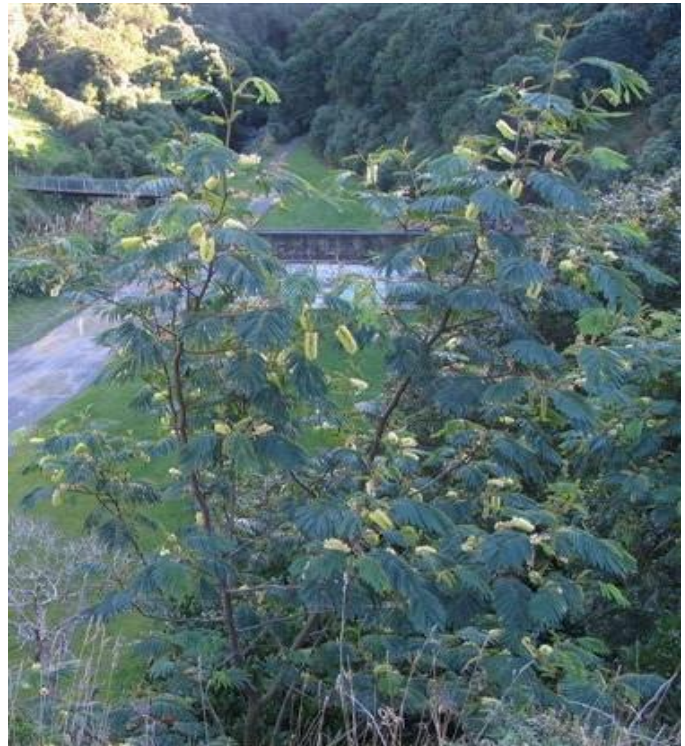
- Become a “mulch-bearer”, transferring the Trelissick Crescent mulch pile to the middle of the cleared railway land site below bridge 5, beneath the trees (for the next winter planting)
- Cut or uproot Australian wattle in the lower valley (see photo)
- Search for remnant wandering willie (*Tradescantia fluminensis*), pull out carefully and remove from the park⁶
- Release weeds from around young plants
- Disrobe plants of their smothering bindweed or convolvulus (*Calystegia silvatica*)⁵
- Help Bill Hester pull out balsam (family *Balsamineae*)⁵.

It's refreshing working in the valley by the stream, with birds for entertainment.

Bird Food

Birds encourage spread of seeds for natural regeneration. But in winter and early spring birds can fall on lean times in a vastness of native plants. The adjacent suburbs are reasonably well endowed with winter nectar/fruit producing exotics, such as elms, poplars, plums, some camellia cultivars, eucalypts and banksia¹. There is also tree lucerne in the lower valley of the park, which we are reluctant to remove, as it is popular with the birds. But there is always a risk of spread of exotics into the park. Here is a list of some native plants producing some nectar/fruit in winter/early spring²:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| ▪ Climbing fuschia | <i>Fuschia perscandens</i> |
| ▪ Tree fuschia | <i>Fuschia excorticata</i> |
| ▪ Five finger | <i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i> |
| ▪ Karamu | <i>Coprosma robusta</i> |
| ▪ Pate/seven finger | <i>Schefflera digitata</i> |
| ▪ Red matipo/mapou | <i>Myrsine australis</i> |
| ▪ Kowhai | <i>Sophora microphylla</i> |



Australian wattle in the lower valley

Progress (of sorts)

Dogs – No longer is leashed dog-walking throughout the park a “custom more honour’d in the breach than the observance”³. The new WCC policy that has been approved allows dogs to be unleashed (but under control) on all tracks. The date when this comes into operation is yet to be announced.

The Project Kaiwharawhara Sign – The planting at the northern end of the ferry vehicle marshalling area at the Kaiwharawhara estuary is now graced with a replacement sign, possibly more resistant to the errant backing of trucks. Thank you GW.

Map Update and Track Names – John Foden produced the excellent park map used on the map boards and brochure, in collaboration with WCC. His latest update includes names for tracks. In addition to the Northern Walkway, these are:

- Ngaio Gorge Track – traverses the entire length of the park along the valley/gorge
- Forest Remnant Track – the “route” sidling below Trelissick Crescent and Ngaio Gorge Road.

An “in-house” version of the map has grid lines, so that locations for work can be identified.

Picnic Tables – Ontrack are providing two tables with seat benches, made from old railway sleepers, for the area they re-grassed beside the powder magazine building ruin. This follows use of the area for ballast storage earlier in the year, when the tunnels on the Johnsonville line were being widened.

Memorandum of Understanding – The WCC relationship with us has evolved over the years, but WCC want to describe this in words – driven by the current penchant for “health and safety”, which hangs over all of us like the sword of Damocles. So we are on the verge.....

Pest Control – The days are numbered for more wandering willie and Japanese honeysuckle, mainly in areas between and above bridges 5 and 6. A new contractor, David Williams of GSL is working there under joint WCC/GW funding. Mark McAlpine has sprayed more areas of montbretia under GW’s “Take Care” fund.

Dead Willows across Stream – Some of the poisoned willows have fallen across the stream, causing debris to pile up and create dams. Our Projects Coordinator, David Grace, has managed to get WCC agreement to remove some of these.

Working on Railway Land – We have been given verbal approval in principle by Ontrack to work on more of the railway corridor, subject to conditions. Initial areas identified are:

- A patch of blackberry and a patch of buddleia between bridges 3 and 4
- A patch of blackberry opposite the track “triangle” below Wightwick’s Field
- The slope planted by Ontrack above the powder magazine building ruin.

Debris Trap Rocks/Fish Passage – Some of the less athletic fish species are being blocked by the debris trap. The rocks below have moved downstream from the force of the water, over time. WCC/Capacity/GW are looking at moving the rocks to restore fish passage.

Kevin Jamieson

It is with much sadness that we have learned of the passing of Kevin Jamieson. Kevin worked with WCC liaising with community groups, including ours, for a period around 2006/7. He often came to our meetings and visited the park to arrange WCC work in conjunction with ourselves. Our condolences go to his family.

People

The Sathya Sai Service Organisation visited their spot below the debris trap for weeding and mulching the recent plantings. They did an immaculate job.

A warm welcome to Chris Fawdray, who has adopted a spot just down-stream from bridge 6 (Ngaio side).

A team from BNZ, on their “closed” day, released around the Ontrack plantings from the magazine building to the road entrance gate in lower Trelissick Park. It is amazing what can be achieved when a team is let loose on such an area. Peter Reimann subsequently applied mulch, provided by WCC.

A small group of St Benedict’s school children and parents helped with weeding at our November working bee above the debris trap.

Northern Rata

We have planted many northern rata (*Metrosideros robusta*) in the park over the years. The Green Party also planted one in memory of Rod Donald at a sunny edge of the grassy patch 350m upstream of the debris trap.

Naturally occurring northern rata begin life aloft from an epiphyte, with roots descending down the host tree, to eventually form a tree itself. However, ours came in pots from the WCC Berhampore nursery. The flowers are a brighter red and smaller than those of the pohutukawa. “The leaves are 2.5-5 cm long x 1.5-2 cm wide, hairless, rounded and a little notched at the tip with the fine vein network clearly visible below”⁴.

Where pohutukawa are growing nearby, hybridisation may occur between the two species.

The photo below illustrates the magnificence in store for the park in a few centuries time. It was taken from the Turere Bridge in the Orongorongo River. Barry Durrant says he has never seen them look better or brighter.



Photo – Barry Durrant

Contacts

Chairman & Adopt-a-Spot: Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602, peter.reimann@paradise.net.nz
Working bees: Dorothy Douglass (04) 472 8558
Wellington City Council (reporting slips and fallen trees across tracks, other problems): (04) 499 4444
Greater Wellington pollution hotline: 0800 496 734
Website: www.trelissickpark.org.nz

Working Bees (Check with Dorothy before coming – changes may occur)

Sunday 7 February, 1.30 PM Ngaio Gorge Road
Tuesday 16 February, 9.30 AM Ngaio Gorge Road

The Gorge Gazette

Compiled by Peter Reimann about every 4 months - all contributions and suggestions gratefully received.

Come and participate in the transformation of Trelissick Park or give us your ideas – all welcome. Thanks to all who contributed. Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2010.

References:

1. Ralph Powlesland, Colin Miskelly, John Innes. "City Slickers". Forest & Bird. November 2008.
2. Banks Peninsular Tui Restoration brochure (DoC source). "Tui Tucker". 2009.
3. W. Shakespeare. Hamlet.
4. John Dawson, Rob Lucas. "Nature Guide to the New Zealand Forest". Publisher: Random House, New Zealand. 2007.
5. December 2008 Gorge Gazette.
6. April 2008 Gorge Gazette.

