

Gorge Gazette

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams

(Footbridges over the stream are numbered from 1 – 6 going downstream.)

Abbreviations:

WCC	Wellington City Council	WRA	Wadestown Residents' Association
GW	Greater Wellington Regional Council	VUW	Victoria University
HPPA	Highland Park Progressive Association	DOC	Department of Conservation
TPG	Trelissick Park Group	F & B	Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society
NCDRA	Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents' Association	GG	Gorge Gazette

Website www.trelissickpark.org.nz (includes past Gorge Gazettes)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TrelissickParkGroup>

DECEMBER 2017

Zoological Surprises

VUW MSc student Olivia Carson's study is finished. Over a month-long period between September and October her 12 cameras 'caught' surprising numbers of animal interlopers.

Cameras were motion detecting, at 10 or 20 metres off-track, at the locations shown. They were un-baited, to allow animals to act naturally. She had to wade through about 40,000 pictures, many triggered by wind and birds - especially ground-foraging blackbirds. The numbers below may include several appearances of the same animal.



337 Dogs - Many of those were 20m off-track, with no owners in sight. This is alarming because fledglings, such as kākā, spend time on the ground before they can fly. Olivia says she "saw kākā on the forest floor on two cameras." It is encouraging that they might be nesting in the Park. However, their fledglings this summer will be vulnerable to roaming dogs.

The Park is off-leash for dogs but Olivia recommends "keeping dogs on leash until coming to an area which allows owners to clearly observe their pet. Wandering off track shouldn't be okay." The WCC dog policy¹ requires dogs to be under control at all times.

68 Rabbits - For years we have cursed about rabbits eating new plants. Now we have confirmation that the more dense rabbit-zones lie in the north and below Trelissick Crescent.

30 Cats - Most were patrolling from 10 PM to 4 AM. Olivia says: "...keeping them indoors overnight would be ideal."

Raging debates continue^{2,3,4,5}. We worry about birds, lizards, geckos and insects. We wonder what would happen if cats were not there to catch rodents and rabbits.

Olivia says: "Camera data monitoring domestic cats is so rare in New Zealand. I wish there was more evidence that could show what cats are up to during the night."

56 Hedgehogs - They might look cute but each night they consume about 10% of their body weight, feasting on bugs, beetles, wetas, skinks, geckos and the eggs of ground-nesting birds⁶. Our canny hedgehogs must know about traps. We have only caught 17 since 2008.

9 Rodents - Despite the low number, VUW students David Munro and Holly Chapman report high numbers of rats and mice in the original forest remnant, using tracking tunnels and chew cards. Bill Hester also says consumption of block bait by rats is high in some areas.



Stoats remain elusive, with only 17 trapped since 2008. Well, at least their diet includes rats, mice and rabbits...

The Fern Experiment

How do we fill those tracts of bare ground in the shady forests? Some slopes below Trelissick Crescent are well-endowed with Hound's Tongue ferns (*Phymatosorus pustulatum*). So is Peter Reimann's garden. With shallow, fleshy stems it is easy to transplant - ideal for ground-cover. Some are 'taking' well in the Park (see photo). Hope prevails.

Revenge is Sweet

The Park is adorned with our tradescantia heaps. After 3 - 4 years, most of it turns into wonderful compost. The huge heap near the lower Ngaio Gorge Road entrance yielded nearly five 40-litre bags. Now it is being used for home nursery potting. Just fish out bits of weed, add sand, commercial potting mix and a sprinkle of 'Osmocote'. A few weeds are sprouting from the pots - but nothing is ever perfect.

The photo shows the mix being used for potting some kohuhu (*Pittosporum tenuifolium*), kindly provided by Toni Allwood.

Beware! Developer at Large

A resource consent application has been lodged for 17 town-houses below the corner of Trelissick Crescent and Ngaio Gorge Road. This is on a very steep gully area, right above our beautiful original forest remnant. We are all aghast.

WCC has not decided on public notification and requested more information from the applicant. TPG and others sent submissions to WCC. Bill Hester put them on the 'Current Issues' page of our website, for anyone wishing to delve.

Where it all Starts and Finishes

The Kaiwharawhara estuary is at the lower end of the ecological corridor, extending up to the outer green belt. A few years ago, GW planted the southern side of the estuary. However, the reclamation area on the other side is a



wilderness of weeds. Welcome to Wellington...

CentrePort suffered from the 2016 earthquake and its plan to develop the reclamation for storage of logs and containers is on hold. What an opportunity to instead enhance the area, and what an attractive asset this could be for Wellington!

VUW MSc student Eduardo Barros has an idea for re-routing the stream through the central reclamation area, incorporating a wetland. The existing stream outlet would be retained to take flood flow during heavy rain. A 'green' bridge across the motorway and railway would allow public access, including to the sheltered northern beach.

Perhaps Frances Lee will soon be able to celebrate, after so many years of activism?

Dispatch from the Southern Front

It's not warfare yet, but after 36 years of local advocacy, patience is wearing thin. This is how it stands now:

- There was 84% public support in the recent survey for Park access from Oban Street.
- A legal right of way exists.

- All issues raised by dissenting people in the survey have been addressed in draft public consultation documentation prepared by TPG for WCC.
- Stream bank and height issues for the footbridge over the Kaiwharawhara Stream have been resolved.
- The WCC guideline for outdoor recreation is "600 metres or a 10-minute walk to one or more neighbourhood park..." (Suburban Reserves Management Plan 2015). Access from Oban Street would satisfy this for residents in lower Wadestown/Highland Park.
- The WCC 'Open Space Access Plan 2016' includes investigation of a second Park entrance from Wadestown. We have done most of that.
- \$50K of funding has already accumulated in a trust account.
- A funding plan is awaiting WCC project approval in principle, before raising the balance of funds.

This project has been dogged by politics ever since it was first mooted in 1981. WCC are trying to steer through this. What is sorely needed is political enthusiasm for this exciting project!

Our target is to see the project added back into the next WCC 10-Year Plan and for the project to have fund-raising completed, with all aspects designed by the end of 2018 and construction starting in February 2019.

We ask supporters to strongly advocate for this project in submissions on the 10-year plan in early 2018. We are now open to additional pledges of funding for such a much-needed access.

Down in the Park

Bill Hester captures nearly everything on our Facebook page. Below is some 'infill'.

Conservation Volunteers and Mobil - It is always incredible how much can be achieved by keen young people exuding energy. So it has been with Conservation Volunteers New Zealand (CVNZ) on several visits. They come from countries such as Germany, France and Belgium, to enhance their New Zealand experiences. Recently, CVNZ signed a partnership with Mobil New Zealand Ltd who want to help with riparian restoration to improve aquatic habitat. The Park was a benefactor the other day, with 20 people achieving weeding miracles in seven areas all the way down the valley. The photos show the grasses around the eel sign, weeded and mulched by CVNZ, and Mobil toiling next to the Korimako Stream. Mobil provided delicious lunch boxes from 'Eat My Lunch' (who operate the "buy one, give one" scheme).



Other News

WCC's contractor, Kaitiaki o Ngahere Ltd, has sprayed tradescantia, leaving bare swathes below Waikowhai Street and beside the vehicle track in the valley of the Kaiwharawhara. We are keen to plant those areas next year.

Warrick Fowlie is still wielding his saw on the karaka slopes.

Kelvin Hastie reports that his pukatea, rimu and kahikatea below Waikowhai Street are surviving, thanks to hand-watering.

The Sathya Sai people are persevering with their riparian spot upstream of the debris trap, despite chunks being washed away last winter.

Benjamin Curran is removing old chew-card markers* - cause of puzzlement to many a passing human.

Bernard Smith from WCC has given Barry Durrant replacement entrails for DOC200 traps, in more durable stainless steel.

WCC's Daniela Biaggio has found a contractor to restore and upgrade fish passage at the Kaiwharawhara Stream tunnel under the railway line.

Total planting for this year, including 57 Kaiwharawhara Road = 1,110.

Congratulations to Frances Lee, who celebrated her 90th birthday. She is as sharp as ever.

Seasons greetings to all!

* Chew cards are of corrugated cardboard, impregnated with peanut paste. Tooth marks identify the pest animal. Unfortunately, free-range dogs chomped the cards.

References

1. <https://wellington.govt.nz/~media/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans-and-policies/a-to-z/dogs/files/dogpolicy.pdf?la=en>
2. <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/SC1301/S00046/cats-impact-on-native-wildlife-experts-respond.htm>
3. <https://wellington.govt.nz/~media/about-wellington/research-and-evaluation/natural-environment/2014-what-do-owned-free-ranging-domestic-cats-get-up-to.pdf>
4. <https://i.stuff.co.nz/science/97845877/bob-brockie-birds-pests-and-the-hunting-habits-of-dr-fluxs-cats>
5. <https://sciblogs.co.nz/politecol/2013/11/18/dr-fluxs-cat-misleads-us/>
6. <http://i.stuff.co.nz/national/blogs/in-our-nature/7248769/Wildlife-baddies-The-Hedgehog>

Contacts

Chairman & Adopt-a-Spot: Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602, nz.peterreimann@gmail.com

Working bees: Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602

Wellington City Council (reporting slips and fallen trees across tracks, other problems): (04) 499 4444

Greater Wellington pollution hotline: 0800 496 734

Working Bees

Usually 1st Sunday of the month at 1.30 PM and 2nd Tuesday at 9.30 AM. See web-site for updates.

Membership drawn from Highland Park Progressive Association Inc., Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents' Association Inc., Onslow Historical Society Inc., Private Landowners' Group, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Inc. (Wellington Branch), Wellington Botanical Society Inc., Wadestown Residents' Association.