

Gorge Gazette

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams

DECEMBER 2007

The festive season is here for weeds also, one thinks, observing our nearly 4,000 winter plantings becoming submerged. Our park is at its best in the early mornings before breakfast, when the only sound is birds, or in the cool dusk after dinner. So how about tending to some of these nascent trees? "Releasing" can be cathartic and it is so rewarding to watch "your" trees flourishing! Take a bucket – it is very dry.

Fire Service Helps with Watering

The plantings by the historic magazine building are suffering from the absence of rain and the Fire Service have just started using the area for hosing practice. They were pleased to have such a large space. We are pleased too! Many thanks to Glenside Streamcare Group, who put us onto this idea.

People

A warm welcome to Robyn Smith, new coordinator with GWRC, to work with care groups in the Take Care programme. She is replacing Kate Mackenzie, who left for Tauranga late in November. Robyn is on a 1 year contract while Jo Fagan is on maternity leave.

Many of you will already know Robyn, who was the Wellington Regional Representative for the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust. Robyn has also been the Curator/Manager at Otari-Wilton's Bush and spent seven years as Supervisor at Percy Scenic Reserve in Lower Hutt. Robyn has also been closely involved in many of the regional Restoration Day events held each year in May.

We are also very pleased to see Myfanwy Emeny back in the WCC fold from her maternity leave. She is now the Community Biodiversity Coordinator. A large part of her role is to link the initiatives from the Biodiversity Action Plan to the work undertaken by community groups. So for us she will be involved with planning, training, community based initiatives, monitoring, research and marketing initiatives. For day-to-day issues our WCC person is ranger Stu Bailey.

Late in September, Frances Lee received a citation for her Trelissick Park work since the early 1990s from the Mayor, at a small ceremony prior to a Council meeting. We all owe Frances a huge debt of gratitude for what has been achieved in the park over the years.

"Sanctuary to the Sea" Track

The dream of having a track from the Karori Sanctuary to the Kaiwharawhara Stream estuary, via Otari-Wilton's Bush and Trelissick Park is underway. A reconnaissance for the connection from the Blackbridge Road/Churchill Drive intersection to the park has just been carried out by David Halliday (WCC), Peter Buxton (Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust), Stan Pillar (Onslow Historical Society), Grant Preston-Thomas (ace track-maker) and Peter Reimann (Trelissick Park Group). This will probably follow an old benched track under Bowen Hospital and descend to Trelissick Park via a ridge below the northern end of Bowen Hospital, to link with the existing track on the railway side of the Koromiko Stream. Our Group have contacted OnTrack to arrange a meeting late in January to work out how and where to cross the railway line. The crossing work will need to fit in with the railway upgrade in 2008.

Pest Weeds

You may have noticed "scorched earth" areas along the Kaiwharawhara Stream, below Hanover Street and below the Waikowhai Street, where tradescantia (wandering willie) once thrived. This is part of the weed control work funded by WCC and GW for three years to 2009/10 (\$8,000 from GW and \$4,000 from WCC per annum). There will be a follow-up application in autumn 2008, allowing planting of these areas in winter 2008. Honeysuckle is also being targeted, and follow-up spraying of Asiatic knotweed.

Armed with a new, sharp handsaw and Vigilant gel, Peter Reimann is exterminating sycamores. The Group is very grateful for the \$300 donation from the Ngaio Progressive Association, being used to purchase the Vigilant. Thanks also to Stu Bailey of WCC for the three bottles he provided. Recently the private landowners below Hanover Street allowed Stu and Peter to tackle the sycamores on the lower slopes of their properties.

Possum Bait Stations

Much of the increase in bird life and natural bush regeneration can be attributed to the possum eradication programme. Pink markers indicate bait stations nailed to tree trunks. The GRWC contractors have recently checked all the Trelissick Park bait stations. If you notice any are empty, please advise Peter Reimann, who will then contact GWRC.

Tree Planting Next Autumn/Winter

Trees for next autumn/winter will come from GWRC Take-Care funding, WCC annual allocation of 500 trees and home nurseries. These will be used mainly for infill in already planted areas, tradescantia sprayed areas and for adopt-a-spot people.

We are very grateful for a \$735 donation from St Luke's Church in Wadestown. We are proposing to the Church that we use this to enhance the area at and below the Hanover Street entrance by planting in the bare patches once occupied by tradescantia.

Web-site

Refer to our web-site www.trelissickpark.org in the minutes of meetings section for further information on recent activities, including details of submissions and correspondence on rezoning of land next to Huntleigh Park, a development at 97 Waikowhai Street and Bowen Hospital expansion. The web-site also includes the Management Plan and Five-year plan. Many thanks to Lindsay Bonnett for maintaining it.

Map Boards, Interpretative Board and Brochure

Thanks to David Halliday and his WCC team and contractor for the map boards at strategic locations and the interpretative board at the historic powder magazine site. Thanks also to Barry Durrant and Fitzbeck Creative for the excellent brochure and to Ngaio Progressive Association for acting as the financial intermediary for the funding from the WCC Environmental Grant. These are available in local libraries

Adopt-a-Spot

Susan Weekes and the Ngaio Scouts have been doing a great job clearing weeds from the plantings streamside between the 2nd and 3rd of the small new bridges by the Korimako. They intend to continue working in this area periodically.

More "spotees" will be needed for the planting and care of tradescantia cleared areas next year. Tell your friends – volunteers please contact Harry Barton or Peter Reimann.

Stormwater

All stormwater from streets, driveways, roofs and yards ends up in the local streams and the harbour. Waste oil, dirt and silt can suffocate aquatic life. Paint, waste cement and detergent can be toxic to aquatic life. GWRC say "the only thing that should get into the stormwater drain is rainwater. You can be fined for putting anything else down the drain." If you notice any pollution in the streams, it is essential to contact the pollution hotline – see number below. GWRC will then investigate the source.

Things Botanical



The Kawakawa, or Pepper tree (*Macropiper excelsum*), is widespread in our shady areas. The holes in the leaves are from the caterpillar of a native moth which co-exists with this plant only. The orange candle-shaped fruit is much prized by birds and possums. Maori had many uses for the medicinal properties of fruit, bark and leaves. A drink can be made from the leaves.

This is one species that will be good to plant in some of the shaded tradescantia cleared areas.



Look out for this new potential invader, already seen in nearby Heke Reserve: Asthma weed, also known as Sticky weed or Pellitory (*Parietaria judaica*). This many-branched perennial herb grows up to 1 metre, with small light green or red flowers clustered on the sticky red stems. The leaves are green, soft, oval shaped with pointed ends, growing alternately, 2 – 8 cm long. It likes sunny embankments or forest margins.

Seeds are dispersed by wind, water or attachment by the sticky hairs to people or animals. Regrowth is fast and persistent. It is a declared noxious weed in Australia and is prolific around Sydney Harbour. It “takes over” and is difficult to eradicate.

The pollen can cause asthma, conjunctivitis, rhinitis and hay fever. Contact can cause skin rashes. If prone to these things, the recommendation is to use dust mask, eye protection, gloves and long clothing when removing it. Remove the entire root system, put the plants carefully in a plastic bag and send to a landfill.

Further information:

http://www.pittwater.nsw.gov.au/environmental/plants_and_animals/noxious_weeds/



If putting mulch around plants in this dry weather, it is best to water the plant first. The mulch will then help retain the moisture. The ground is very dry at the moment and any small rain showers don't penetrate the mulch.

Ngaio Gorge Road Work

Geovert is finishing with the strengthening work on Ngaio Gorge Road, comprising driving “nails” under the road from the downhill slope into rock under the uphill side, to prevent this strategic road collapsing in an earthquake. There is similar work to be done at the last left-hand bend going uphill.

Rubbish

Frances Lee suggests always taking a plastic bag into the park to pick up any rubbish found en-route.

Contacts

Secretary: Malcolm McDonald (04) 479 5350, msmcdonald@paradise.net.nz

(35A Trelissick Crescent, Ngaio, Wellington 6035)

Working bees: Dorothy Douglass (04) 472 8558

Chairman: Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602, sheila.reimann@paradise.net.nz

Adopt-a-Spot: Harry Barton (04) 907 0054, 021493 000, trelissickpark@nzparkfinder.com

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

Greater Wellington pollution hotline: 0800 496 734

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

10 February 1.30 PM Sunday, Ngaio Gorge Road entrance

24 February 9.30 AM Tuesday, Ngaio Gorge Road entrance

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