

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

DOC Department of Conservation

GW Greater Wellington Regional Council

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

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

SEPTEMBER 2019

In Days of Yore...

Here is Ngaio School in 2006 at the new Bridge 2 across Korimako Stream, listening to the man from GW. On the other side of the stream, the verdant field of blackberry had gone - sweet harvest for the locals no longer. The group planted on both sides of the bridge, then downstream at Bridges 3, 4 and 5.

The right-hand photo was taken from the same place a few days ago. The end of the bridge can just be seen behind the foliage.



Cause for celebration? No way! Look at the bare ground below the four metre trees, once home to the blackberry. It should be awash with seedlings, ferns and grasses! Lemonwood trees dominate. Many of the mānuka have either died or are overwhelmed.

The slope above Bridge 4 was exactly the same. Lemonwood monocultures are not to be entertained, it seems. After ruthless thinning we planted a variety of under-story species suitable for semi-shade. It's starting to look more healthy.

The saws are coming...

Wanted: LED Light Shields

At night the lights of commerce go on, illuminating the whole of the lower Kaiwharawhara valley.

A resident aloft asked ExxonMobil and NZ Post for sharp edges to their LED lights to align with the site boundaries. She referred to the Trelissick Park/Kaiwharawhara corridor as a significant area for Wellington's wildlife. Birds and insects have body clocks. For birds she quoted the National Geographic Magazine: "Brighter nights shift hormones and other biological cues for mating, singing, and finding food."

Hope reigns.

Oban Street Track and Bridge Update

Details of the Kaiwharawhara Stream footbridge project for the new track from Oban Street were given in the previous newsletter.



Trevor Butler, the engineer from Frame Group Ltd, visited the site on a cold and grey July morning. He proposes a wooden bridge of laminated beams - a larger version of Bridge 3, 15 m long. A helicopter may be the easiest way to bring these to the site from the flat ground next to the old magazine building.

His design and preparation of tender documentation should finish in September. He will then work on WCC and GW consent applications. Tim Harkness from WCC will seek quotations from construction contractors and project manage the work.

WCC will be funding and managing the access from Oban Street down the road reserve and the legal right-of-way into the Park.

We will need to upgrade the existing track to WCC standards and do the short stream-bank section to the bridge. The northern end of the bridge will connect with the vehicle track, locally elevated to keep the bridge above floods and floating trees/branches.

All should complete by May 2020.

Weed Farewells

Delight abounds. Stu Whiterod of Kaitiaki o Ngahere has chronicled their extensive weed control for this year - some on ghastly rocky slopes of matted vegetation rarely penetrated by mankind. Thanks for the support from WCC's Illona Keenan.

Earlier in the year Kaitiaki sprayed large tracts of tradescantia below Hanover Street down to the stream, across the stream, on the slope below Crofton Downs station and on railway land upstream of Bridge 6. At last we are able to fill these with plants.

More recently they sealed the fate of much climbing asparagus, banana passionfruit (photo at left), old man's beard and Japanese honeysuckle - see Appendix for locations.



They are going to tackle evergreen buckthorn trees (*Rhamnus alaternus*) above the boulder area on railway land, southwest of Bridge 6 - see right-hand photo by Weedbusters.

'Chalk and Cheese'

After a recent screening of 'Only Fools and Dreamers' about Hugh Wilson and Hinewai Reserve on Banks Peninsula¹, Brony Shepherd spoke about the Te Ahumairangi Hill Ecological Restoration Group². Their domain, once known as Tinakori Hill, overlooks us. We never knew they existed! Trawl through the Group's Facebook page www.facebook.com/pg/teahumairangihill for a fascinating wealth of information.

Te Ahumairangi and Hinewai have large undisturbed core areas of forest to spawn natural regeneration. The Hinewai philosophy is to not do weed control and planting: nature will do it instead - Te Ahumairangi likewise, but not everywhere possible.

We always slavishly clear weeds, then plant. Could we do the same as Te Ahumairangi and Hinewai? Trelissick Park used to be thickly carpeted with tradescantia and healthy areas of blackberry, completely stifling natural seedling emergence. Riparian areas were beset with Himalayan balsam. The railway and roads lie along our borders and sewer tunnels run under the middle. Perpetual upgrades of those, with excavations, are gifts for the weeds. Climbers envelop and smother, right up to the canopy. Weed and exotic invasions from the surrounding urban jungle and railway corridor are borne on wings, wind and water, assisted by gravity. Hmm...

Another neighbouring group aiming to restore the catchment from Khandallah to Ngauranga is facing problems similar to ours - see <https://www.facebook.com/TyersStream/>. We wish them well.

Countering the Mighty Dollar

The vast forests of South America are being destroyed.

Our efforts are scant compensation. This year, WCC provided 1,000 plants and another 200 are from the home nursery. Most are now in the ground, filling small patches and previously sprayed areas. Our wonderful core of working bee volunteers and 'spotees' have been working hard, aided by visits from Conservation Volunteers, SPCA staff, St Benedict's School and Ngaio Brownies. Details are in the Appendix and on our Facebook page.



The plan has always been to populate cleared areas with closely-planted fast-growing plants to suppress the weeds, but to include some slower-growing podocarps.

WCC's Jonathan Anderson has supplemented the podocarp planting from separate WCC allocations. The photo shows a healthy miro (*Prumnopitys ferruginea*) - to become a forest giant in a couple of centuries. Miro find the Park to be highly suitable. A couple planted in 2002 beside Korimako Stream down from Wightwick's Field are more than 3 m tall.

The original forest remnant below Ngaio Gorge Road and eastern Trelissick Crescent contains mature kahikatea, tōtara, mataī, rewarewa and tawa. A growing treasure of podocarps and other canopy species have been planted in the Korimako and Kaiwharawhara valleys over the last 28 years.

Here is your Chance

DOC is leading a consultation for an action plan for a new wide-ranging biodiversity strategy 'Te

Koiora o Te Koiora'. This will set a vision and guide biodiversity work for the next 50 years - particularly important in this era of exploitation, degradation and climate change.

More information and an opportunity for you to participate is on <https://www.doc.govt.nz/biodiversity-consultation>. The closing date is 22 September.

References

1.
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=only+fools+and+dreamers&qs=PF&cvid=fed5c6cf38e44c8d87af1727dc428dfd&refig=b6aab94587914c93824d2be043d1a256&cc=NZ&setlang=en-US&plvar=0&ru=%2fsearch%3fq%3donly%2bfools%2band%2bdreamers%26form%3dEDGTCT%26qs%3dPF%26cvid%3dfed5c6cf38e44c8d87af1727dc428dfd%26refig%3db6aab94587914c93824d2be043d1a256%26cc%3dNZ%26setlang%3den-US%26plvar%3d0&view=detail&mmscn=vwrc&mid=9AC11278044DFEC0B3C39AC11278044DFEC0B3C3&FORM=WRVORC>

2.
<https://www.facebook.com/teahumairangihill/photos/pcb.436605990525437/436605857192117/?type=3&theater>

Working Bees

See website 'Projects' page for dates, locations and health and safety information.

Contacts

Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602, nz.peterreimann@gmail.com
WCC (reporting problems): (04) 499 4444,
GW pollution hotline: 0800 496 734

APPENDIX

Recent Control of Climbers by Kaitiaki o Ngahere (extensive infestations)

Old man's beard

- On both sides of the Korimako valley

- Below Bowen Hospital, Ngaio Gorge Road, Oban Street
- Above track through Ngaio Gorge
- On slope opposite and above the magazine building.

Climbing asparagus -

- Below Oban Street and below lower Ngaio Gorge Road.
- On slope opposite the magazine building.

Japanese honeysuckle

- On both sides of the Korimako valley
- On slope opposite the magazine building
- Down from Hanover Street
- Riparian upstream of debris trap
- Railway land upstream of bridge 6.

Banana passionfruit

- Below Oban Street
- On slope opposite the magazine building.

Our Multi-faceted Planting Year

(W = at working bee)

Above Waikowhai Street entrance and down 'kauri' ridge beyond (Richard Grasse)

Riparian below Waikowhai Street (W)

Below Crofton Downs station (Alex Thompson for Duke of Edinburgh award)

At Upper Ngaio Gorge Road entrance (Warrick Fowlie)

Trelissick Crescent verge (Conservation Volunteers, Marilyn Hester, Peter Reimann, W)

Down from Trelissick Crescent entrance opposite #19 (St Benedict's School)

Beside track junction down from Wightwick's Field (Ngaio Brownies and W)

North bank at bridge 2 (W)

Slope above bridge 4 on Ngaio side (SPCA staff and Conservation Volunteers)

Either side of bridge 5 (SPCA staff)

Slope on either side of track beyond grassy area down from bridge 5 (Conservation Volunteers)

Upstream of bridge 6 on railway land (Conservation Volunteers, with Scouts due later in September)

Old slip slope below SW end of Forest Remnant track (Jim Gifkins and W)

Just above bridge 6 beside track, Ngaio side (W)

At Hanover Street entrance (W)

Above first track 'zig' below Hanover Street (Anne Tuffin and Joan Waldvogel)

Beside track down from Hanover Street (Peter Reimann)

In memorial seat area beside stream down from bridge 6 (W)

Riparian infill below vehicle track upstream of debris trap - due October (W)

'Flood Plain' down from debris trap (Marilyn Hester and W)

Lower Ngaio Gorge Road entrance (Tim Mclvor)

Infill at 57 Kaiwharawhara Road (Warrick Fowlie)

Podocarps throughout (Jonathan Anderson, Conservation Volunteers, Peter Reimann).

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