

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

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

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

MARCH 2017

"Less than Minor" - Hmm...

Whenever we read resource consent applications and reports on proposed developments, they say reassuringly "The effect will be less than minor".

Crofton Downs residents and TPG are upset about the silty run-off from the earthworks of the huge housing development in the valley beyond Silverstream Road. The silt retention measures were inadequate. Plaudits to Andrew McLellan, Bill Hester and Kelvin Hastie for their assiduous monitoring and alerts to WCC and GW, now working in conjunction with the contractor to investigate the problem and reduce the risk of this happening again. Our precious aquatic life once more assaulted.



Photos: Silt from the Silverstream development earthworks after rain (top left - issuing into the Korimako Stream in the park, top right - in the Silverstream). Lower photo - the earthworks so far.

We are forever hopeful that local authorities, consultants and developers will give more recognition to the environment. Wellington is a stunningly attractive and unique city, with its mix of houses, bush, birds, harbour and coastline, which WCC's biodiversity strategy aims to protect and enhance¹. But pressure for more housing and money to be made threaten to turn Wellington into yet another ghastly urban metropolis. It's the 'nibble' effect: cumulative "less than minors" = major.

Wellington is listed as a partner 'biophilic city' on <http://biophiliccities.org/>, but needs to embrace this more. WCC must also complete and then implement the 'Water Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines'.

The major Curtis Street and BUPA developments are on the horizon and we will be watching!

More on Aquatic Life

Our eels and colourful native fish migrate between the sea and the headwaters of streams. Kaiwharawhara Stream used to be a paradise for redfin and bluegill bully, banded, shortjaw and giant kōkopu, kōaro, inanga, shortfin and longfin eels. Some of these fish species are nationally threatened and rarely found in urban streams. Shortjaw kokopu is the rarest (only one found in the Kaiwharawhara in 2004)^{2,3,4}. Trout are also present - a threat to indigenous fish, competing for their food. See also list in the Appendix.

Recent surveys of fish and invertebrates make us question if all the species are still there⁵. All the stormwater from the 22 km² catchment ends up in the Kaiwharawhara Stream, complete with careless washings of detergents, paint and cement. Sewer lines run through the park and leak/rupture. Fast storm-water run-off from decreasing bush cover and hard surfaces of roads, paving and roofs washes away stream banks and deposits a layer of sediment on the stream bed, smothering invertebrates - essential food for the fish. Silt comes in from earthworks, such as recently from the development above Silverstream Road. It's a wonder anything survives.

Worse, there are barriers for fish passage throughout the catchment. Following a study by Frances Forsyth of Wildlands⁶, Myfanwy Emeny of WCC says work will start within the next few months on rectifying the major barrier at the tunnel exit at the Kaiwharawhara/Korimako junction. This will include clearing the slip, looking at slip slope stability and fish passage through the tunnel itself.

Zealandia are considering a whole-of-catchment waterway improvement effort (allowing fish and eel migration) in conjunction with perch eradication in the lower reservoir - in effect a re-ignition of 'Project Kaiwharawhara'. TPG and WCC attended a meeting at Zealandia recently, to air catchment issues and think of possible interested parties.

More Weapons

It all started with dogs. With the streams for frolicking and no need for a leash, dogs think the park is fantastic. However, some misadventures with eating bait station pellets dictated a change to block-bait, wired into the bait stations.

The next question was "what about the possums?" GW have come to the rescue and provided some lever-operated stations. The possums quickly work out how to operate the lever - see video⁷.

Norway rats cannot climb as well as our alarmingly agile ship rats. Illona Keenan of WCC has provided two Goodnature A24 traps⁸, which Barry Durrant is installing close to the ground in the southern forested slopes above the lower Kaiwharawhara Stream. We also have two A24s elsewhere.

The DOC 200 traps throughout the park complete our weaponry. Since 2008, they have caught 145 rats, 17 stoats/weasels and 17 hedgehogs.



Gorge Updates

Progress on several fronts:

Bridges - The partly collapsed 'bridge to nowhere' at Wightwick's Field has been removed by WCC's contractor. The same fate will befall bridge 3, with the undermined foundations. David Halliday is organising a replacement just upstream.

The Oban Street Track - The survey report and letter to WCC have been agreed by HPPA, WRA and TPG. If there agreement from WCC to proceed, a long process follows, including engineer's stream bank assessment for the bridge, price estimating, obtaining committed funding, writing a project plan for WCC agreement, resource consenting and implementation.

Our 'Extra-curricular' 57 Kaiwharawhara Road - Following last year's work⁹, WCC have just sprayed the weed re-growth and Conservation Volunteers are revisiting for a final clearance before planting and mulching later this year.

New Gabions for the Korimako - The track downstream of Wightwick's Field narrows between a rock face and the stream below. It has long been in jeopardy from washout. Following valiant protection efforts by Malcolm McDonald and Bill Hester, WCC have at last installed some rock gabions. Photos are on our Facebook page.

News from the 'Spots'

Work on the spots⁹ continues. Welcome to Joan Waldvogel, who has adopted the Hanover Street entrance and the slope below. Alexandra McKendry and her mother were relieved that their streamside plantings below Waikowhai Street mostly survived the November deluges.

Scattering Might be Better?



This limb of a forest giant was washed up on a beach. Slicing showed termites had been at work, despite fossil hardness. A recent F & B article¹⁰ uncovered some amazing facts about New Zealand termites. Thousands of bacteria and protozoa live in the guts of termites. "Some of the bacteria fix nitrogen and provide a supply to the termites. Other micro-organisms break the cellulose in wood into simple sugars and ferment them. The products of fermentation are used by both the microbes and the termites for energy...Termites are an important

part of the forest ecosystem, speeding up wood decomposition and returning nutrients to the soil. They are, via their nitrogen-fixing bacteria, an important source of nitrogen in the forest."

During clearance of fallen or felled trees we usually pile the cut branches and trunks into a heap. It appears that there are advantages in scattering everything, to spread the nutrients and nitrogen, if circumstances allow.

Beware! Ngaio and Poroporo at Large

Large is the word. Ngaio, (*Myoporum laetum*) and poroporo (*Solanum aviculare* or *laciniatum*), both attractive and endemic, are tempting for revegetation areas. However, they are fast-growing and sprawling, overwhelming their less exuberant neighbours. Think again...



References

1. WCC. Our Natural Capital. Wellington's biodiversity strategy and action plan 2015
2. WCC. Suburban Reserves Management Plan (April 2015)
3. <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sbs/research-centres-institutes/centre-biodiversity-restoration-ecology/newsletters/2014-news-and-events>
4. GG. September 2015
5. GG. March 2012
6. Frances Forsyth. Survey of Potential barriers to Fish passage in the Kaiwharawhara Catchment, Wellington. Wildlands Contract Report 3811. July 2016.
7. <http://baitsafe.co.nz/>
8. <http://www.goodnature.co.nz/>
9. GG. December 2016
10. Michelle Harnett. 'Amazing facts about...New Zealand Termites'. *Forest and Bird* Issue 355, February 2015.

Contacts

Chairman & Adopt-a-Spot: Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602, peter.reimann@paradise.net.nz
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.

APPENDIX

FRESHWATER FISH OF THE KAIWHARAWHARA CATCHMENT (Copied from Ref. 6) Data accessed from the NZ Freshwater Fish Database (NIWA) on 10 February 2015

. Fish Species	Scientific Name	Threat Status (Goodman <i>et al.</i> 2013)
Banded kōkopu	<i>Galaxias fasciatus</i>	Not Threatened
Bluegill bully	<i>Gobiomorphus hubbsi</i>	At Risk-Declining
Common bully	<i>Gobiomorphus cotidianus</i>	Not Threatened
Giant bully	<i>Gobiomorphus gobioides</i>	Not Threatened
Giant kōkopu	<i>Galaxias argenteus</i>	At Risk-Declining
Inanga	<i>Galaxias maculatus</i>	At Risk-Declining
Koaro	<i>Galaxias brevipinnis</i>	At Risk-Declining
Longfin eel	<i>Anguilla dieffenbachii</i>	At Risk-Declining
Redfin bully	<i>Gobiomorphus huttoni</i>	At Risk-Declining
Shortfin eel	<i>Anguilla australis</i>	Not Threatened
Shortjaw kōkopu	<i>Galaxias maculatus</i>	Threatened-Nationally Vulnerable
Brown trout	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	Introduced

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.