



# Newsletter

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## Chair's Report

*Peter Adams*

We have spent the wet winter months seeking funds to support our ongoing conservation projects and we are pleased to announce success on three fronts.

Firstly, the Cobb Mitigation Fund has granted us funds to complete our trap line network in the remote Deep Creek area. This is the last significant line extension we are planning and will give us a complete network of traps stretching from the Flora car park through to the Cobb.

Secondly, the NZ Lotteries Grant Board has provided significant funds to continue our ongoing great spotted kiwi reintroduction programme. This has been topped up by a third grant from the BNZ Save The Kiwi Trust, thanks in part to Robin and Sandy's presentations at the recent kiwi hui in Nelson. These last two grants mean that we can now start planning with local Iwi and DoC for a second introduction of kiwi. This will be a major step towards our goal of a sustainable kiwi population in the Flora Valley.

We have lots more work to do but this is a major step towards our goals. We thank all the grant bodies concerned plus everybody in FoF who helped to put together such fantastic applications.

## Kiwi update August 2012

*Sandy Toy*

In the last kiwi update we identified the need for a second kiwi translocation to increase the founder population in the Flora. Great news - we have secured a substantial contribution towards the cost of the translocation and follow up monitoring. The Environment and Heritage Committee of the Lotteries Grants Board have offered us a significant grant over two years and the BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust will pay for the transmitters that we will need to monitor newly translocated birds as well as the existing Flora birds. A huge thank you to both organisations. It was particularly pleasing to learn that the kiwi recovery group which advises the BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust applauded the excellent management of the Friends of Flora programme. This is great acknowledgement of all the hard work done by so many volunteers in keeping stoat numbers down and ensuring that we learn as much as we can about the Flora kiwi. We have a couple more grant applications outstanding and would welcome any ideas for raising the remaining funds. Meanwhile the monitoring of the existing Flora kiwi has continued over the winter. The slip on the access road has meant that monitoring now involves access from the Cobb side and at least one night in the Flora. Luckily we have a choice of deluxe accommodation (photo shows an icy Flora hut which we had to ourselves for three nights!).



We had a bit of excitement when the transmitter on Aorere (the female who hangs out in Ghost Creek) started to malfunction. We eventually managed to change it, but only after a long, cold, frustrating day since the transmitter was only transmitting intermittently, with periods of silence extending for a couple of hours!

## Operations Report

*Pamela Jenkins*

With winter comes colder weather and snow when the pests aren't up to much and so most FoFers have been taking a well-earned rest and there is not much to report. However, we did make time for a refresher course/workshop on best practices for trapping and pest control methods, thanks to Chris Golding from DoC Motueka (who also took this photo of the slip). This was attended by the line leaders. Not only was it very informative, but it was a great opportunity for some of us to get together and have a catch-up. Despite snow and the closure of the Graham Valley Road leading up to the Flora Carpark, some line monitoring was achieved for the end of August, accessed via the Cobb Valley. As expected kills were low and had obviously been caught some time ago!! Very unfortunately more material has come down onto the Flora Road, and current estimations are that the road may not be open until December.



## Other News

### *Rock Wren Sightings*

*Bill Rooke*

Rock wrens are a bird that most New Zealanders would never have seen or indeed heard. This lovely little bird is vanishing from our high country, and like many other species may well be on the road toward extinction, so we were thrilled to hear of a sighting recently, up on Mt Arthur. The last recorded sighting on Mt Arthur was about two years ago and another near the Summit in 2004. They still survive in pockets throughout Kahurangi and in other parts of the South Island, but are in decline.



The rock Wren (*Xenicus gilviventris*) is one of our most ancient endemic species. It belongs to a family of endemic wrens that survived unchanged in isolated New Zealand for millions of years. We originally had 6 species including several flightless species, but firstly due to introduced Polynesian rats, then European rats, stoats and mice, we now sadly only have the rock wren and

rifleman left. Rock wrens look very similar to rifleman, but are slightly larger, have a very short tail, and longer legs. It has a very characteristic habit of bobbing up and down and flicking its wings when perched on a rock. It is our only true alpine bird, as it lives only above the bush line, mostly around rocky outcrops, and can also be seen in alpine scrub.

When any of you FoFers are up on the mountain, look out for rock wrens and report any sightings to FoF or DoC. Pipits are common on Mt Arthur and could be mistaken by some people for a wren, from a distance. Watch for the bird's tell tale bobbing up and down.

### ***Michael Douglas leaves for the North Island***

*Maryann Evers*



Michael was one of the original Motueka High School student group that helped out building rat tunnels in Friends of Flora's early days. He is the last of that group to move on to further his career. Over the years Michael served as our youngest ever committee member, line leader, part of the operations team, and as a kiwi tracker. Michael will be missed, not just because of his cheery nature and being a nice person to have on your team in the hills, but also because of his bush skills and fitness level. We can always do with a few more like Michael.

Last year he completed a DoC Rangers Course and now has a job with DoC in Northland. Our very best wishes and thank you to Michael from all at FoF. We are sure to see him again on a FoF trapping line when he is home on holiday.

### ***Proposed Steatite Mine Cobb Valley***

There is a proposal to mine steatite in the Cobb Valley, by Steatite Ltd. The company is looking to gain a 38 year access agreement from DOC to do this, with 32 trucks a week using the Cobb road and entering the mining site via the national park. There are many rare plants in this area. We have written a letter to DoC Nelson/Marlborough Conservator – Neil Clifton, expressing our opposition to this proposal. Other organisations such as Forest and Bird have also written to The Conservator.

If you oppose DOC approving access rights to mine this area, you can check out this website below for further information on how you can help.

<http://savethecobb.wordpress.com/>

***In a similar vein there is a:***

### ***SODOFF Hui***

*15-16 September, Te Awhina Marae, Motueka*

There is also a hui you can attend, which will cover the proposed steatite mine. The 2012 SODOFF hui aims to bring together people from across the Top of the South region who are motivated to take action to stop new fossil fuel extraction and prevent runaway climate change.

The SODOFF hui is on the 15-16 September, at the Te Awhina Marae in Motueka. If you are interested, please email [sodoff.2012@gmail.com](mailto:sodoff.2012@gmail.com) to get a registration form for the weekend.

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