



Newsletter

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Chairperson's Report and Summary of AGM Minutes

*Peter Adams
Maryann Ewers*

The Friends of Flora 10th AGM was held on 26 April with about 60 people attending. Peter Adams' Chairperson's Report included discussion about the kiwi project in the Flora including the planned translocation of 16 more kiwi in 2013 (this will improve genetic diversity and encourage the kiwi to stay put). Bill Rooke gave the Operations Report. This work is now being carried out by an Operations Team led by Pamela Jenkins. Two new trap lines have gone in at Ghost Creek and up on the Tablelands; two seed funnel lines have been put into Deep Creek to monitor for beech seeds and a possible mast; and two new foot tunnel lines (FTTs) have also been put in place.

Chris Golding gave a report on behalf of DOC. He welcomed his new boss, Bruce Vander Lee who now heads the DOC Biodiversity team for the Motueka Area Office. Bruce has previously been based in Masterton and has been working on projects in the Tararuas. It appears that possum numbers in the Flora have increased by 7% this year, and DOC is considering a major blitz on them next year. Chris also told us about the National Heritage Management System (NHMS). Apparently Flora just misses out on being in the list of areas deemed eligible for inclusion in the scheme at this stage, but more information will be available in four years time. The January whio survey in the Flora Stream found 17 birds. We were delighted to hear that Genesis Energy are providing significant funding for whio over the next few years, and Chris is seeking funding to transfer up to 20 birds into the Cobb River.

Sandy Toy gave the Kiwi Report. Excellent progress has been made with the Kiwi Project since the birds were placed in the area two years ago. Sleep deficit has been incurred by the nocturnal, fortnightly transmitter monitoring. A mortality signal was discovered coming from Anaweka's transmitter in the Pearce River, however fortunately this turned out to be a dropped device. Acoustic recorders have been placed around the Cobb Ridge/Deep Creek area for the last month or so, but no kiwi calls recorded as yet.

Sandra Bishop gave the Treasurer's Report. The books have been audited by Euan Brownlie. The Opening Balance from last year was \$66,317.00 (\$62,641.00 for GSK, and \$3,676.00 for General Fund). The Closing Balance is \$37,883.00 with \$11,000 being Lottery Funds, which will be spent by June, and \$2500 being allocated to listening devices (from a Tasman District Council grant).

Office bearers were elected. Lesley Hadley and Michael Douglas have stood down from the Committee after many years of service, and we thank them for this very much. They have put in a huge amount of hard work over the years. The new office bearers are: Peter Adams (Chairperson), Maryann Ewers (Advocacy), Marie Firth (Secretary), Sandra Bishop (Treasurer), Pamela Jenkins (Operations), Sandy Toy (Kiwi Project).

At our busiest time of year we have completed a huge amount of work, whilst still managing to complete all of our monthly trap line monitoring on time. A huge amount of effort and hard work has been put in by an unbelievably dedicated team, without whom we just wouldn't have got all of our jobs done. These jobs, mostly being particular to the pre-empting of a beech mast, were:



The annual Footprint Tracking Tunnel Monitoring: Ink cards were placed inside 12 in-situ tunnels situated across our 5,000ha territory in the Flora catchment area. Once placed inside the tunnels, the rat cards only need to stay in for a 24 hour period, whilst the stoat tracking cards remain for 3 nights. (A photo of Lucy placing peanut butter on a rat card is shown above.) This means that volunteers had to be available to cover a large area repeatedly over the 4 day period. Days were incredibly long for most, with some staying overnight, but the job was successfully completed (except where mischievous weka kept running off with the cards as soon as they were placed in the tunnels!) The result of our hard work revealed just one set of rat footprints in the line set out in the Deep Creek area. BUT it is not over yet at the beginning of May we will be doing it all over again, but this time just for the rats.

At the same time as this was being done, a newly marked out seed funnel line began construction down in Deep Creek, involving the carting of some rather oversized equipment in some pretty rough terrain. For those of you who may not realise it, the seed funnels themselves are huge, and so caused much hilarity whilst trying to work out how to carry them for the journey. The result was something akin to a group of turtles, with several river crossings adding to the effect!!! At the end of March the stockings were brought out to analyse the seeds and new stockings put in their place, which will again be collected at the end of April.

We also managed to squeeze in the marking and laying out of the new line on the Tablelands, following the bushline from Balloon Hut and meeting up with D line just south of Lake Peel. A group of volunteers stayed in Balloon Hut for the night, enjoying beautiful weather and Bill's bedtime ghost stories.

It just remains for me to say, that on behalf of the Operations Team, huge thanks to all of those volunteers who have put in so much tireless effort these last couple of months. You've been amazing!!

That's all for now, but if you are interested in seeing some great photographs of all of the work being done in the last few months, then you will be able to find them on our new Facebook page. at <http://www.facebook.com/friendsofflora>

Kiwi Update

It is almost two years since kiwi were brought back to the Flora. The radio transmitters that enable us to monitor their activity and movements run on batteries with a life of about a year. In order to fit transmitters with new batteries we need to catch the kiwi. This gives us an opportunity to give them a health check and as you can see

Sandy and Robin Toy

Bird	Sex	Weight (g)		
		2010 (Clark River)	2011	2012
Anatori	M	2500	2500	2465
Anaweka	F	2850	2760	- tx dropped
Rakopi	M	2180	2235	2205
Aorere	F	2875	3185	3025
Pikopiko	M	2275	2480	2450
Pakawau	F	2975	3050	3050
Parapara	M	2275	2690	2500
Totaranui	F	2975	2990	3050
Waiharakeke	M	2275	2345	2325
Rameka	F	3475	3350	3300
Patoto	M	2275	2600	2550
Rototai	M	2250	- tx failed	-

from the table that summarizes the changes in weight of the birds over the last 2 years, they're doing well. In addition to weighing the birds we measure the length of their bill, check their condition and look for any damage to their eyes, legs and feet. Transmitter changes have just been completed on all the birds.



This is Rameka, our biggest kiwi. Isn't she beautiful? One photo illustrating one benefit of all that hard work invested in predator control in the Flora.

Finding and catching the kiwi can be tricky – luckily Robin has long arms and isn't claustrophobic! Aorere had a particularly large burrow, we don't often have to crawl right in, but in this case Robin eventually pretty well disappeared.



The length of a kiwi's beak gives an indication of their sex. However, a bird with a short beak could be a sub-adult female or an adult male. Annual measurement enables us to see if the length of the bird's beak is changing and hence determine its age

Who's that FoFer?

Wayne Elia

Here is a photo of Wayne with Honey and Rosa at their new property near Mapua. He and partner Judy also have two dogs. The dogs and Honey the cat are excellent ratcatchers – pity they can't come and work up the Flora! For many years Wayne and Judy used to have the gear shed in their back garden in Motueka. At the time this was a big job, as it meant maintaining all the gear and preparing it for the different work



groups, whereas nowadays the group leaders organise the gear themselves. Wayne played rugby league with Bill and Titch in Auckland, and therefore he is an inaugural member of FoF as well. Wayne has always liked drawing, and has an artistic and creative background, particularly in the visual arts. He draws, paints and carves, finding inspiration from the natural environment around him. He created the FoF logo, and has done art work for DOC including three-dimensional models of the Mt Arthur and Karamea regions. He also helped make the special protective boxes for the kiwi that have been released on the way up to Mt Arthur. He worked for the NZ Forest Service in the 1980's in the Mt Arthur/Leslie Stream area, and it was his experiences out in the bush that drew him into conservation work. Once he saw a three-generational family of weka up near Gridion, and has seen up to six whio at one time in the Flora Stream.

Funding was an issue for FoF in the beginning as it was the first voluntary conservation project in NZ that wanted to work on DoC land. Fortunately DoC was able to provide some initial funding from a community work budget, and other private benefactors and angels also recognised the potential of the Flora Project.

In common with most FoFers Wayne has been out in some “interesting” weather. Up on Mt. Crusader there is an area of shattered rocks and furrows in the ground caused by lightning strikes, so being caught out in a violent electrical storm on the slopes of Mt Arthur was a sobering experience. Wayne now organises A Line with Margot, and has done various other lines in the past. His most memorable moment was getting his forearm caught in a “coney bear” trap (used for possums at one time) while carrying it, and having to be rescued by Judy using a screwdriver!

What's that plant?

Marie Firth

Archeria traversii (Red mountain heath)



The best place for seeing *Archeria traversii* is at the start of F line where it joins up with I line (at I60) where there is a beautiful clump of older trees. Many can also be seen on the track up to the Mt Arthur Hut. *A. traversii* is an attractive many-branched shrub, which grows up to 5m in height. It is easily mistaken for manuka except that it is not prickly, and

has a noticeable orange-brown, flakey bark (a bit like a fuchsia or dracophyllum), and the small flowers (Dec-Feb) are a reddish/dark crimson colour, flushed with white. It grows from Nelson to Stewart Island in subalpine and montane (up to 1250m) country, and down south extends into lowland forest in high rainfall areas. The leaves are smooth, small (but larger than manuka), leathery and sometimes tinged with red. The fruit is a 5 celled capsule. There are five species of *Archeria* and they are found both in NZ and Tasmania. It belongs to the family *Epacridaceae* (woody plants, mostly shrubby).

Other news

At our AGM on 26 April, Tui de Roy gave a wonderful talk, with photos, of her work in wildlife/natural photography. Tui is an excellent speaker and her photos are absolutely stunning. She has published many books including ones involving NZ. We thank Tui very much for giving such a marvellous talk. She has a new book coming out shortly.

FoF now has a Facebook page, which can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/friendsofflora>
We would like as many newsletter recipients as possible to Like the page so that you receive updates when someone posts a new photo or piece of news.

Our Patron, the Rt. Hon. Helen Clark has recently won an award for outstanding achievements in international relations, and has also been named “the most powerful woman you've never heard of”!! WE KNOW HER!! Further information is found at:

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/23/the_most_powerful_women_youve_never_heard_of

https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/files/About_Us/Press_Releases/FY12_Releases/120326.aspx

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