

Leaves from the Brook

The newsletter of the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary
Issue 14 – Feb 2007

Entrance Building Opening – Sun 1st April 2007

We are thrilled to be able to announce the date for our “grand” entrance building opening - scheduled for Sunday 1st April. (This date has been moved from the original but unpublicised date of March 10 so a specific guest speaker can attend.) The opening is a major milestone for our project and we will be celebrating it with 2 different events over the course of the day. The first ceremony will be a blessing of the building at dawn, accompanied by the haunting sounds of traditional Maori musical instruments in the hands of Nelson’s Richard Nunns, and the singing of Hinemoana Baker.

The opening ceremony itself will be around the middle of the day – we will let you know the time once our key speaker is confirmed. Hinemoana Baker and Richard Nunns will play again – radio listeners may have heard some of their performances last year – there will be other activities, food and drink and a chance to look over the building.



The backdrop painted by Dean Raybould for the entrance building’s childrens’ corner

We are all eagerly anticipating the various displays that will be set up in the building using our Ministry of Tourism funding. Several local artists and designers are busy putting the finishing touches to display panels, a children’s corner, a “3D” model of the sanctuary site and bird models.

This event will be a chance to thank the many people who have volunteered their time or donated services and materials to bring the building to completion.

Judene Edgar - Professional Fundraiser

We have engaged local fundraiser, Judene Edgar, to assist us part-time with raising money for the pest-proof fence. Judene is well known for her practical approach to fundraising and has assisted many local community groups to successfully attain funds for their respective projects, so we’re excited to have her on board!

Website

Our Brook Sanctuary website:

www.brooksanctuary.org is now live! The website is 4 “pages” long and includes information about our project vision, why we need a sanctuary, latest sanctuary news, archived newsletters, how we are run & how to contact us. It’s great to be able to refer people to the website for a summary of the Sanctuary information and the site is obviously generating interest as we are now receiving web-based enquiries from around the country. We are really pleased with look and feel of the website, which was designed by Hothouse, a local award-winning multi-media design company.

As part of the website package, Hothouse also generously donated the sanctuary the software and training needed to update the site - a very practical gift. We will use this to add new features – look out for more details on the opening for example. Eventually we will be able to receive membership payments online. We welcome any comments you have on the website.

Traps & Tracking

Before carrying out the trapping and tracking work, we’ve had to get our health & safety system really well sorted as previous field work has shown just how steep and unstable parts of our site are. Now that work has been done and our health & safety system is operational, the trapping and tracking is underway. Our first session of pest monitoring using tracking tunnels took place in the Feb 10-11 weekend and the results of this monitoring will now be analysed. The traps, which have been left unset with bait in them to encourage stoats (as DOC have done at times when they are looking for a very good kill), can now be set. The trap setting is scheduled to take place next weekend (17/18 Feb).



A volunteer working on the trapping lines

Sanctuary Site GPS "Recce"

Thorsten Kather is leading a small team of people who are mapping the Brook Sanctuary site using GPS (global positioning system) technology. Thorsten's goal this year is to have the exact position of every trap (there are 240 in total) and each of our 10 monitoring lines mapped. On 20th Jan, Thorsten took 2 new GPS volunteers around a section of the site to familiarise them with the line system and the GPS work that's required. Thanks to everyone who got back about being part of this gps group, anyone else who's keen to join, please contact Ann at the Brook office. Also big thanks to Martin Clelland from Nelson City Council for the loan of the GPS.

One or two of this group are planning to buy their own GPS. If other members are interested in doing the same please let Ann know as it may be possible to get a discount for a 'bulk' deal.



Tony Steenhart marking trap locations using GPS

Search & Rescue (S & R) Familiarisation Day

We had a great response from our request in last newsletter for Search & Rescue volunteers and now have 18 volunteers "on the books." A group of 9 of these joined Peter Hay on 21 January to view the site and learn how the team would be activated in a real S & R situation. Basically, the S & R team would be called upon if one of our field team members didn't return home after carrying out their trapping / tracking / gps work. The team would immediately contact the police and then travel to site in order to find the missing person, who may be either injured or disoriented and lost. The S & R team work on a "rapid action / rapid response basis" and would aim to quickly find & provide any appropriate first aid for the missing person. The S & R teams will also be using two fully equipped packs loaded with safety gear as well as VHF radios. These radios mean that the searching teams can communicate with each other, a coordinator at the entrance building and Police S & R if necessary. The VHF radios have been generously donated by the Nelson Rotary Club.



The Search & Rescue team familiarise themselves with line locations

The Brook Sanctuary & Nelson Region Tourism

As we set out in 2007 to bring local companies and individuals on board as partners to fund the pest-proof fence, it is interesting to look at how well the sanctuary 'fits' the Nelson region today.

Back in November the Nelson Mail contained a full-page feature identifying that tourism is Nelson's 3rd largest industry, but we need to build more attractions or get 'left behind in the battle for the tourist dollar'. We fully expect the Sanctuary to become one of the region's top attractions.

That same month Nelson's draft Biodiversity Strategy was released from comment and the Sanctuary features prominently in it. More recently a review identified that New Zealand is still not really succeeding to turn around the situation for our endangered species. The Sanctuary can make a huge contribution to the conservation of our beech forest fauna and flora by providing a pest-free refuge on a large scale. The country's rarest kiwi, the Okarito brown kiwi is one example. This is probably the kiwi that was once in the Brook and Mt Richmond. We could potentially re-establish a large population throughout the nearby ranges by using the Sanctuary as a nursery.

Farewell to Jean Espie

A memorial service was held late last year at the sanctuary site to honour and remember the wonderful Jean Espie, who died in early December. Jean was one of our sanctuary's strongest supporters and a tireless advocate for conservation and nature. It felt very appropriate to farewell Jean in the sanctuary setting, with the bush vista and birdsong as a background to the speeches and tales about Jean's interesting and vital life.

Nelson City Council funding

We have had recent discussions with the NCC about contributing funding to the pest-proof fence and expect to have an input into this year's Annual Plan process. Clearly the Council is faced with demands from a number of community projects, but support for the Brook seems strong. We don't believe much is gained by sending out a form letter and asking you all to send it into the Council to lobby for funds. However we would encourage you to have a look at the draft Plan when it is released for comment and make a submission if you feel like. The same goes for Tasman District residents as we see the Sanctuary developing as a regional project that will benefit the whole region.

Nelson City Council Brook Valley Planting Day

NCC are planning a number of planting days this year, including one in the Brook beside the Waimarama Gardens. If members are interested in helping, the planting will be held on June 23rd from 10am -12 noon at Waimarama Gardens site (the "OK Carrol") in Brook Street. You'll be rewarded for your efforts with a sausage sizzle afterwards! Plants and tools are provided. For more information on the Brook planting or other NCC planting days, contact Martin Clelland at NCC, Ph 546 0866.

For more information contact:

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