

Leaves from the Brook

The newsletter of the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary
Issue 13 – Oct/Nov 2006

Pest Control and Monitoring

We are poised to begin tackling some of the pests in the Sanctuary and the group that worked so hard building our trap tunnels will soon see their efforts bear fruit. However we are not rushing in to kill pests without being able to show that we can make a positive difference by doing so. First we have to set up monitoring to measure pest and bird numbers. We can then show that in our trapped area (the secondary forest in the lower part of the site) pest numbers decline and birds increase while this does not happen outside this area.

Two groups of volunteers have been formed:

Monitoring Group

The monitoring field team, coordinated by Karen Driver, have so far set out 100 monitoring tunnels on 10 lines using a national protocol, in our site's challenging and steep terrain. The tunnels are currently sitting un-baited to allow predators to get used to them. In November, they will be baited with rabbit meat and peanut butter, which will entice predators to run through them, leaving red ink footprints which can be identified and counted to provide a picture of predator species and numbers in the area. The monitoring team's energy, commitment and on-site "hard yakka" is really appreciated.

Trapping Group

The trapping group have been working equally hard, placing over 100 stoat and rat traps within the site over 9 km of operational lines. Eggs are going to be placed in the traps which will be operated as soon as the first monitoring round is complete.

The teams have also been busy developing rigorous health and safety protocols before they start regular work. As part of this we need to establish a **Search and Rescue Team. Would you consider joining this?** We need fit people, experienced in the bush, who would be available to go in and search for people if they did not return from their work. A 4WD, ideally short wheelbase, would also be desirable to enable the team to rapidly access the area.

Nelson City Council have made a great contribution to the pest control by contracting two hunters who have recently shot around 100 goats in the catchment. The damage these animals were doing by ring-barking trees was incredible.

Anyone keen to join these groups should contact our coordinator, Ann Sheridan at 5469175 ext 683 or brooksanctuary@xtra.co.nz

Entrance Building Interpretation & displays

We are making good progress with all the interpretation and display material for the inside and outside of the entrance building. The process of developing these resources is enjoyable and exciting, and really engages us to think about the sanctuary from a visitor's perspective.



Field team members working on-site

Donation from the Tasman Parrot Club

The Tasman Parrot Club President recently gave the Sanctuary a \$500.00 donation. The club has around 100 members and the donated money was raised by the club during the organisation of a local conference. Club President Laurie Blue knew of the Sanctuary, and was inspired and excited by the idea of flocks of native birds returning to Nelson, Richmond and Stoke. Sanctuary Coordinator Ann Sheridan recently met Laurie (and assorted avian family members) to say thanks and pick up the donation cheque. Livvy, Laurie's sulphur-crested cockatoo, became quite interested in nibbling the cheque, but we managed to get it off her without too much damage. Thank you Tasman Parrot Club for your generosity and vision. We look forward to keeping in touch and sending flocks of kaka and parakeets your way before long!



Tasman Parrot Club President Laurie Blue & Livvy

Entrance Building

The entrance building is now looking very impressive, thanks to our builder Alistair Wiffen and all the Nelson companies who have been discounting or donating materials and labour. Alistair has literally “built on” the previous excellent work done by the NMIT Carpentry School students and staff, who worked for two consecutive years on the building. Construction should soon be complete and we are now working on obtaining some final funds to connect to services and complete the surrounds.



Interior & exterior of Entrance Building

Opus Consultants Brook Entrance Building Working Bee

A group of 22 staff from Opus Consultants recently discarded their laptops and corporate suits for a day and got their hands well and truly dirty up at the Brook entrance building. Opus contacted sanctuary staff a while ago to discuss how their firm could assist with the Brook project, as well as provide staff with a welcome opportunity to escape the office and have some fun together. Alistair Wiffen, our resident builder, got everyone well organised with a good variety of tasks and without further ado, they got to work. Jobs tackled included painting, sanding and sealing the building’s interior and exterior and a general (and rather needed!) outside site tidy-up. The Brook Sanctuary staff and trustees would like to say thanks and well done to the Opus team for their time and excellent efforts. We hope this is the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship with Opus Consultants!



Nelson Opus Consultants team Entrance Building working bee

October 13th Masked Parade Food Stall

The Brook Sanctuary was invited to have a fundraising food stall at this iconic opening event to the Nelson Arts Festival. With pests in mind, we catered to the hungry festival goers with various yummy venison products while enjoying being part of the lively carnival atmosphere. Keith the Kiwi and Spike, the ASB Aquatic Centre tuatara, came along too. Spike in particular was a major hit and was apprehended every step he took by children keen to cuddle him. Next year it’d be great to have a Brook Sanctuary entry in the parade – with some of our member’s artistic skills and vision we could create something really fantastic. Thanks to Brook member Kim Merry for inviting us to this event, Rosie Bartlett from ASB Aquatic Centre for loan of Spike, Vicky Hay for being “Keith”, despite the heat, also David Marriott for food organisation, Chris and Nora Hemi, the BBQ ‘cooks extraordinaire’, and Margaret Martin, Tui Sheridan and Martin Rutledge for their team skills and spirit.



Spike the tuatara & Keith the kiwi at the Masked Parade

Trustee Re-organisation

The Trust has recently re-organised itself to manage the rapid increase in Sanctuary activities. Four sub-committees have been formed each chaired by a trustee. A **Finance and Administration Committee** chaired by Graham Wright (5473036) will oversee a wide range of the vital 'behind the scenes' work including project finances, staff, leases and resource consents. **Planning and Development** (chair: David Leadbetter (5488233)) will oversee activities on site including buildings, pest-proof fence and track development, pest control and monitoring. **Funding** (chair David Marriott (545 6399)) will be responsible for fund-raising and have a busy year planned (see below). **Community** (chair Rudy Tetteroo (03 528 0804)) will look after our membership and develop community and educational activities. Please contact a chairperson if you are able to assist in their area.

Fund-raising - a shift in approach

Over the past two years our fund-raising group led by Craig Welsh has focussed most of its attention on written applications for grants. A significant \$400,000 has been raised but this source offers less opportunity for now. We have been turned down by some large funders, such as the Government's Significant Community Based Projects Fund, who need to see us raising more of our target before they will potentially help contribute to finish things off.

We are off to a strong start, with an entrance building close to completion and lots of membership support, so feel it's the time to turn our attention towards individual or corporate sponsors. A package will be developed identifying various opportunities to contribute with the pest-proof fence the largest item (\$2-3 million).

We will also be talking in more detail to our two Councils looking for support from the Regional Facilities Fund. Your Chair recently attended a 'Sanctuaries of New Zealand' workshop in the Waikato and heard of the progress being made by equivalent projects elsewhere. A smaller-scale initiative near Dunedin was starting its fund-raising for a fence a year ago – now it is building one! It received \$1 million from Otago Regional Council and \$1 million from a Dunedin-based gaming trust. Another in South Taranaki is almost ready to go with \$950,000 from Taranaki Regional Council. When you add the multi-million contributions that Auckland, Wellington and Waikato Regional Councils or City Councils have made to fenced sanctuaries in their areas, it makes you think that it is time for our local bodies to step up.

Craig Welsh has stepped down from his role with this group (thanks Craig!) though his company continues to help us with resource consents. So we need some more help. **If you would like to join the fund-raising group please give David Marriott a ring on 5456399.** There are still applications to be compiled and fund-raising events to be organised and you will be playing a key role in the project. We are giving ourselves a two-year timeframe to raise the further \$3.5 million needed to set the sanctuary up on a sustainable course.



"Cash in For Nature" Coin collection

We've had a wonderful response to this campaign & have raised around \$4,000.00 so far. We expect this figure to increase again with the final round-up of coins before the November 1st deadline. If anyone out there is still harbouring old coins, we would be very happy to relieve you of them! We need them to receive them by 10am on Tues 31st October at the very latest. Contact Ann at the office for pick up / drop off information.

Thanks are due to the many people involved in this campaign: - Brook Trustee David Marriott, for his campaign coordination skills and time; Trustee Chris Hemi for her efforts; the generous public and members who've donated us money; the schools, organisations and businesses who accepted collection jars at their premises; Eva Pomeroy and family for their work at local schools; local artist Dean Raybould for campaign artwork; our hardworking coin collectors; our tireless Wednesday afternoon "coin counters" and finally the patient staff at ASB Nelson who continue smiling when they see us rock up with yet another pile of heavy coins!



Tuatara at the Nelson market coin collection event

Education and Training Centre

You may recall how our receipt of a Tourism Development Fund grant recognised the Sanctuary's potential to be national significant for tourism. Now, working with two of our Trust's contributing partners, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) and the Department of Conservation (DOC), we hope to become equally significant as an education and training site. A proposal for an Education and Training Centre in the Brook Valley is being submitted to Nelson City Council at the end of the month. NMIT would use this for delivery of their Trainee Ranger course and other programmes and DOC plan to make it one of three training centres nationally for their staff. It would allow the Sanctuary Trust to offer more to school groups who currently visit the site and to welcome community groups to share learning of what a pest-free New Zealand would be like. If you would like to find out more contact Dave Butler (5457127) or Bob Chittenden (5469175).

Bellbirds and tui

– coming to a garden near you!

The Sanctuary has signed an MOU with Landcare Research to participate in a research programme entitled 'Enriching Society by Restoring Biodiversity'. Tui and bellbirds are two of the species chosen for this programme and with your help we would like to contribute to a study of their use of 'modified landscapes'. We expect the Sanctuary to start producing bellbirds and tui, slowly at first due to our trapping and then more dramatically once the fence is in place and all pests eradicated. What are needed are observations of where bellbirds and tui occur now and then records of their spread and we would like observers from the Brook through Nelson to Richmond and maybe beyond. The scientists are developing a recording system – it may be a bird diary that you can fill in standing at your kitchen or living room window! **Are you interested in getting involved?** If so please contact Ann at the office.

Brook Sanctuary Website - www.brooksanctuary.org

Our official "Brook Sanctuary" website will soon be up and running. Local multi-media company "Hothouse" are designing this for the Brook. As part of the website development package, Hothouse have generously agreed to donate a "content management" system and training so we can regularly update the website ourselves. The website will contain general information on sanctuary project; specific and up-to-date information about field activities / other volunteer opportunities and will also include downloadable forms, for example, for membership and donations.

Brook Whitebait run the Gauntlet!

The Brook Stream's native fish population

(Installment # 2 from Martin Rutledge, DOC Freshwater Ecologist)

Many juvenile native fish migrate up rivers and streams to complete their life cycle, such as whitebait.

In addition to the chance of being caught in a whitebaiter's net, fish unfortunately also run a gauntlet of human-made obstacles which block their journey.

The Brook Stream has several of these "fish passage" barriers. Now that it's whitebaiting season, Martin did a field check to see if any native fish were successful in getting past these barriers....

"The first obstacle for native fish upstream of the Dommett Street bridge is the massive culvert at Nile Street. This was "interesting" to check, there were at least a couple of very smelly dead goats caught up on trash racks within the culvert- no doubt good eel food! There were also a lot of small trout buzzing around. Upstream of the culvert about 50 metres I came across 4 banded kokopu whitebait. Their ability to get over the Nile Street culvert by climbing up its face is impressive. I found a couple more banded kokopu whitebait sitting just below the Manuka Street "ford", where I also captured some trout fry and koura (freshwater crayfish).

The Manuka Street ford has high water velocities running through the culverts. Given the swift water, I think this ford would present a total blockage to banded kokopu. The only exception would be perhaps when the stream is in flood and they can get up the quieter edge water. Options for dealing with the ford might include a fish pass or considering catching the whitebait and letting them go above the ford. This will be discussed with NCC.

Remember I'm really keen to hear any fishy stories about the Brook from residents and others." Martin can be contacted on (03) 546 9335 or mrutledge@doc.govt.nz



The culvert at Nile Street presents a barrier for native fish migrating up the Brook