



Returning Nature to the Nelson Region

Leaves from the Brook

Welcome to 2014 - another exciting year for the Sanctuary

Open Day March 16

We have a fantastic day planned, including Ruud Kleinpaste "The Bug Man" and a live Rowi Kiwi encounter



Ruud & Rowi

at the open day, be sure to tell all your friends and family to come!



Pest Plant Control

Vital work from the Weeders



Health & Safety

Keeping our workers safe is all important



Grey Warbler

The grey warbler or riroriro is New Zealand's most widely distributed endemic bird species, very common in the Sanctuary.

2014 Beech Mast Year



Battle for our Birds.

A predator plague that will pose a serious threat to our endangered native wildlife is being predicted by scientists this autumn.



High levels of seed production ('mast') in our beech forests is expected to trigger a rodent and stoat explosion later this year. When seed supplies run out these predators will turn on endangered birds such as mōhua, kākā, kea, whio and kiwi along with other at risk species like bats and land snails.

How a fence will help

In a mast year the rodent and stoat numbers get so high that they are nearly impossible to control with trapping alone. A pest-proof fence allows near zero pest levels to be achieved, resulting in a more rapid process of restoration and the introduction of the full range of species once present at the site, including the most endangered. A fence also reduces the need to continuously apply poisons and the killing of pest animals is largely restricted to the initial eradication.



Show your support
get a bumper sticker for your vehicle or window now!
Just a gold coin donation.
From the Visitor Centre or the campaign office in Morrison Square.

From the General Manager

Hudson Dodd



This summer has been another time of transition for the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary Trust—proving once again that this organisation is nothing if not dynamic! For starters, if you haven't already seen them, check out the new maps and signage at the Sanctuary's two main track entrances, made possible by a grant from the Mainland Foundation.

After a fantastic year of being generously hosted by Bowater Motor Group at their Honda dealership, our fund-raising campaign office moved to Morrison Square (formerly Fashion Island) in January. Our new office is handsome and spacious, with plenty of room for meetings and workshops. The administrative staff cohort is 'up and running' there now, and keen to welcome you—do stop by and say hello to Raeonie, Naina, and the office volunteers. As we go to press a campaign display is being erected in the heart of Morrison Square, sure to catch your eye next time you're visiting one of the shops or eateries (or the Farmers' Market). Thanks for welcoming us, Morrison Square!

Another significant transition has been the addition of new staff member, Bo Stent, with the title of Facilities Development Manager. Bo's been getting stuck into the role, making strides in the improvement of the valley floor loop track, and firming up plans for other facilities at the Sanctuary. Under his watch we'll soon see the re-location of the Brook Conservation Education Centre into the corner of the Brook Motor Camp site—a joint project with NMIT. Next time you're at the Visitors Centre, be sure to say hello to Bo, and Rick, too, of course, who continues to be the backbone of the Trust, doing everything from coordinating field operations to delivering high quality educational experiences for school groups to designing this newsletter.

Meanwhile the invasive plant control team, with help from some great interns, have made excellent progress on eradicating the weeds along the planned fence route—necessary to satisfy one of our resource consent conditions. And the track cutting team have been working high up on the southern ridges of the Sanctuary, bringing us closer to a complete operational track system for the site. Reports from these and the other field teams are in the pages that follow.

Plans are well advanced for construction of the pest-proof fence, with Opus Consultants having begun work as project managers for this ambitious construction project. Negotiations are underway with Nelson City Council for a long-term lease for the site. We are aiming for fence construction to commence in June, with Operations, Ecosystem Restoration, and Fund-Raising Committees working hard to make it happen.

The fund-raising campaign is in full swing. Downing Design did a great job of developing various campaign materials for the Trust over the last year—everything from tabloid style, attention-grabbing posters to a first class 'case statement' document for donors and sponsors. Later in the newsletter you'll find an update on the great success of the public phase of the fund-raising campaign—with families and businesses 'coming out of the wood work' to sponsor fence posts. The big news currently is that we're eagerly awaiting word on two major funding applications (Lottery Grants Board and Ministry for the Environment)—so if you have a spare hand, please cross your fingers!

Help us spread the word about the fund-raising campaign: Friend us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter. Send your contacts a link about sponsoring a fence post. And be sure to bring your mates along to our Open Day on Sunday the 16th of March!

Open Day

Sunday 16 March

11:00am – 4:00pm

Come see the latest developments at
“Nelson’s most exciting conservation project”

- Gold coin donation admission
- Special guest speaker: Ruud Kleinpaste, “The Bug Man!” Ruud will speak at midday, then lead guided walks for kids during the afternoon.
- Special wildlife experience: A real live kiwi encounter! At 2:30pm DOC officers will show a young Rowi kiwi
- Guided walks on the Sanctuary’s fantastic track system: Check out the improved track system built by volunteers, and choose between historical and ecological themed interpretive walks
- Heaps of fun for kids and families, featuring Faerie Lou and the fantastic activity trailer from Sport Tasman
- Refreshments available for sale, including tasty treats from the BBQ, coffee and ice cream, and the Brook Sanctuary’s own sparkling lemonade by Bays Brewery
- Ride your bike
- Or ride the N-bus from the Whakatu Square bus depot special bus service sponsored by Nelson Coachlines running 11:00-4:00 ; Parking also available
- While there, sign up as a member of the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary Trust, register as a volunteer, and sponsor a fence post to help us complete the pest-proof fence



New Staff Member: Bo Stent

Please join us in welcoming Bo Stent, who has joined the staff at the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary in the new position of Facilities Development Manager. We’re glad to have Bo on board, as he brings a wealth of experience and talent to the project, in the areas of construction project management, design and draughtsmanship, and native species recovery.

Bo has always had a keen interest in the New Zealand outdoors, training as a Woodsman after leaving school and working for a number of years for the New Zealand Forest Service in environmental forestry.

After gaining quantity surveying qualifications Bo worked as a Project Manager firstly for building companies then for the Department of Conservation as Project/Contracts Manager in the Southern Island Area. In this capacity he managed a variety of projects such as the upgrade to the Rakiura Great Walk, various bridge projects, and hut upgrades/maintenance on the remote Sub-Antarctics.

Bo has also aided the Kakapo Recovery Team as a nest controller and assisted in constructing the chick raising facility. Several trips to the Sub-Antarctic Islands have made it clear to Bo the importance of protecting our native flora and fauna back here on the mainland. He believes that sanctuaries such as the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary will protect many species and hold breeding stock to assist others around the country with the same vision in reintroducing wildlife to other areas.

Bo is also a keen artist, having published a book of weta cartoons, and continues to draw and paint when time allows... in between trips getting outdoors to enjoy what we have here in the greater Nelson region.

Welcome aboard, Bo!



Public Events



The public events team has been both enthusiastic and incredibly active during the past year. As well as being involved in a great number of events, they have been prominent in talking to retailers and other local businesses about the "Get Behind the Fence!" campaign and have secured many donated prizes, brochure spots and window displays used to promote fence post sponsorships.

The team has provided a Brook Sanctuary presence at many events including: Ecofest, Haven Realty Sanctuary Fun Run, Home & Garden Show, Growables, Brook Waimarama Sanctuary AGM, an evening with Sir Allen Mark, Mosaic Choir concert, the Outdoor Recreation Expo, plus numerous Nelson Market and Farmers Market stalls.

This dedicated team of over 50 volunteers has really stepped up to engage the public and create a local awareness of the Sanctuary, with a special emphasis on the fund-raising campaign for the pest-proof fence project.

Public engagement opportunities coming up in 2014 include Hardy Street Sprig & Fern Quiz nights each Wednesday during March and ensuring our Open Day runs smoothly on Sunday March 16.

The team welcomes out-going individuals to help plan events and engage the public at BWST sponsored events and other community venues. To learn more about getting involved, contact Team Leader, Jane Stevens:

stevensstewart@tasman.net or
Membership Administrator,
Raeonie Ellery: 546 2422.

Invasive Plant Control

For the resource consent to be signed off for the pest-proof fence, all invasive weeds must be removed from a strip five metres either side of the actual fence line. The fence line is around 14.4km long although, fortunately, around 10km of it is through mature beech forest that is largely free of invasive weeds.

By Team Leader Mike Murphy

That leaves The Classic 4WD track up to Four Corners, Coleman's Link, the western valley floor and the western boundary all the way up to the beech forest on the top of Jenkins Hill in need of clearing – and being kept clear – before fence construction can commence. That represents around 4.6 hectares (11.4 acres in old money) of steep, overgrown countryside.

In anticipation of the funds being raised and fence construction beginning this year, the Invasive Plant Control Team began a sweep of The Classic, the western valley floor and the lower part of the western boundary in May 2013. Both sides of Coleman's Link have been swept several times yet with only a few diversions such as felling the many flowering hawthorns that gave themselves away in spring, that sweep has taken eight months of working bees totalling around 550 volunteer hours. Furthermore, it did not include more than 2km of the upper western boundary from which several interns and other working parties have cleared much of the gorse.

One of the reasons this work took so long is that to clear all invasive weeds meant having to remove several prolific species that we would normally not bother much with in the forest because it will eventually overgrow them and deprive them of the light they need. These include: gorse, Himalayan honeysuckle, buddleia, barberry, broom and Mexican daisy. And, of course, those were accompanied by the usual infestations of the vines that are a serious threat to mature forest - old man's beard, banana passionfruit, climbing asparagus fern and Japanese honeysuckle. On the western valley floor, several large patches of tradescantia continue to challenge our attempts to eradicate it and just below Four Corners on The Classic, there is a persistent infestation of montbretia.

The eastern side of The Classic, being a road-cut bank with overhanging growth, was particularly challenging. We used ladders for access on a couple of occasions but did not usually have transport for



Education →

Learning about Nature - in Nature

"In the end we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught."
-Baba Dium



Old Man's Beard
 Each plant can produce more than 100,000 seeds in a year, mainly spread by wind and water.

did you know that ?

The Invasive Plant Control team needs more keen volunteers. Why not sign up?

them so mostly clambered up the bank and removed the very weeds that would have prevented us falling if we slipped.

Another reason it took so long is that the average turn-out to fortnightly working bees is only around six people, almost always drawn from a dozen or so regulars. In that count I have not included several other regulars who are no longer available for the harder work but continue to carry out valuable weed control in the lower areas closer to the Visitor Centre. As is true of Brook Sanctuary volunteers in general, the majority of the regulars who volunteer for the harder work are beyond retirement age with a few well into their seventies. Working on unstable slopes in sometimes impenetrable masses of thorny weeds is extremely demanding and many new volunteers have simply not returned. Many of the team members use the working bees to keep fit for tramping, so it does have personal benefits along with good company and the satisfaction of doing something that is essential to the viability of the project. Once we have walked to the area we are

going to work in, we line up a few metres apart along one of the operational lines, tie a marker to record where we started and then head directly uphill dealing with the weeds we find until we get to the next operational line. We then spread out again on that line beyond where we emerged and work back down. A typical four-hour working bee includes only two such up-and-down passes. In other words, each person covers only about 400 metres because of the time and effort it takes to cover the ground and deal with what we find along the way.

Of concern is that while we have been working on the fence line clearance there are many areas of significant infestation elsewhere that we have not been able to attend to this spring and summer. To name just one, the old Douglas fir plantation block on the western side of the valley has large, visible patches of old man's beard in flower. Although that will be the team's next target, we are unlikely to be able to attend to all of it during the next month or two so much of it will seed this autumn and the sea breeze will spread it up into the pristine beech forest

deeper in the catchment. Having worked in that block a few years ago, I know how impenetrable the Himalayan honeysuckle and gorse in there is, and how difficult it will be to find all the offending vine stems.

The lower 10% or so of the sanctuary – approximately 70 to 80 hectares of steep hillside – is infested with all the weeds I listed above and more, with the vines posing the greatest threat. A straight line down Jacob's Ladder from Four Corners to the stream above the upper dam and then up the western side to the old Douglas fir skidder site roughly defines the southern edge of this problem area. The entire valley north of that line back to the Brook Camp is in need of thorough and repeated sweeping for weeds.

Please consider this a plea that you consider joining the Invasive Plant Control Team. It is hard work but it is critical to the viability of the Sanctuary project. And although weeds will always invade the valley, if we can get on top of the main threats while the native forest regenerates, it will eventually be manageable.



Over the past year more than 3500 students have experienced the Brook Sanctuary Education Programme. The natural world is an essential part of our lives and a visit to the Brook Sanctuary is a great way to encourage the next generation to engage with their world. A major focus of the Trust is to provide an educational opportunity open to all ages, focused on the unique ecology of Aotearoa.

Classes from Early Childhood through to University and adult learners can be booked with the cost being only a gold coin donation per person. To make your booking contact: Rick at education@brooksanctuary.org phone 539 4920 or book online at www.brooksanctuary.org

Hunting Report

Keep a look out for goat, deer and pig in the BWS



photo Tim Cuff

While holding down part time day work, BWST hunter, **Keith Marshall** is currently hunting in the Sanctuary about once a fortnight and trying to cover some ground. "I haven't seen any goats since shooting an old billy last June," says Keith. "I have noted some fresh goat sign on the Western firebreak above Simpson's house, but without seeing them." Deer have been not much more plentiful, with one shot in September and another in January.

Martin Vince, a pig hunter who holds a license to operate in the vicinity of the Sanctuary, has accounted for some deer on the Eastern boundary too. Regarding pigs, Keith adds, "No luck lately despite some great information on the Firebreak mob. We just haven't met up yet..."

Keith also reports he's trialing a pig corral trap with the Marsden Valley trappers. "So far we have not enticed a pig inside. It has been set off once by a hawk and last night a cat was in there feeding on the pile of possums when I came by (not any more). To date it has been a learning curve only but hopefully this will change when winter sets in and the pigs come down lower. Maybe we just need dumber pigs. In future it may be relocated inside our fence to deal with any remaining pigs. I guess I'll know more about trapping pigs by then too."

That's a good day to look forward to!

Track Development

One of the visions of the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary Trust is for the valley floor track to be an accessible loop track to enable everyone in the community—including people with disabilities, people with strollers, everybody—to enjoy the site's fantastic forest and wildlife.

The first stage of the loop track project will follow the existing track along the Brook Stream from the Visitor Centre up past the 1868 stone weir and into the Beech Glade. Stage two will include a pedestrian bridge across the Brook Stream to connect with the historic waterworks track on the stream's true left side, down to the large dam and then back across to the Visitor Centre by way of a bridge on top of the dam.

The volunteer track cutting team has done a great job creating the preliminary loop track, which the public has been enjoying for the last several years. This track has been slowly but steadily improved, including the addition of a gabion basket bench just upstream from the picnic areas on the stream's true right side. You may remember photos of the Crusaders rugby team chipping away at the rock face to widen the track there last year, as well.

The challenge to construct an accessible track in the forest is to keep the gradient to 1:11 (that is, a one metre rise across eleven metres of track). To that end, parts of the current track are being rerouted to enable this gradient to be achieved.

We are also taking the high spots off the track and widening the path to 1.2m. So if you are out for a walk you will note these improvements. (Please keep in mind this is work in progress!)

The volunteer track cutters are hard at work every Friday working on this upgrade, as well as continuing work to complete the Sanctuary's operational tracksystem. Currently they're continuing to construct 'H line' 540m high on the site's south-western ridge line.

This is very rewarding work in some of the most beautiful native bush in the region, and the track cutting team would welcome additional volunteers to help complete the operational track system in time for pest eradication and monitoring to commence once the fence is constructed.

To get involved, please contact Team Leader, Peter Hay: 546 7901, or Membership Administrator, Raeonie Ellery: membership@brooksanctuary.org



Photo Don Fraser
Large Rimu stand 'discovered' by the trackers

Lizard Report

The number of green tree geckos found to date still remains at four but the hunt goes on. Searches at the top of the Western firebreak and areas outside the Brook Sanctuary area have yet to add to the total.

Once again though, we encourage everyone wandering around the sanctuary, to stop and look into the kanuka trees for this elusive beast. Other lizards in the Brook Valley include the Nelson green



gecko pictured here; populations of this species are scattered throughout the Brook. If you find one please let Rick or Rex know. Have a look under loose bark, rocks, piles of wood, etc.

Planned upcoming outings include: a search for green geckos in the kanuka along the Western firebreak boundary, a search at Third House for common skinks, and a trip to an area where a forest gecko skin has been located.

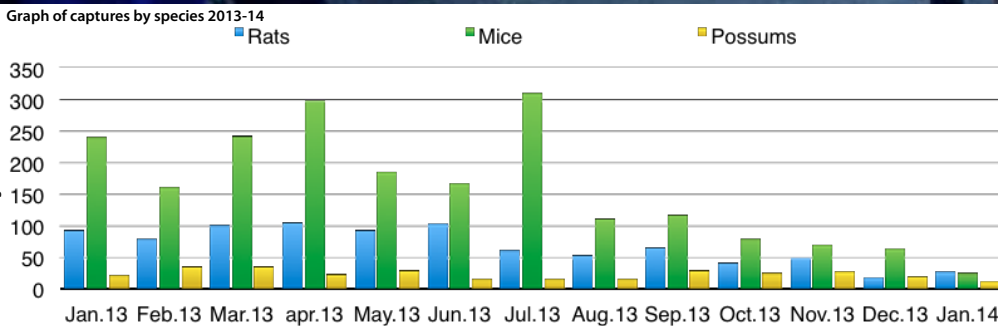
To report a sighting of a lizard (or lizard skin), or to participate in an upcoming excursion, contact Team Leader, Rex McDowall: 547 7118.

Rex says, "Get out there, have a look, you never know what you might find."

Volunteer!

So much of the Sanctuary activities relies on the input of keen and dedicated volunteers. Currently all areas are keen to have more volunteers join their teams, especially pest plant control, trackcutting. To find out more phone 546 2422

SIGN UP TODAY!
www.brooksanctuary.org



70%
of Kiwi chicks survive to breeding age (their first birthday) in areas that have predator control. In a fenced sanctuary this can increase to the majority surviving and reproducing.

Trapping

By Team Leader Arthur Jonas

The pest count continues to fall, as the graph showing pests caught in the valley over the past year indicates. Not included in that data are three other trap lines: East I, which runs 100m below the main southern ridge, and which, after an initial high catch a year ago, has caught almost nothing; the East Valley Rim line, which is now, after two years, catching very few rats but many possums; and Toutouwai Spur where pre-baiting has shown only isolated pockets of either rats or mice - the first and so far only check revealing just one rat and a hedgehog.

The anticipated beech mast will have increased seed on the ground as soon as March, and the effect of an explosion of the pest population will be felt when they have had time to breed and the food supply is exhausted. However, given the population difference between the time of the last beech mast and now, we are cautiously optimistic that it won't be too devastating.

In anticipation of a changed strategy when the fence building commences those DOC 200 traps showing signs of damage are being withdrawn from the field for renovation.

Over 70 trappers are active, but there are vacancies on some lines. In spite of vacancies and notwithstanding some unpleasant weather lines have been generally checked weekly.

Health & Safety Update

At the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary Trust we hold the health and safety of all of our volunteers, staff, and supporters as our highest priority. As an important step in fostering an organisation-wide culture of health and safety, we're initiating a health and safety update as a regular feature of the Trust's newsletter.

The Trust has a robust Health & Safety Policy that is regularly reviewed and updated. We conducted a thorough health and safety audit in 2012, and our Health & Safety Sub-committee has been tracking progress on a list of recommended actions identified by this audit. I'm happy to report that as of this month, the Trust's staff and volunteers have all addressed - and in many cases completed all the actions arising from the audit. Of course, over time, other actions have been identified, and the cycle begins again.

During the 2013 calendar year, there were six health and safety incidents reported:

- February 2013 - Back strain injury (office shift)
- March 2013 - Glancing blow on head via crowbar (track cutting)
- March 2013 - Injury to nose via crowbar (track cutting)
- July 2013 - Eye injury via barberry (weeding)
- Sep 2013 - Cut on head from car door (transportation)
- Jan 2014 - Cut on shin via flying rock from sledgehammer (track cutting)

The main mitigation learning from these incidents is the importance of wearing protective clothing and gear when performing potentially hazardous activities. Eye protection is recommended when weeding or track cutting. As well, protective clothing such as long sleeves and heavy trousers is a must for any work in the bush.

On behalf of all the Trustees, I'd like to express my appreciation for the hard work you do to help develop the Sanctuary site, and to encourage you to always take your protective gear into the bush with you. Please also remember to always report any health and safety incident and/or near miss. While it's great for us to have a low number of reported incidents over the past year, it's equally important for the Trust to hear about all the near misses out there—so that we can all learn from them.

David Butler
Brook Waimarama Sanctuary Trust Chair

South Island Robin

The robin we have present in the Sanctuary are a great indicator of the overall ecological health of the area. Being susceptible to predation, particularly rats and stoats, means they are the equivalent to the 'canary in the coal mine'.

We have a fairly healthy population above 500 - 600m elevation in the Sanctuary.

This is most likely due to a lower density of rats at higher elevations. Robin will, once the fence is complete, bounce back very quickly, repopulating the valley in a few years.

Relatively long-lived, surviving up to 14 years where few or no predators exist, robin begin their breeding season in August or September.

Incubation lasts 18 days, and chicks leave the nest after 21 days. They are able to produce 2-3 clutches of usually 2 eggs, in the absence of predators. Look for them now, but we expect they will be very common in the future.

Maybe even in your backyard?

Get Behind the Fence Campaign Tops \$250,000 — Still Going Strong!

The Get Behind the Fence campaign engages the wider community in supporting the pest-proof fence for the Brook Sanctuary. And it's been a huge success! Since its launch last May, nearly 900 fence posts have been sponsored, contributing over \$250,000 to the fence fund!

Individuals have given fence posts as gifts, businesses have sponsored high value posts that include a logo, and school groups and neighbourhoods have pooled their resources to sponsor one—or in some cases several. Posts have also been sponsored by families in memoriam of a loved one. This outpouring of financial support for the fence project goes to show that the community is right behind the vision for a pest-free wildlife sanctuary and visitor attraction on Nelson's doorstep.

There are some great stories of creative ways people are raising funds to sponsor fence posts. June Ward organised her fellow residents of the Oakwood Retirement Village to chip in, raising enough to pay for a \$2,500 value post! Meanwhile the students at Hampden Street School held bake sales to sponsor five \$100 fence posts; then the school's board matched that donation with

another \$500 fence post! And the residents of Mount Street combined forces as a neighbourhood to sponsor two \$100 posts, and challenged other streets to do the same. Another notable contribution was from the all volunteer Mosaic World Music Choir, who staged a fantastic public concert that raised enough funds for a \$2,500 post!

Each of the 7,000 fence posts in the planned fence is available for sponsorship, and each includes a recognition plaque. With over 6,000 posts still available for generous individuals and businesses to sponsor, the campaign is still going strong. In January alone over \$14,000 in fence post donations came into the campaign's coffers.

If you haven't sponsored a post yet, there's one waiting for you! If you are one of the many generous souls who have sponsored one or more posts to date, the Trust congratulates you on supporting such a worthy cause, and sends our sincere appreciation. And remember, a fence post makes a great legacy gift for a loved one on any occasion!



GET BEHIND THE FENCE
Sponsor fence posts today!

www.getbehindthefence.org.nz

Telephone: Campaign Office 03 544 2422
Visitor Centre 03 539 4920

E-mail contact: info@brooksanctuary.org

Postal address: PO Box 744, Nelson 7011

Website: www.brooksanctuary.org



Lottery Grants Board
Te Puna Tarua



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

