

OHINETAHI RESERVE REPORT 2008-9

Our work party team of about 14 members remain as enthusiastic as ever and work on the Reserve each Tuesday excepting when rained off. Activities continue with track maintenance, weeding, pest control, winter planting and plant maintenance. From time to time we work outside our Reserve, in particular Omaha Bush, a reserve we eventually will take ownership of. Total work party hours for the year are 2,175.

A major development for the Reserve during the year was the development and installation of six interpretation panels mounted in strategic positions near the entrance of major tracks. The panels clearly indicate the network of tracks on the Reserve and their access points. On the panel at the entrance to Titoki Track in Governors Bay the area is referred to as Gordon's Garden in memory of Gordon Kirk whose vision and effort established our Reserve. Thanks go to Anne Kennedy, a key member of the team for developing the panels in conjunction with FinnArt, the designer.

Our early plantings are now developing into substantial trees and shrubs and they are beginning to flower and attract birds. The planting programme continued during the winter with approximately 500 native seedlings added around the lower section of Titoki Track and adjacent to Ngaio Track. In spite of the vagaries of the weather and the threat from rabbits and possums we have very few failures. This is due to the thankless task of weeding and mulching around each plant for three or four years after planting, and the occasional need for rabbit poisoning around the new plants.

Track maintenance was continuous throughout the year, as required, with improved benching being carried out, keeping the edges of the tracks clear of foliage and in the summer mowing the grass with weed eaters in the open areas which the tracks pass through. Much time is spent by the team searching through the forest hunting down invasive weeds both on our Reserve and neighbouring properties. Major inroads have been made over the years in destroying infestations of passion vine, old mans beard and cherry. Periodically we return to areas already dealt with to catch up with re-growth and seedlings, but we continue also to discover other invasions.

Robin Collie and Tony Edney are managing our animal pest programme with assistance from Governors Bay neighbours. They do this in addition to our weekly work parties. All of our Reserve is now generally covered with bait stations targeting possums and rats. Greater success in trapping mustelids has occurred recently by baiting the traps with rabbit meat instead of eggs. The success of this programme is measured by the noticeable increase in native seedlings appearing within the bush, improvement in the health of mature fuchsia (possum delicacies) and the increase in bird life. As our Reserve is not an island, this work must continue into the future as must most of our other activities. (See Tony's article in the latest newsletter).

To consider what the needs of the Reserve are in the future, two planning meetings have been held in the past and on Friday of this week another will be held. Thanks go to the Trusts and the Lotteries Board who have provided financial assistance for the cost of the interpretation panels, pest control material and native seedlings. Ohinetahi Reserve is the "flagship" of the Society of which we are all immensely proud.

Three of our members retired this year due to ill health. They are Zane Dalzell, Jim Dunford and Otto Bolt. We miss their cheery presence and work effort, and wish them well.

Mike White
Co-ordinator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M White', written in a cursive style.