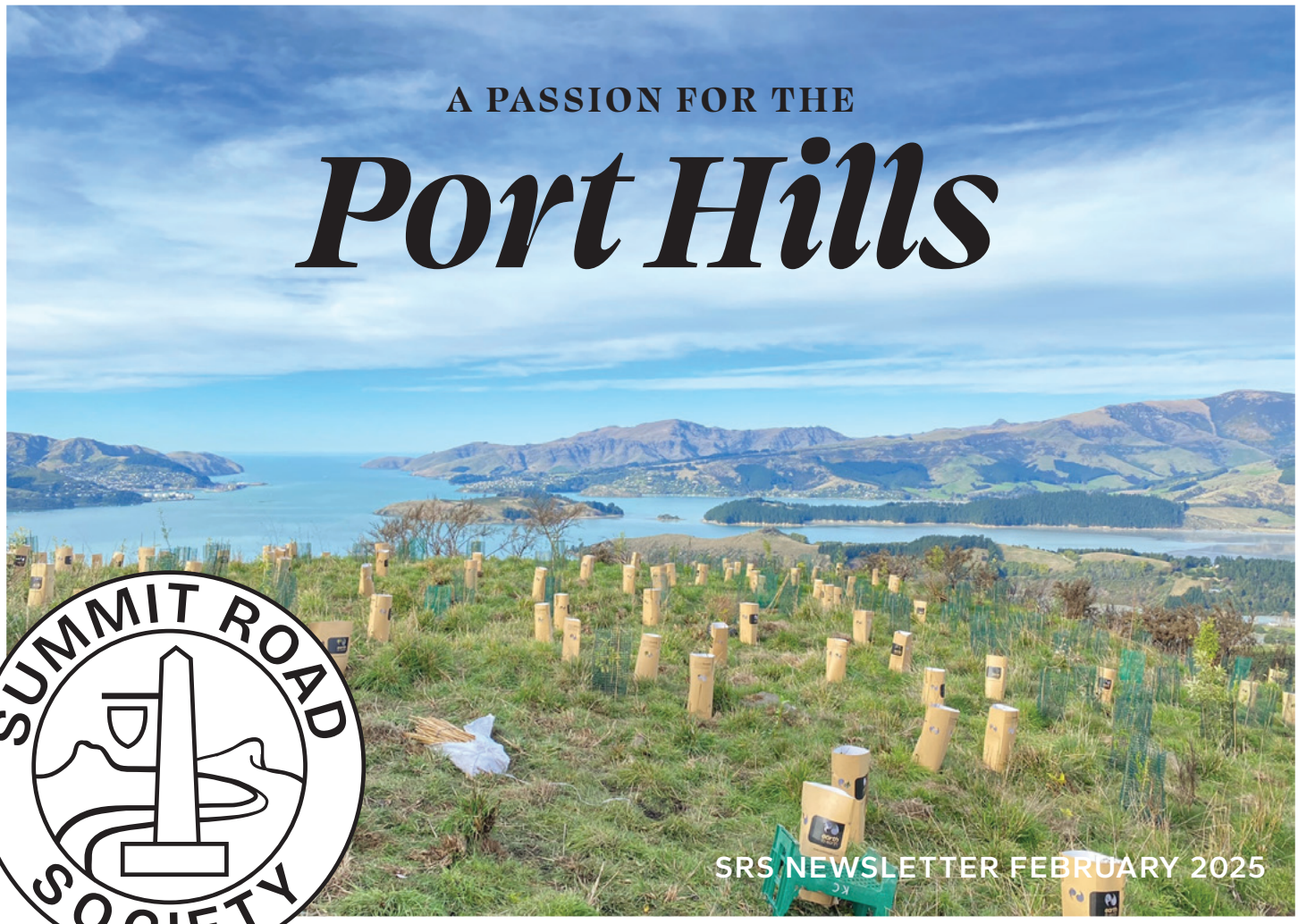


Fire restoration planting at Ohinetahi. Photo by Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke Tiaki Taiao

Tēnā koutou katoa

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the Summit Road Society Newsletter!

I hope everyone enjoyed a relaxing summer break. As we experience a somewhat cooler and wetter summer than originally predicted, we look forward to bringing you a research-focused edition, highlighting the innovative projects shaping the future of conservation on the Port Hills. This season's newsletter outlines some of the groundbreaking work being conducted across our reserves, showcasing the power of research in tackling ecological challenges.

From testing new long-lasting lures for invasive mammals and exploring canopy structure for invasion-resistant planting to utilising drone technology for reseeding fire-damaged landscapes, these projects are driving conservation efforts forward. We've also seen remarkable success in raising awareness about spur valerian, a fast-spreading invasive weed, thanks to the creativity and dedication of University of Canterbury media students, and we are introduced to landhoppers: the unsung heroes of the forest floor.

This edition shines a light on the researchers, students, and collaborators whose passion and expertise are helping to protect and restore the unique biodiversity of our cherished hills. Dive in to learn more and join us in celebrating the progress being made through science and innovation!

Paula Jameson – SRS President

Reviewing our Strategic Direction: Protecting, Restoring, and Enjoying the Port Hills

At the Summit Road Society, our mission is to preserve, restore, and enhance the Port Hills for everyone to enjoy, ensuring that their unique landscapes, ecosystems, and recreational opportunities thrive for generations to come. Guided by this vision, we are focusing on four key priorities that align with our long-standing commitment to **regenerating and preserving our reserves for the public to enjoy**. These priorities include protecting our regenerating bush, **revegetation programmes, pest management,** and **enhancing public access** to ensure the continued protection and enjoyment of these natural areas.

1. Pest Management in our Reserves and the City Fringe

Supporting predator control remains a cornerstone of our conservation efforts. Our dedicated volunteer groups play a crucial role in maintaining and regularly checking the extensive network of predator traplines across our reserves, ensuring consistent and effective pest management. These efforts are vital in protecting native species and ecosystems from the threat of invasive predators. In addition, we proudly support the Predator Free Port Hills Project, a community-driven initiative under our umbrella, which now includes over 2,000 backyard trappers working around the fringes of the Port Hills. Together, we are creating a safer haven for native wildlife to thrive.

2. Reforestation Initiatives

Replanting native vegetation is essential for restoring biodiversity and building resilience against future challenges. This coming winter, we will plant 3,500 native plants in Linda Woods Reserve and 2,500 natives at Ōhinetahi Reserve, focusing on the area below Mt Ada that was impacted by the 2024 Port Hills Fire. These efforts not only restore the natural beauty of the landscape but also provide habitat critical for native species.

Our volunteer work parties continue to play an essential role in nurturing young native plantings across our reserves. From weeding to mulching and other maintenance tasks, these efforts ensure that our reforestation projects are given the best chance to succeed and thrive. Maintaining these areas is an essential and ongoing commitment that sustains the ecological restoration of the Port Hills.

3. Post-Fire Recovery: Lessons and Actions for the Port Hills

In February 2024, a wildfire swept through 650 hectares of the Port Hills, including 20 hectares of the QEII-covenanted Ōhinetahi Reserve. This event echoed the devastating 2017 fire, reinforcing the urgent need for fire resilience in our reserves.

One key observation was how the fire rapidly consumed gorse and broom but slowed significantly upon reaching established native forest areas. This highlights the effectiveness of green firebreaks—strategic plantings of lower-flammability native species such as broadleaf, tree fuchsia, māhoe, lancewood, and poroporo. These plantings can help slow or even halt fire spread, providing a crucial tool for fire mitigation in vulnerable landscapes.

A major step in post-fire recovery was the planting of 4,000 native trees in the affected area last winter, thanks to the efforts of Ngāti Wheke, Conservation Volunteers Christchurch, and the Ōhinetahi work party volunteers. This large-scale revegetation project aims to not only restore lost biodiversity but also strengthen natural fire defences to protect the remaining regenerating bush.

Fire restoration planting at Ohinetahi. Photo by Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke Tiaki Taiao

Implementing green firebreaks and ongoing revegetation efforts align with our strategic priorities of protecting and restoring the Port Hills, ensuring long-term ecological resilience while maintaining these landscapes for public enjoyment. Selecting the right native species and working collaboratively with conservation experts will be crucial to the success of these efforts.

A huge thank you to all the volunteers and partners who have contributed to this vital restoration work!

4. Preserving Public Access and Enjoyment

Public access to the Port Hills is at the heart of the Summit Road Society's mission. We are committed to maintaining and enhancing the network of tracks and trails across our reserves, ensuring that everyone can enjoy the breathtaking views, unique landscapes, and opportunities for recreation. By balancing conservation efforts with public use, we aim to create a space where people can connect with nature while respecting and protecting its ecological integrity. This year, we're excited to see the completion of new walking tracks in Ōmahu Reserve and a new section the Summit Road Mountain Bike Track in Linda Woods Reserve (Horotane Valley).

Looking Ahead

Through collaboration with volunteers, community members, and partner organisations, the Summit Road Society is dedicated to building a sustainable, biodiverse, and accessible future for the Port Hills. Thank you for being part of this journey — your support is crucial to the success of these initiatives.

Together, we can protect, restore, and share this iconic landscape for the benefit of people, wildlife, and the environment.

Bill Martin – SRS General Manager

Predator Free Port Hills

Student Partnership: Community Collaboration with Education

Predator Free Port Hills is excited to announce a successful collaboration with the University of Canterbury 3rd year geography students. This partnership has yielded valuable insights into the distribution of trapping efforts across the Port Hills.

By analysing data collected from PFPH's extensive network of community trappers, the students identified key areas where additional trapping efforts are needed. Urban areas — including Cashmere, Heathcote, and Hillsborough — need more trappers to help suppress pest populations. In contrast, the harbour side of the Port Hills had an effective buffer zone when combined with trapping efforts on the reserves. Their research highlighted PFPH's role as a buffer zone between urban Christchurch and the Port Hills, the role community engagement has on conservation efforts, and the eradication work happening on Banks Peninsula. It also emphasised the need for better data collection on non-residential trapping initiatives, such as those in reserves and parks, and further interaction with registered trappers to determine whether they are actively trapping.

The findings from this collaboration will help PFPH focus resources on the most critical areas, ensuring that our efforts are as effective as possible. We're grateful to the students for their hard work and dedication to this important project. If you would like to read the full report, please contact PFPH Coordinator Natasha McIntosh at natasha@predatorfreeporthills.org.nz. You can also find their presentation on Facebook.

Natasha McIntosh
Predator free Port Hills Coordinator

PFPH Students

Testing lures for invasive mammals on the Port Hills

During July and August of 2024, my field assistants and I undertook research at multiple reserves on the Port Hills to test the efficacy of new lures for invasive mammal species. Conventional mammalian lures tend to be food-based, which means that they degrade relatively quickly over a period of a few days. This leads to a lot of time and effort being spent on refreshing lures in traps. Our research aim has been to develop and test longer life "scent lures" in the field. These new lures are compounds derived from food items which are attractive to invasive mammals. These new lures have the potential to last for months in the field, requiring less time spent maintaining traps. We wanted to test these new lures around the Canterbury region, including on the Port Hills, to see which animals were attracted to them, and to compare their performance with current industry standard lures.

During our research on the Port Hills, we set up the lures with trail cameras nearby, to monitor the species visiting and their behaviour towards the lures. We videoed multiple invasive mammals showing interest in the lures, including brushtail possums and rats. Preliminary results (using this data and data from across Canterbury) indicate that our lures are just as effective at attracting mammals as the current industry standard lures. The data recorded from the Port Hills has been very useful, and I am deeply thankful to the Summit Road Society for allowing us to use their reserves to conduct our research.

Zoe Ambrose
MSc Student, School of Biological Sciences, University of Canterbury

Research supervisors: Professor Jim Briskie and Dr Michael Jackson (University of Canterbury).

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT:

Dioecious Species Study at Ōmahu Reserve

Ōmahu Reserve has been the focus of an intriguing research project led by Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research. The study aims to understand the size or age at which New Zealand woody plant species become reproductive.

The project is focusing on secondary forests to understand how forests reassemble during succession. In the early years of succession, a new forest is dependent on seed rain arriving at the site, but once plants can reproduce, the new forest becomes much more resilient because it can generate its own seed rain and seedlings have a much higher chance of being able to persist at a site.

An intriguing aspect of New Zealand forests is the abundance and diversity of dioecious plants - those with separate male and female plants – and the researchers are interested in testing whether dioecious plants reach reproductive maturity earlier than other plants, as well as asking if NZ woody species mature earlier compared to their relatives in other parts of the world.

As part of the project, individual plants were flagged to track their fertility over time. The flagged trees are revisited periodically to assess their fertility, height, and diameter, with findings helping to enhance understanding of native plant ecology.

The Summit Road Society looks forward to hearing the results of this fascinating study and its potential contributions to native vegetation management.

Exploring Canopy Structure for Invasion-Resistant Restoration: Insights from South Island Plantings

The breath-taking view while walking out to the Sally's Trees planting in Ōhinetahi.

I have been surveying restoration sites on the South Island of New Zealand to understand the canopy structure of woody indigenous vegetation in relation to the presence of invasive plant species. I will be using data from these restoration sites to determine how best to plan an invasion-resistant revegetation planting. I have been recording what species are planted, their heights and widths, how much area these plants occupy in several height strata, and the light reaching the ground at randomised points within the planting. I aim to determine whether these metrics can predict invasive plant species presence, community composition, and cover.

Matthew Turnbull (research advisor) assisting with data collection efforts.

So far, I have collected data from 31 South Island plantings, including three at the Ōhinetahi Reserve. The oldest planting in my dataset, 22 years old, is at Ōhinetahi.

My preliminary results indicate, in conjunction with a separate experiment on the effects of shade on several species of conifer, that a canopy cover approximately two and a half times the ground cover (leaf area index, or layers of canopy leaves per unit ground area) creates enough shade to inhibit the growth of wilding conifers—one of New Zealand's most well-known and harmful invasive plant species. The 22-year-old planting at Ōhinetahi has a leaf area index over 4, with only a few coprosma and five-finger seedlings in the understorey. Some of the newer plantings are in full sunlight (at ground level) and exhibit many invasive grasses and forbs.

Hoheria angustifolia

I would like to collect data at a few more restoration sites, particularly sites older than 10 years, before completing my study. I am grateful for access to this marvellous resource and look forward to sharing my findings with the Summit Road Society.

Sean Davis
PhD Student in Ecosystem Mycology, School of Biological Sciences, University of Canterbury

Supervisors: Professors Ian Dickie and Matthew Turnbull, University of Canterbury.

Drone Technology Brings New Hope to Ōhinetahi

A huge thank you to the incredible team at Red Tree Environmental Solutions Ltd., Brent Barrett from Whaka-Ora Healthy Harbour, and Rāpaki - Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke for their groundbreaking efforts in environmental restoration. Together, they have implemented an exciting trial using cutting-edge drone technology to reseed the rocky outcrops in Ōhinetahi—areas devastated by the Port Hills fire in February.

This innovative approach involved drones dropping native seeds encased in clay pellets, designed to retain moisture and boost the likelihood of germination.

NATIVE SEEDS IN THE MIX:

- *Solanum aviculare*
- *Haloragus erecta*
- *Hebe stricta*
- *Cordyline australis*
- *Coprosma propinqua*
- *Pittosporum tenuifolium*
- *Coprosma robusta*

The trial aimed to address two key questions:

1. Can low-flammability native plants be directly seeded to stabilise soil rapidly and prevent weed infestations?
2. How viable is drone-based seed-pod application as a method for ecological restoration?

The seed pods were deployed at a density of 10 per square metre across steep rock and cliff zones in the Ōhinetahi Reserve. Quadrats—2m x 2m pegged squares—were sampled both within and outside the seed pod deployment areas to compare the success of seed pod regeneration against natural regeneration. The team focused on low-flammability species to stabilise soil, while also expecting other native plants, such as climbers, to emerge. These plants will help stabilise the soil and create a habitat for natural seedbanks or bird-dispersed native species to colonise over time.

Researchers anticipated that weed species would initially outcompete native plants, but the hope is that over time, natives will grow and shade out the weeds.

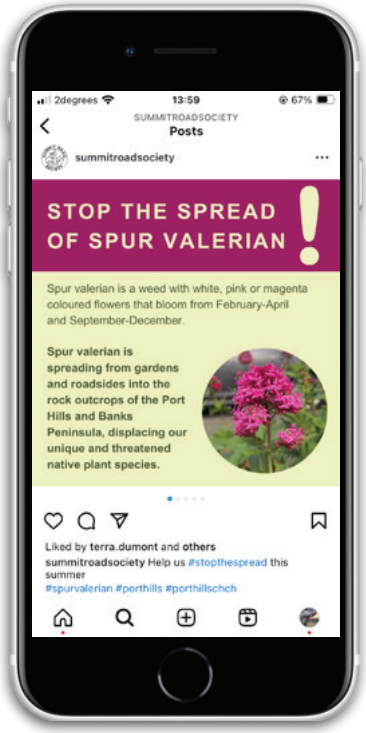
In addition to the main trial, a smaller study was conducted where 40 seed pods were hand-sown and watered in three separate 2 m x 2 m quadrats, located away from the drone deployment site. This replicated the intended seed density and allowed researchers to closely monitor germination success. Encouragingly, recent visits to these quadrats—placed in areas with up to 50% bare earth—show grasses and herbs now covering the ground entirely due to high summer rainfall. This will make the next round of sampling even more intriguing when the team collects additional data in the coming weeks.

All seeds were sustainably sourced from the Port Hills by Red Tree, who also managed the drone sowing. Paul Dahl (Ngāti Wheke) secured the funding for this initiative, while Dylan Steeples and the Tiaki Taiao team from Ngāti Wheke are responsible for long-term monitoring after receiving specialised training.

This project stands as a shining example of innovation, collaboration, and a shared commitment to rewilding the Port Hills and enhancing biodiversity.

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:

University of Canterbury Students Boost SRS Social Media Presence



In November and December 2024, the Summit Road Society partnered with talented media students Kiera Brown, Gwenaelle Chollet, and Kate Douglas from the University of Canterbury to execute a dynamic social media campaign.

The primary focus of this campaign was to raise public awareness about spur valerian, a highly invasive weed that is rapidly spreading around Christchurch's eastern bays, Lyttelton Harbour / Whakaraupō, and Banks Peninsula. This collaboration showcased the students' creativity and digital marketing expertise while addressing this urgent conservation challenge.

GOALS OF THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign aimed to:

1. Educate the public about the environmental threat posed by spur valerian.
2. Highlight the Society's efforts to manage invasive species and protect native habitats.
3. Engage a broader audience through visually compelling and educational content.

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

The students created and shared targeted posts on the Society's Facebook and Instagram platforms to inform and inspire community action. Key elements of the campaign included:

- **WEED WATCH:** Informative posts explaining how spur valerian spreads and its ecological impact.
- **CALL TO ACTION:** Practical tips for identifying and safely removing spur valerian, encouraging public involvement.
- **ENGAGING VISUALS:** Striking photos, graphics, and videos illustrating the spread of the weed and its impact on native ecosystems.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

The campaign delivered significant outcomes:

- A **30% increase in Instagram followers**, reflecting growing interest in the Society's work.
- Doubling of Facebook engagement rates, with strong community responses to posts about spur valerian.
- Widespread sharing of content, leading to greater awareness of spur valerian and its effects on local biodiversity.

A COLLABORATION TO CELEBRATE

This campaign highlighted the value of bringing academic talent and conservation efforts together. The students' contributions not only helped amplify the Summit Road Society's message but also inspired the community to take action against spur valerian.

The Society extends its thanks to the University of Canterbury media students for their dedication and creativity. Their work has strengthened our social media presence and raised much-needed awareness about an important ecological issue.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encouraged by the success of this campaign, we are committed to ongoing efforts to manage invasive species like spur valerian and restore native biodiversity. Stay informed and involved by following our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Together, we can preserve and protect the natural beauty of Christchurch's eastern bays, Lyttelton Harbour/Whakaraupō, and Banks Peninsula for generations to come!

Landhoppers: the unsung heroes of the forest floor

Landhopper Leslieorchestia lesliensis from Ōmahu Bush

Landhoppers are crustaceans, and belong to the order Amphipoda. Amphipods are found mainly in aquatic ecosystems such as rivers, lakes and oceans, but a small number of them have made it on to land. Only a single group of amphipods, those in the superfamily Talitroidea have colonised land. They originated millions of years ago, when a marine ancestor colonised land via marshes. The cousins of landhoppers that inhabit sandy beaches are called sandhoppers, and those that inhabit rocky beaches are called beachhoppers.

Landhoppers inhabit the leaf litter-soil interface of many terrestrial ecosystems and provide critical ecosystem services by processing dead organic matter. They chew leaf litter and help recycle the nutrients from the leaves back into the environment. Their value to ecosystems is therefore immense. Although they are abundant in many countries, they are largely restricted to the southern hemisphere, betraying their Gondwanan origins. They are especially diverse in New Zealand.

My project seeks to review and reappraise the taxonomy of New Zealand's described landhoppers, and to unravel and reveal the true scope of the fauna in this country. For this, I use differences in both morphology (body shape) and DNA sequences. Currently, 28 species of landhopper in 16 genera are formally recognised in the New Zealand fauna. Historically, all of them have been attributed to the family Makawidae.

Landhoppers are morphologically very conservative – one landhopper looks like any other landhopper (or even sandhopper)! There is often little variation between species, genera or even families, and the complex combinations of characters within and between species can be difficult to interpret and resolve. This is where molecular evidence in the form of DNA sequencing can be very helpful. Differences in colour patterns can also be helpful, but as the colour fades very quickly in preserved animals, its usefulness is unfortunately limited. One thing is certain, as the photos show, landhoppers can be very beautiful creatures.

So, what have we found so far? We have documented the existence of at least 48 provisional (or undescribed) native species. So, at 28 species, our described fauna is already dwarfed by the documented undescribed species, greatly expanding the diversity of the New Zealand fauna. We have found that several described species are in fact complexes of very similar looking species. For example, we have found that one of our most common "species", Parorchestia tenuis, is in fact a complex comprising at least 16 species. As well as species complexes, we have found quite a few new species belonging to genera that have not been described at all. Not only that, we now know that New Zealand has species from families other than Makawidae. Species from several new genera belonging to the families Arcitalitridae and Talitridae have been found, the first records of fully terrestrial landhoppers belonging to families other than Makawidae from New Zealand. So, big changes in landhopper taxonomy are coming to New Zealand!

And what is the significance of the Port Hills and Ōmahu Bush? One described species where our knowledge is very incomplete is Leslieorchestia lesliensis. This apparently has a distribution from North-West Nelson to Canterbury to Otago to Southland. The species was originally described from the Leslie Valley in North-West Nelson, but due to the loss of the type specimens, an updated description was made using landhoppers from the Port Hills.

In September 2024, I therefore visited the Port Hills and Ōmahu Bush in the hope of collecting this landhopper to determine whether it is in fact the same species as that originally described, or whether this is another species complex. The good news is that I did indeed collect several specimens of L. lesliensis from Ōmahu Bush. Interestingly, the males appear to have at least one major character difference from the animals described from the Leslie Valley in North-West Nelson. We are in the process of sequencing part of the genome to help determine whether the Port Hills population is indeed a different species from the one living in North-West Nelson. Watch this space!

Dr Olivier Ball (Senior Ecologist)
Wildland Consultants Ltd.

Assessing Habitat Quality in *Avoca Valley Stream*

From the spring of the Avoca Valley Stream looking down the catchment.

As part of my MSc in Conservation Biology, I recently completed a research assignment assessing the habitat quality of Avoca Valley Stream.

To do this, I used the Rapid Habitat Assessment (RHA) tool, developed by the Cawthron Institute to standardise national monitoring of wadeable rivers and streams. This tool provides a simplified yet effective method for assessing stream health without requiring expensive equipment, making it highly valuable for community groups such as the Summit Road Society.

HOW THE ASSESSMENT WORKS

The RHA evaluates 10 key factors of stream health:

- Deposited sediment
- Invertebrate habitat diversity
- Invertebrate Habitat Abundance
- Fish cover diversity
- Fish cover abundance
- Hydraulic heterogeneity (the variety of stream features like pools, riffles, and runs)
- Bank erosion
- Bank vegetation
- Riparian width
- Riparian shade

Each factor is scored on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 representing the highest quality. I assessed 19 reaches along the stream, defining each reach based on noticeable changes in habitat and environmental characteristics. For example, the lower section of the stream had been channelised, showing little variation, which resulted in fewer but longer reaches. A Habitat Quality Score (HQS) was then calculated for each reach, and an overall mean HQS was determined for the entire stream.

KEY FINDINGS

The Avoca Valley Stream received an average HQS of 33.63 out of 100, placing it in the 'fair' category. However, this is significantly lower than the national average of 61.6 for New Zealand streams assessed using the RHA.

Breaking down the stream into three sections, I found:

- Upper section: Highest HQS of 40
- Middle section: HQS of 32.5
- Lower section: Lowest HQS of 27.33

The best-performing factors were vegetation-related, such as riparian width, shading, and bank vegetation, while bank erosion also scored well. In contrast, hydraulic heterogeneity, deposited sediment, and invertebrate/fish habitat received the lowest scores.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR RESTORATION

The upper section, which is managed by the Summit Road Society, had the highest habitat quality, indicating that riparian planting and catchment restoration efforts by the Society are having a positive impact. However, as the stream moves into the middle and lower reaches — through urban and agricultural areas near a Zealandia nursery and toward the estuary — habitat quality declines due to urban and agricultural pressures.

Juvenile Tuna (Eel) in the lower reaches of the Avoca Valley Stream.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE MONITORING

To better understand and improve habitat quality, I recommend that the Summit Road Society:

1. Conduct multiple RHA surveys annually – this will help track seasonal changes, measure improvements as native plantings mature, and evaluate the success of new restoration efforts.
2. Collaborate with external agencies – engaging with the Christchurch City Council and private landowners will help expand restoration efforts downstream.

The full report has been provided to the Summit Road Society, and I hope these findings contribute to ongoing conservation efforts for Avoca Valley Stream.

Looking up toward the catchment from the lower reaches of the Stream. Flow in this section has been channelised.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A huge thank you to the Summit Road Society for their support and ongoing commitment to restoring Avoca Valley Stream!

Quinn Bungard
MSc student, Victoria University Wellington.

Know Your Place: Penguin Peninsula and Guardians of Whakaraupō

In November, Predator Free Port Hills and Naval Point Club Lyttelton partnered with Manaaki Whenua to host a segment of Know Your Place—an inspiring multi-event programme celebrating art as a catalyst for change.

This unique gathering explored how experiencing art can spark conservation action and highlighted the growing importance of engaging new conservationists through creative mediums.

Our segment featured two distinct components: a family-friendly day session, Penguin Peninsula, and an evening speaker event, Guardians of Whakaraupō.

During the day, 150 ceramic penguins, crafted by kaitiaki of the harbour—ranging from tamariki to our very own PFPH Coordinator—were placed along the rocky coastline near Naval Point. Families participated in hands-on activities like trap building, creating traps to take home and use in their backyards. Other highlights included an underwater Virtual Reality experience with Blake and sailing lessons with RŪNĀ, offering fun, educational opportunities for all ages.

PFPH Coordinator, Natasha McIntosh

The evening Guardians of Whakaraupō event brought together ten local experts, including Summit Road Society president Paula Jameson, to share their insights through PechaKucha presentations. Speakers were only allowed 20 slides and a timed 20 seconds per slide to provide a punchy opportunity to discuss their work. The talks celebrated the diverse efforts

Summit Road Society president Paula Jameson

underway to protect and nurture the natural and cultural heritage of Whakaraupō. Guests connected over wine from Tussock Hill Winery and beer from Two Boys Brewery, generously provided by our sponsors.

This event was a wonderful reminder of the power of community and creativity in driving conservation efforts forward.

Natasha McIntosh – Predator free Port Hills Coordinator

Summit Road Society Reserves Update: Highlights & Volunteer Opportunities

The past six months have been a busy and productive period across our reserves, with ongoing restoration work, predator control efforts, and community involvement helping to protect and enhance these special areas. Below are the key highlights, upcoming events, and volunteer opportunities for each reserve.

Ōmahu Bush Reserve

WORK PARTIES & CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Good rainfall in January has encouraged strong native regeneration at Ōmahu, but it has also meant a surge in weed growth. Our work parties have been actively:

- Releasing plantings around the Gibraltar Rock entry gate.
- Controlling gorse along the hybrid perimeter fence to prevent it from outcompeting native species.
- Mowing and maintaining tracks to manage the lush summer growth.

WEED CONTROL FOCUS

- December: Targeting elderberry while it's in flower and easy to spot.
- January & February: Identifying and removing Himalayan honeysuckle, which is distinguished by its deep red flowers.

JOIN OUR ŌMAHU WORK PARTY!

- Meets twice a month on Fridays.
- Work includes track maintenance, weed control, and plant care.

Contact: Bill McSweeney - 027 438 7194
bill.margaret@xtra.co.nz

PREDATOR CONTROL AT ŌMAHU

Summer is a busy time for trap and trap line maintenance, with key updates including:

- Five new AT220 automated traps installed, adding to the existing 15-trap network.
- Servicing of older traps that have been in place for over three years.
- Maintaining low rat numbers following the successful July 2024 toxin knockdown.

While rat catches remain suppressed, summer typically brings an increase in mustelid and rat activity as food becomes more available.

INTERESTED IN PREDATOR CONTROL?

Our team of seven volunteers runs four monthly trap checks—we welcome more hands to help!

Contact: Greg Gimblett
greg@craigieburnproperties.co.nz

A giant Ōmahu totora. Bill McSweeney

Ōhinetahi Bush Reserve

WORK PARTIES & CONSERVATION EFFORTS

- 5,000 native trees planted over nine weeks on the ridge impacted by the 2014 fire, thanks to Conservation Volunteers and Ngāti Wheke.
- A green firebreak planted at the north end of Ella's Track to help slow future wildfires. Huge thanks to all public volunteers who pitched in!
- Weed control focus: Elderberry and passionvine removal.
- Track maintenance to ensure access and maintain fire breaks.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 25TH 2025: Conservation Volunteers Christchurch will be helping to clear around 2024 plantings.

JOIN THE ŌHINETAHI WORK PARTY!

- Meets weekly on Tuesdays.
- Work includes track maintenance, weed control, predator control, and some planting.
- Transport available from the Sign of the Takahe if needed.

Contact: Anne Kennedy - 03 337 0364
kennedyz@xtra.co.nz).

PREDATOR CONTROL AT ŌHINETAHI

JULY – DECEMBER 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- Predators caught: 226 (50% were rats).
- Volunteer hours: 490 contributed by our predator control team.

KEY UPDATES

- 71 new bait stations installed—now positioned at 50-metre intervals for the next poisoning operation later this year.
- Five additional AT220 self-resetting traps installed, bringing the total to 17 in the reserve.
- Collaboration with Landcare Research – Partnered on a poisoning trial with Decal to improve bait station effectiveness.

FOCUS FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

- Continuing monthly trap checks and maintenance.
- Reviewing and repositioning traps to improve effectiveness.
- Preparing for the next poisoning phase (July – August 2025).

JOIN THE PREDATOR CONTROL TEAM AT ŌHINETAHI!

We're always looking for more volunteers to assist with trapping efforts.

Contact: Murray Smith - 021 159 6563
manager@summitroadsociety.org.nz

The Ōhinetahi Work Party taking a well-deserved break.

Linda Woods Reserve

WORK PARTIES & CONSERVATION EFFORTS

The Linda Woods Reserve (LWR) work party is one of our most active groups, supporting native planting efforts, track work, and reserve maintenance.

Over the past six months, significant progress has been made in restoration, infrastructure, and predator control efforts at LWR.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (2024)

- Revegetation planting: Approximately 6,500 native trees planted in 2024.
- Completion of the Jobs for Nature revegetation programme—a huge milestone, with over 50,000 trees planted since 2021!
- Completion of the Horotane shed, generously built by the Mundy family.
- Ongoing weed control targeting gorse, broom, briar, and boxthorn.
- Installation of track signage, a work in progress thanks to Marcus King.
- Track maintenance to improve accessibility and safety.
- Releasing new plantings and removing plastic guards to support young trees.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

- Planting another 7,000 native trees in Avoca and Horotane Valleys, with the help of contractors and volunteers.
- Ongoing maintenance, including releasing plantings, removing guards, and continued weed control.
- Further track signage installation and new track development, including a bench track to allow a full circuit in the lower valley.
- Strengthening predator control efforts to protect native biodiversity.

These efforts will enhance biodiversity, improve public access, and strengthen conservation work in Linda Woods Reserve.

JOIN THE LWR WORK PARTY!

- Meets weekly on Wednesdays.
- Work includes weed control, track maintenance, and planting support.

Contact: Graeme Paltridge - 03 384 3592
graeme_sue@slingshot.co.nz).

A huge thank you to all the volunteers, contractors, and partners who have contributed to these efforts. Your dedication is making a real impact!

PREDATOR CONTROL AT LWR

JULY – DECEMBER 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- Two new AT220 traps installed in higher, isolated areas—one trap caught three possums in just six nights!
- Chew card monitoring (led by Brigid Casey & Jane Radford) detected significant possum activity. Adjustments are being made to improve accuracy.
- Steady summer catches of weasels and hedgehogs.
- DOC200 trap repairs underway—if unsuccessful, replacements will be needed.
- Expert consultation with Marcus King helped refine possum trapping techniques.

A huge thank you to all volunteers who contributed their time and effort to keep this programme running successfully!

JOIN THE PREDATOR CONTROL TEAM AT LWR!

We're always keen to have new volunteers assist with trapping efforts.

Contact: Ross Radford - 027 360 6629
rossradford90@gmail.com)

John Marsh with boneseed (weed) found in LWR.

Paul Devlin, Marie Gray and John Marsh planting a Matai in memory of Port Hills Ranger Kay Holder.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

The **EASTENDERS WORK PARTY** has been running for over 30 years and focuses on track maintenance, weeding, and planting across the eastern Port Hills.

- Meets twice a month on Mondays.

Contact: Graeme Paltridge - 03 384 3592
graeme_sue@slingshot.co.nz).

Get Involved!

If you'd like to join any of our work parties or predator control teams, please reach out to the coordinators listed above. No experience is necessary—just a reasonable level of fitness and enthusiasm for conservation.

For more information, visit
www.summitroadsociety.org.nz.

We welcome new members to the Society!

Our annual membership is $25, which includes two newsletters per year and invites to special events. Your support helps us protect and preserve the Port Hills.

Sign up here:
www.summitroadsociety.org.nz/join/membership-form

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS – A FRIENDLY REMINDER

A quick reminder that annual membership renewals are now due! You will be receiving your renewal notices soon, so keep an eye out.

Thank you for being part of the Summit Road Society—your support makes a real difference!

A massive thank you to all our volunteers—you make our conservation efforts possible!

Summit Road Society

PO Box 37-115, Christchurch 8245
www.summitroadsociety.org.nz
secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz

CHARITABLE TRUST NUMBERS:

Summit Road Society: CC 27184
Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust: CC 27183

CREDIT CARD DONATIONS CAN BE MADE VIA THE SECURE WEBSITE:

givealittle.co.nz/org/summit-road-society

We are a voluntary society working to enhance, preserve and protect the natural environment, beauty and open character of the Port Hills of Banks Peninsula for people to enjoy. We need and welcome contributions to our work through memberships, donations, corporate sponsorships, bequests, and participation in work parties (non-members welcome—but why not join us as well!)

Follow us on Facebook & Instagram for regular updates
Summit Road Society & **Predator Free Port Hills**

Thank you to John Clemens for proofreading

President	Paula Jameson	027 555 3582
Vice-President	Finn Jackson	022 128 8137
Treasurer	Marie Gray	027 470 2020
General Manager	Bill Martin	027 389 0030
Board Members	Bill Woods	(03) 318 4825
	Anne Kennedy	(03) 337 0364
	Paul Loughton	(03) 322 7082
	Melanie Coker	021 156 9281
	Bill McSweeney	027 438 7194
PFPH Co-coordinator	Natasha McIntosh	022 159 5665
REPRESENTATIVES		
Selwyn District Council	Grant Miller	027 381 7032
Spreydon-Cashmere-Heathcote	Will Hall	021 674 255
Banks Peninsula	Tyrone Fields	021 100 4590
Port Hills Rangers	Paul Devlin	(03) 941 7570
WORK PARTY CO-ORDINATORS		
Eastenders	Graeme Paltridge	021 0825 3931
Ōhinetahi	Anne Kennedy	(03) 337 0364
Omahu Bush	Bill McSweeney	027 438 7194
Linda Woods Reserve	John Marsh	027 4314 0182
PREDATOR CONTROL CO-ORDINATORS		
Linda Woods Reserve	Ross Radford	027 360 6629
Ōhinetahi	Murray Smith	021 159 6563
Omahu Bush	Greg Gimblett	027 492 1330