



a passion for the Port Hills

SUMMIT ROAD SOCIETY: 74th PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2022

The President's Report does not always contain good news, occasionally there is news that affects the working of the Society far more than realised, leaving a gap that is very hard to fill.

I begin the 74th annual report by remembering that on the 8th of December 2022, Jeremy Agar our Vice President for more than 8 years passed away. He was a faithful vice president and wise counsel, and for me personally a great friend. All other members of the Board were greatly moved by Jeremy's sudden death. Jeremy's contribution to the Society and the environment will not be forgotten especially as the founder of the Port Hills predator free movement known as Predator Free Port Hills.

Jeremy, a man of quiet nature who kept his personal life to himself, firmly believed that actions spoke more loudly than words and managed to prove what he believed in was correct. It has been a pleasure to have known him and reflect on his achievements.

The Avoca Stream Restoration project sponsored by the Jobs for Nature Scheme got underway for the second year with a certain amount of vigour with the projected planting and fencing achieved. Like most projects there was a few hiccups due to the wet weather that was great for the planting statistics but the downside was the moisture in the soil caused a few slips. Most were not too bad although there were some casualties of planting. The unstable loess soil is known for movements during the wetter months, but the intended planting is designed to lessen the effects of soil erosion and restore the more reliable seasonal flow of the Avoca Stream. There is an additional benefit of the planting as the trees selected with the view that they will qualify for Carbon Credits in the not-too-distant future.

There was a predictable excitement amongst the Board and members that the well-discussed John Jameson Lookout was to become a reality with the finances raised being sufficient to prepare contracts for its construction. There is no doubt that this facility will prove to be a tourist and local winner. It has a fine view of the Lyttelton Harbour basin capturing almost the entire extinct volcano crater.

The little shed at the bottom of Horotane Valley is being remodelled to house equipment for the Linda Woods Reserve. With the Avoca plantings and the increase of volunteer work we need somewhere to store the gear needed by the work parties as using private garages to store the gear is not really recommended plus it is imposing on the volunteers' private lives. A special effort will be made to complete this project as it is needed.

Once again acknowledgement of the time and commitments of our volunteers who make the operation work of our properties possible. It is not just the leaders of the teams who submit their own reports but those supporters who so willingly give their time to the Society.

The Rangers who also seem to be so willing to help wherever they can even though their programmed work is becoming more complex all the time.

The annual thank you BBQ at Victoria Park is a way to thank the volunteers for their efforts over the year. Unfortunately, covid interrupted the attendance of the rangers but a good attendance gathered to enjoy food and refreshments plus swapping stories and a general get together.

Now that each of the leaders of our projects are supplying their own reports concentrating on their particular interests, my report is simplified with only general comments on the past year. The reports show the ever-increasing work being done by the Society. A record that never fails to amaze me. This emphasises that there is an increasing need for more volunteers.

I have been saying this for several years now and maybe it is time that I did something about increasing those numbers. The volunteering must have something that attracts people because without a concerted effort, numbers of volunteers are maintained and, in some cases, increased. Do you know someone, or yourself who would like to participate in the workings of the Society either management or enjoying the outdoors communing with nature and the camaraderie of people with the same interest with nature? Please let us know our contact details are available on our website or our newsletters.

There is not only a need for volunteers that do the physical work but a need for management. The board is getting fairly sparse and with the passing of Jeremy, the need is even greater. Marie Gray, our most capable secretary, has decided to pursue a different career in the world of education. Marie has enrolled to study as a teacher a vocation that she is most suited for, and we wish her all the best for her future. With her intended resignation at the end of this year there will be a vacancy that needs to be filled. Please join our search for a replacement, if you are aware of someone suitable, we would love to hear about them or maybe you could be that particular person.

That leads me into thanking the Board for their commitment and the newly appointed members from the local authorities. Two of them were previously on the board and we welcome them back: Tyrone Fields from Banks Peninsula and Grant Millar from Selwyn. We also welcome the new guy Will Hall from the Heathcote Ward of the Waihoru Cashmere-Spreydon-Heathcote Community Board. Thanks must also go to Lee Sampson who served as the Cashmere-Spreydon Community Board representative from 2017 to 2022 and to Jeff Bland who served as the Selwyn District Council representative from 2020 to 2022.

The local authorities Christchurch and Selwyn plus Environment Canterbury have been supportive financially and have continued to support our planting, maintenance and predator free programmes. We acknowledge and thank the support of these authorities. Thanks must also go to all the others who generously support our cause, far too many to mention here. The support given ensures that the work and achievements of the Summit Road Society will continue to protect and enhance the Port Hills.

The Predator Free Port Hills programme initiated by Jeremy goes from strength to strength with increasing numbers of home trappers. With his passing, Jeremy has unknowingly issued a challenge to ensure the effort to eradicate predators from the Port Hills will continue. The natural habitat thanks us for that by increasing the biodiversity for all to see and enjoy.

Arbor Day is really Childrens Day where they participate in the future of the environment and are able to reflect on their involvement as they and the plants mature.

328 members and volunteer hours of 15,425 is still something to be proud of. 2022 has proved to be another successful year proving how resilient the Summit Road Society is and will remain so with the continuation of our wonderful and caring members.

*Bill Woods
President
June 2023*

TREASURER'S REPORT 2022

Annual Financial Statements - 31 December 2022

The draft accounts have been prepared using the format and reporting standards required to lodge the Annual return to Charities Services. These are commonly known as the PBE Tier 4 reporting Standards and are "cash accounts". That is to say the financial statements only record the actual cash transactions through all the bank accounts of the Society.

Draft Accounts to 31 December 2022

Statement of Receipts and Payments

Members will note that the total grants received has increased to \$672,856 (including the Jobs for Nature income from Department of Conservation). Grants account for 83% of income received. Other significant sources of income are donations, grazing income, trap sales, membership subscriptions and interest income. Please note, the traps are sold at a subsidised rate as part of Predator Free Port Hills, so trap sales are less than trap expenses.

The Society would like to acknowledge grants received from the Christchurch City Council, Selwyn District Council, Environment Canterbury, Department of Conservation, Greenwood Environmental Trust, Pest Free Banks Peninsula (care of Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust), Whaka-ora Healthy Harbour, Boffa Miskell, QEII National Trust and Lyttelton Port Company.

On the expenses side the major increases relate to the restoration of Avoca Valley and the John Jameson Lookout. Other significant expenses include Predator Free Port Hills, predator control in Ohinetahi and Omahu, spur valerian control in Ohinetahi and Secretarial Services.

Statement of Resources and Commitments

This statement deals with the resources available to the Society as well as the liabilities outstanding as of 31 December 2022.

While the Society may look "cash rich", members need to keep in mind that the bulk of that cash has been set aside to meet the terms and conditions associated with the grants received and cannot be used, generally, for other purposes. Any unspent grant money has been carried over to 2023 for the relevant projects.

Closing Comments

The Society will need to review its constitution and re-register on the Incorporated Societies Register by April 2026 at the latest. It is also likely the Society will need to move to Tier 3 reporting next year too. This is required when a charity has annual operating payments of more than \$140,000 for two years in a row.

*Peter van Hout
Treasurer
June 2023*

OHINETAHI RESERVE ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Ohinetahi Work Party Report

Abundant growth because of plentiful rain meant that 2022 began with weed-eating tracks and clearing bush, broom and bracken back from the tracks. Late October saw us doing the same thing again.

Late summer and autumn is weed-time. Old Mans Beard begins flowering from mid-January and we are constantly on the lookout for the creamy-white flowers showing on the top of the bush. This pest plant is most prolific from Faulkners track to Bivvy track.

While pushing our way through the regenerating bush, blackberry and gorse on the way to eliminate yet another Old Mans Beard we discovered a new pest – climbing asparagus. It is said to be capable of ring-barking soft-trunked trees and shrubs.

In April, while clearing Totara Log track, as we sat eating lunch and enjoying the view, trees displaying autumn colours were seen in the Bush Road track area. So the next week we mounted an assault on this area and removed at least 20 cherry trees. This is an area where a grove of cherries had been cleared in the late 1990's. Spur Valerian continues to bloom in the Faulkners Track area and 6 volunteer work days were spent on cutting out this pest. Thanks as well to Christchurch City Council and Whaka-ora Healthy Harbour for funding Eco Abseil to remove spur valerian in inaccessible areas.

During Autumn we also cleared around the trees planted since the 2017 fires. We have been visited by a creature, possibly a beetle, which has a huge appetite for pittosporum leaves, both *tenuifolium* and *eugenioides*. It has eaten the leaves back to the midrib of the plants in our regenerating areas and sadly some smaller trees have died. It may be the same culprit, or maybe a cousin, doing a similar thing to *Veronica salicifolia* (a hebe).

From late June to late July, rain caused the cancellation of three work days. Two small slips occurred on O'Farrells track and a fairly large slip happened off Wai-iti track. We gathered flax offsets from Ellas Track and planted these on the Wai-iti slip. Fleabane has since grown in profusion on it.

I would like to thank the work party members who help to maintain Ohinetahi Reserve. Without their contribution, the tracks would soon be impassable and the reserve full of weeds. Thanks also to Helen Hills, a work party member, who raises trees from seed gathered in the reserve, some of which have been subsequently planted there.

Anne Kennedy
June 2023

Ohinetahi Predator Control Report

Predators caught -458 (203 in 2021)
Volunteer hours - 913 (462 in 2021)
Numbers of traps 294 (263 in 2021)

Trap numbers have been increased again during this year and volunteers have worked double the number of hours. This has been reflected in the increased numbers of predators caught. A mild winter has resulted in an explosion of rat numbers. Volunteers put a lot of hours in during the spring with a poisoning programme which was reasonably successful but large numbers of rats are still being caught. Poisoning may well have to seriously considered again in the coming year.

Some problems with the AT220 traps have been solved with a dedicated team led by engineer Ian Grant. These traps are catching a lot more possums than Sentinels. We currently have four and have budgeted for increased numbers which will be installed once all teething problems have been sorted out.

There are nine trap lines looked after by Peg Gosden, Peter Moore, David Knoef, Marketa Ciholova, Joseph Zermatten, Darren Tatom and Cath Pollock who all came on board last year. Our experienced crew of Helen Hills, Merv Meredith, Russell Genet and Matthew Hellicar run the other lines. They all deserve a huge vote of thanks.

Our thanks also to Pest Free Banks Peninsula who has again generously provided a one-year grant to keep the trapping programme operational. Any donations of money to maintain and further enhance the predator control programme would be appreciated.

Murray Smith
May 2023

EASTENDERS WORK PARTY REPORT 2022

2022 was another active year for the Eastenders group where we had 15 work party sessions out of a possible 20. Three were cancelled because of inclement weather and the SRS annual BBQ conveniently fell on another.

Track maintenance on the Scarborough Bluffs Track and the Eastenders Track took six sessions. The Scarborough Bluffs Track in particular needed quite a lot of re-benching and draining to bring

it up to an acceptable standard and the Eastenders Track required two sessions for its annual maintenance.

We were involved with tree planting on the Taylors Mistake Track for two sessions. Working in conjunction with a group of cliff-top locals led by Eastender Paul Corwin and CCC park rangers, we cleared a lot of boxthorn, boneseed and tree lucerne and planted natives along the trackside. This area is a particularly tough environment for establishing plants, even for hardy natives such as flax, cabbage trees and akeake and the attrition rate was higher than expected. Paul hopes to organise replanting again next year with a different approach and will ask us again for assistance.

ECAN's requirement to control Nassella tussock means that grubbing on the Linda Woods Reserve is now an annual task. Our team has now become quite adept at recognising this noxious weed and we can now sweep the whole of Horotane Valley with confidence in two three-hour sessions. We grubbed out over 80 of the offending plants this year. Interestingly (and thankfully) we have not detected any Nassella in the Avoca Valley part of Linda Woods Reserve.

Other work parties were: cleaning up the Horotane entrance to the Linda Woods Reserve which had become overgrown and also needed track re-benching, a session to remove crack willow and abandoned wire fencing as well as reinstalling flood damaged plant guards up Avoca Valley, digging 400 holes for Arbor Day plantings at Victoria Park. We also had the first of our pigs ear succulent removal sorties on Scarborough Bluffs Reserve.

I have 56 names on my Eastenders email list (2021 = 62), 12% down on last year with around 15 regular attendees (2021 = 20-25). The average number per work party is 11 (2021 = 13) with a maximum of 17 people and a minimum of 6.

I would like thank all the regular volunteers that turn up for the twice-monthly work parties. The work that we get through and the results we achieve is quite remarkable. Also, to CCC rangers Matt Rose, Simon Mangan and Pieter Borchers for their support and guidance and last but not least to Marie for all her unstinting support and organisation.

Graeme Paltridge
June 2023

OMAHU BUSH ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Omahu Bush Work Party Report

The Omahu work party worked 930 hours over 19 work days including several fence line spraying days. Another 100 Totara trees donated by Te Kāhahu Kahukura were planted near the upper section of Prendergast track. Also 200 natives donated by Helen Hills were planted near the Gibraltar Rock gates. Several work days have been spent releasing and weeding the existing plantings.

The very slippery section of Kirks track below the Rhodes track crossing has had a new drain and steps fitted to make the track more user friendly.

About 10000 hog rings need to be fitted to the top and bottom wires of the deer fence. This has been a huge task and thanks to Bill Mc Sweeney and team for overseeing this mission. We hope to be finished by winter. The bush and gorse are encroaching on the fence in a lot of places and will need tidy up in the spring.

All the fence lines have had the base of the fence sprayed for gorse and other weeds. Some are ready to be sprayed again. The usual sessions of gorse removal from the grazing paddock are ongoing , a job that keeps on giving. More redundant fences have also been removed.

There are normally about 6 to 8 volunteers turn out on a regular basis. Planting days are always popular, weeding days not so much.

A big thank you to all our volunteers for all your help during the year. Thank you as well to the Selwyn District Council for their annual grant.

Ian Johnston
May 2023

Omahu Predator Control Report

The predator control team consisted of 11 volunteers/members for the 2022 year. A total of 875 hours were spent with predator control, up from 490 in 2021. The increase was principally due to the installation of new traps in both the Grazing Block (GB) and Omahu Bush (OB).

Trap catch was a total of 333 predators in OB just below the three year average of 378. 94 predators were caught in the new GB. Possum numbers were 100, at about the previous four year average of 111 for Omahu Bush only. Rat catch numbers were 100, up on the previous four year average of 83, Omahu Bush only. Trap numbers remained at 230 in the main part of Omahu Bush. An additional eighty traps and bait stations were placed in the adjacent GB.

A grant from Pest Free Banks Peninsula (care of Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust) for \$9,500 enabled the purchase of 12 automated AT220 traps, additional Sentinel possum traps and 50 new DOC 200 traps in addition to covering all our PC costs for the year. The AT220 traps are a New Zealand made and developed, battery powered, automated self-setting possum/rat/feral cat trap with automated lure delivery. Control can be done via a blue tooth connection with a smart phone. These were installed in perimeter areas where we have seen reinvasion and possum catch of five or more possums per annum. Soon after installation we saw multiple kills with a given month. The grant enabled us to expand our trapping network into the adjacent GB and establish two trap runs in the re-generating areas to the north of the main Omahu Bush area.

We conducted two rounds of overnight tracking tunnel, and 7-day chew-card monitoring to determine predator abundance in April and September. This was the first year that the University of Canterbury third year ecology students undertook the April monitoring for us.

Results from the April monitoring confirmed the need to poison to lower rodent numbers. This is a significant labour intensive operation, placing toxin (Double Tap) in bait stations at 100m centres throughout the reserve. Subsequent monitoring in September showed that the month

long campaign was not as successful as we had planned on lowering rat numbers to the target of 5%.

The use of 3 motion controlled trail cameras, purchased using a donation from a member of the Society, was used to monitor trap interaction and predator numbers. This technology is hoped to be used more extensively in the future as an alternative to the traditional monitoring tools.

Feral cats within the reserve are of growing concern with multiple sightings, predation of possum carcasses and eleven captures.

Again, I wish to thank the Omahu team for all the work, sometimes in all weathers, to make a difference to the fauna and flora at Omahu Bush.

Greg Gimblett
June 2023

Omahu Bush Feral Animal Management Programme

Completion of the perimeter deer fence occurred in March 2022, and this was followed by a knock down of feral deer within the Reserve using professional hunters from the Kiwi Field Crew. All feral pigs had been removed by experienced volunteers prior to the knock down of residual deer. Further work will be undertaken in 2023 to remove any residual feral deer (low numbers). Eradication of the residual deer is not as simple as it might sound to those unfamiliar with this type of work. It requires patience and can be quite expensive.

Research undertaken on completed sections of the fence in 2022 identified some enhancement measures to improve the long-term resilience of the fence and its ability to resist future infiltrations, but it wasn't necessary to complete this work prior to the knockdown. One enhancement was the addition of a 600mm high layer of equine mesh placed along the base of the deer mesh to reduce the risk of infiltration of piglets and to also reduce the risk of damage to the deer mesh from larger feral pigs and stags. The equine mesh has vertical strands (stays) at 50mm centres and is very strong. It was fully installed before the end of 2022. This fence is a hybrid, and its performance will be monitored and improved over time with subtle enhancements.

A paper was also submitted to the SRS Board in late 2022 covering options to deal with residual ungulates and any new incursions. An incursion could occur in several different ways including if someone leaves a perimeter gate open, if the fence is adversely affected by flooding, slips or vandalism, etc. Inspections and maintenance of the fence will be required on a regular basis to help ensure the fence integrity is adequate and to identify maintenance items. The fence has increased maintenance workload quite a lot and this mainly relates to keeping vegetation suppressed along the fence and to check that waterways passing beneath the fence have not compromised integrity.

This fencing work was done in collaboration with Otahuna Reserve to the north and private landowners to the south. This work at Omahu Reserve has been largely funded by The Gama Foundation, who gifted Omahu Bush and Gibraltar Rock to the Society in 2010. Their support and

encouragement has been invaluable. We were also fortunate to have an experienced fencing contractor (Chris Stuart) doing the work. Thanks as well to the Selwyn District Council for their ongoing support of the feral animal management programme.

Graham Corbishley

June 2023

LINDA WOODS RESERVE REPORT 2022

The main focus for 2022 was the restoration of Avoca Valley. Despite the challenges of weather and covid-19, we planted over 27,000 plants and trees along the catchment. Volunteers planted about 3200 plants and staff from Wai-ora Forest Landscapes planted the balance. Plant survival rate has been high (85-95% depending on area) and the plants are thriving.

We held a number of community planting events in the lower valley, as well as a school planting day in June to celebrate Matariki. Wai-ora staff focused on planting the more difficult terrain in the upper valley.

Weather posed a number of issues. July 2022 was the wettest month in Christchurch since records begun. We had multiple slips across the reserve. Around 250 plants were washed away. The stream flooded in several sections. Work was delayed, access became difficult, fencing and tracks were damaged and further rockfall remediation work was required.

The work party met most Wednesdays, under the leadership of Graeme Paltridge and John Marsh. Work included planting, releasing, removing and recycling guards, saving plants that had been buried by the silt, removing invasive weeds, clearing out old tyres and removing obsolete and damaged fencing. The work party completed over 700 hours of volunteer work over the year.

Our steering group for Avoca Valley met four times in 2022. Chaired by Paula Jameson, the steering group includes representatives from our key partners (Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Ōpawaho-Heathcote River Network, Ngāti Wheke, Wai-ora Forest Landscapes), experts in restoration and freshwater ecology, members of the Avoca Valley community and Summit Road Society board members. In addition to monitoring progress against milestones for Jobs for Nature, the steering group has driven work on a citizen science monitoring programme (freshwater and terrestrial biodiversity) and a predator control programme. With support from predator control expert Brent Barrett and Boffa Miskell, volunteers undertook predator monitoring in December and detected moderate numbers of hedgehogs, mice and mustelids.

The Ohinetahi work party planted 400 tōtara donated by Te Kākahu Kahukura in the upper valley and the Eastenders helped remove old fencing and clean up plant guards after the stream flooded. In spring, the digger returned to clear the slips along the 4WD tracks and the thistles were sprayed.

In July 2022, we were delighted to receive the news that our QEII National Trust covenant for Avoca Valley had been lodged on the title. The remnant vegetation on the rocky bluffs and new restoration areas will be protected in perpetuity.

In Horotane Valley, the Eastenders completed the annual sweep for nassella tussock and tidied up the entrance way. President Bill Woods, the work party and local neighbours worked on an extension to the shed. The Wai-ora team planted one of the slips.

Thanks to funding from the Christchurch City Council Biodiversity Fund, Martin Freeman from Eco Abseil undertook weed control in botanically sensitive areas across the reserve with a focus on boxthorn.

A huge thank you to the volunteers and Wai-ora staff who have worked on the reserve over the year. We are also very grateful to the funders who support our work in Avoca Valley – Department of Conservation Jobs for Nature programme, Christchurch City Council, Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust, Million Metre Streams, Trees that Count, Environment Canterbury, Rātā Foundation, Meridian, Boffa Miskell, QEII National Trust and donations from individuals, families and local businesses. And special thanks to John Marsh for his assistance with the Linda Woods Reserve management plan and Avoca Valley restoration project.

Marie Gray
June 2023

PREDATOR FREE PORT HILLS ANNUAL REPORT 2022

2022 was a huge year for Predator Free Port Hills. Covid-19 caused a number of challenges in the first half of the year, with most larger community events cancelled and many volunteer coordinators sick or in isolation. We focused on online and outdoor events and distributed traps directly to trappers over this time. In the second half of the year, demand surged. We ramped up our trap building days and trapping workshops. We saw the growth of new Predator Free groups around Christchurch and renewed interest and enthusiasm from schools. By the end of 2022, nearly 1500 households had signed up to the programme.

Achievements in 2022 include:

- 18 community markets, events and talks
- Eight trap building days across the Port Hills - Heathcote, Otahuna, Redcliffs, Tai Tapu, St Martins, Huntsbury, Worsleys and Orton Bradley (Charteris Bay).
- Four trapping workshops
- Distribution of our e-newsletter and multiple social media posts
- Working alongside seven schools and preschools
- Expansion of our community reserves trapping programme with Christchurch City Council.
- Upgrades and enhancements to our www.predatorfreeporthills.org.nz website
- Participation in a pilot project for Give a Trap, a new crowd-funding site for predator control
- Continued support of the wider Pest Free Banks Peninsula programme

351 new households joined the programme in 2022. Trappers caught 2,575 predators over the year, bringing the total caught to 9741 as at 31 December 2022.

Sincere thanks to all our volunteer coordinators and backyard trappers who support our vision of a Predator Free Port Hills. Thank you as well to our funders - Environment Canterbury, Selwyn District Council and donations from individuals and families.

In December 2022, Jeremy Agar, the driving force behind Predator Free Port Hills, passed away. He was a mainstay at our events and workshops, providing leadership, offering practical help and assistance, chatting with interested trappers and encouraging us all to keep the end goal in mind. He was an extraordinary man and he will be dearly missed by all our volunteers with Predator Free Port Hills.

Marie Gray
June 2023

UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED JOHN JAMESON LOOKOUT 2022

The report covers the period January to December 2022. The lookout has now opened and we will share photos with our members at the Annual General Meeting.

Final approval from the Banks Peninsula Community Board was received in December 2021. Following a tender process in early 2022, we appointed Maugers Contracting as the contractor for the foundations, earthworks and paving. Southern Stonemasons Canterbury was appointed as the stonemason. Construction began in May 2022.

Caine Tauwhare, master carver from Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke started work on a pou whenua for the site. Pou whenua are used to mark territorial boundaries and places of significance. The concept design was endorsed by the rūnanga and Maui Stuart from the hapū blessed the site. Work also began on the interpretation for the lookout.

Thank you to our core project team: Andy Hall of Davie Lovell-Smith, landscape architects Graham Densem and Nic Kay, and SRS Board member Paul Loughton. We also acknowledge the support of our funders, the Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust, the Rātā Foundation, the JD Stout Charitable Trust (care of Perpetual Guardian), the Christchurch City Council, the Lotteries Environment and Heritage Fund, the Lyttelton Port Company and donations in time, resources and labour from Summit Road Society members and supporters.

Marie Gray
June 2023