



Post-fire research on the Port Hills: implications for restoration

It is almost three years since the extensive wildfires on the Port Hills, and the first results of my research are coming in. I am originally from Brazil and arrived in Christchurch in the beginning of 2017 with the aim of starting a PhD focused on restoration ecology. After the tragic fire occurred, the opportunity emerged to join fire ecology with restoration ecology. One month after the fire, I went up on the hills and was shocked by the extent of the burnt landscape and the damage caused by the fire, but at the same time fascinated by the resilience of some plant species that I observed. Some species were emitting new shoots and seeds of others were germinating, bringing life back to the site.

My research was definitely hands on, involving establishing and sampling many plots on site. The field work began after my first month at the University of Canterbury. Going to the hills and looking for plant survivors became routine. One of my research objectives was to investigate and evaluate the ability of the native woody species to resprout after the fire. Resprouting ability can be understood as a plant's capacity to produce new shoots and persist after disturbances, in this case, fire.

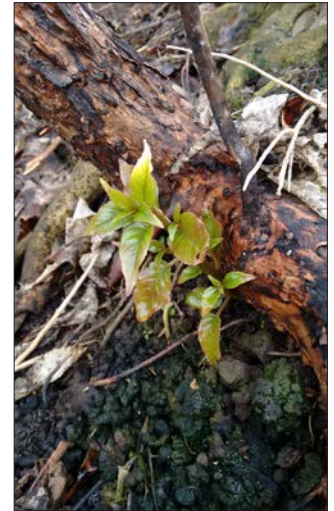
Approximately 450 burned trees and shrubs were monitored and any signs of resprouting were recorded. A total of 38% of the individuals resprouted, and the native species' resprouting ability was quantified. Species differed significantly in resprouting rates. For example, *Melicytus ramiflorus* (mahoe), *Fuchsia excorticata* (Fuschia) and *Cordyline australis* (cabbage tree) presented great resprouting rates. On the other hand, *Kunzea robusta* (kanuka), *Hebe salicifolia* (hebe) and *Olearia avicenniifolia* (mountain akeake) did not resprout at all. The ability to resprout confers advantages in the post-fire recovery process, as generally resprouts grow faster than seedlings and, consequently, are more competitive.

The identification of the native species capable of resprouting is of great value, as this knowledge can be applied to restoration planning and land management. By combining features such as strong resprouting capacity and low flammability, it is possible to plan restoration plantings to be more fire resilient. After extensive wildfires, such as the recent fires on the Port Hills, restoration strategies should consider the potential risks that new fire occurrences can impose on the vegetation being restored. This is especially so in the scenario where climate change models predict that fire risks are likely to increase in New Zealand as a consequence of higher temperatures, reduced rainfall and stronger winds.

The Summit Road Society actively supported the development of my research by permitting the establishment of sampling plots in the Ohinetahi Reserve, assisting with field work (a special thanks to Anne Kennedy), having a representative on my research supervisory panel (Paula Jameson), and donating native seedlings for one of my trials. I take this opportunity to say a big thanks to the Summit Road Society Board and members.

Ana Magalhães C. Teixeira

PhD Candidate, University of Canterbury



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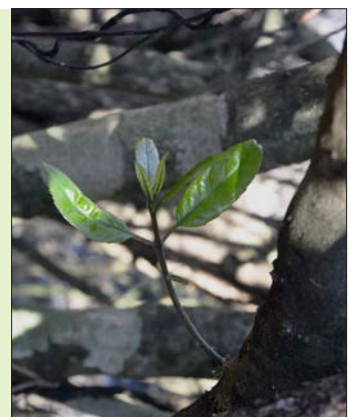
1. *Cordyline australis* (cabbage tree) resprouting.

2. *Fuchsia excorticata* resprouting.

3. Overview of a sampling plot.

4. *Melicytus ramiflorus* (mahoe) resprouting.

5. Sampling plot established soon after the fire.



Harry Ell Walk

We had a beautiful day for our Beca Heritage Festival guided walk in October. This festival is organised by the Christchurch City Council and aims to celebrate the heritage of the district and to share stories from the past. Paula Jameson, Society Board Member and the great-granddaughter of Harry Ell, led a guided walk from the Sign of the Takahe to the Sign of the Kiwi and back. This walk was open to both members and the general public and followed the Harry Ell Walkway through Victoria Park. Paula gave talks at the Sign of the Kiwi and the Sign of the Takahe about Harry Ell, the Summit Road, the acquisition of the reserves and the building of the rest houses.

The Sign of the Takahe had only just reopened a month earlier, following a long period of closure after the earthquakes. Andrew Male is the new lessee and joined in to listen to the talk. Following the walk, we had the opportunity to look through the building. It is looking great and is well worth a visit.

This walk has almost become an annual event and provides an opportunity to remember Harry Ell and his contribution to the Port Hills and indeed to the people of Christchurch. It is thanks to Harry Ell's stubborn determination and sheer force of will that we have the network of reserves along the Port Hills that we have today.

For new members, the Society has a long connection with Harry Ell. John Jameson was 14 years old when his grandfather Harry Ell passed away in 1934. Following WWII, the rest houses had been vandalised and several of the reserves had been grazed and even logged. In 1947, John began to brainstorm ideas for a group to resurrect and extend his grandfather's vision.

In 1948 at the age of 26, John gave a now legendary talk at the District Convention of the Jaycees in Kaikoura. The convenor took him aside and told him his address was 'the worst he's ever heard'. Despite this, the Jaycees took up John's ideas. The Summit Road Scenic Society held its inaugural meeting on 18 February 1948 with Sir Heaton Rhodes as its patron, Freddy Freeman as president and John as a committee member.

70 years later, the Society continues Harry Ell's vision to preserve and protect the hills and provide for public access.



Beca Heritage Festival walkers at the Sign of the Kiwi

Kids Talk

My family and I visited Quail Island and stayed in the new hut for two nights. The hut had two bedrooms with lots of bunks, a small kitchen area and two tables. It is really nice and we saw a kererū right by the hut. We went to the beach and looked for crabs.

That evening we went fishing but didn't catch anything. We went back to the hut, had dinner and went to bed in our bunks. You have to bring your sleeping bag. In the morning we had breakfast then we walked all the way around the island. We stopped for a snack above the beach with the sunken ships. The next day my dad came over with our inflatable boats. We had lots of fun playing with the boats on the water. My favourite parts were seeing the shipwrecks and playing with the inflatable boats. We took the ferry back to Lyttelton and got a gelato. Yum!

By Alex Gray (aged 9)

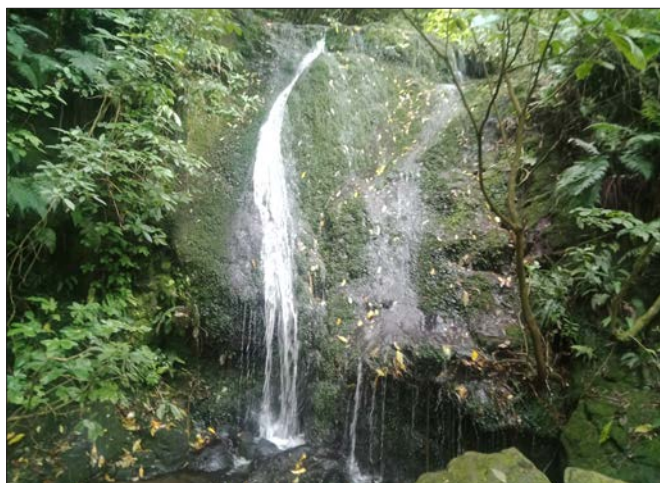


Kubota

President Bill Woods has bought a Kubota RTV for use at Omahu Bush and on the Linda Woods Reserve. This wee vehicle has been a huge asset for the fencing project at Omahu.



The new Kubota RTV



Anne's Falls



Walking down through Omaha Bush


Kids Nature Trail Banks Peninsula Walking Festival

Paul Tebbutt and I led a Kids Nature Trail Walk at Gibraltar Rock and Omaha Bush as part of the Banks Peninsula Walking Festival. Omaha Bush is such a hidden gem full of old trees, amazing ferns and abundant bird life. The walks there are challenging but doable for children. We offered a short walk option to Gibraltar Rock for wee ones and a longer walk through the bush for older children and adults. It was a beautiful sunny day and got up to 29 degrees. We started with a short walk through the bush before heading up to Gibraltar Rock. As always, Gibraltar Rock is an impressive sight and we ate our morning tea under the shadow of this 'rock mountain'. One family chose the short walk option and returned to the carpark. The rest of us carried on down to the bush. We followed Kirks track and Nelsons track down to the waterfall. We had prepared a nature trail checklist to keep the walk interesting for the kids. They had to tick off tasks such as feel the bark of a native fuschia, smell the leaves of a lemonwood and count the number of tree ferns (there are lots!). We paused at a rotting log and hunted for huhu grubs. We crossed a small stream and then took the path to Anne's Falls. This picturesque waterfall is well worth the detour and makes a great half day trip for families. We stopped for lunch at the bottom of Rhodes Track before heading back up through the bush to the carpark. That trek back up the hill was a bit of a push especially in the heat. The kids were so proud of themselves for getting to the top, the youngest being only 5 years old. We agreed we deserved an icecream! Many thanks to our volunteers for their help and support.

Marie Gray

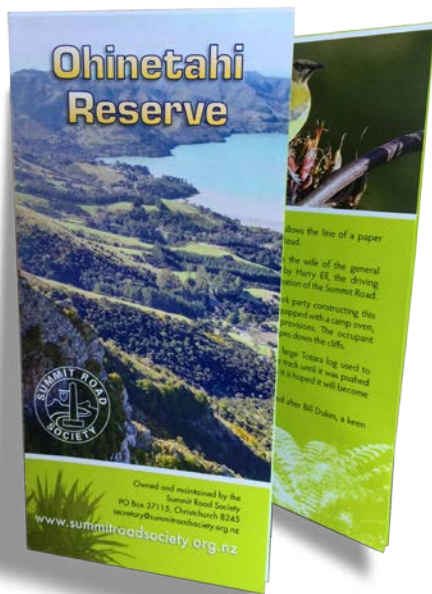


Hunting for huhu grubs

	Summit Road Society PO Box 37-115, Christchurch 8245 Website: www.summitroadsociety.org.nz Email: secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz	
	Bank accounts for online payments and donations: Summit Road Society: 03-0802-0104055-00 Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust: 03-1592-0321653-00 Credit card donations can be made through the secure website: https://givealittle.co.nz/org/summit-road-society	
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Spreydon/Cashmere	<i>Due to recent CCC elections, the community board representatives are still to be confirmed.</i>	
Banks Peninsula		
Linwood-Central-Heathcote		
Port Hills Rangers	Paul Devlin	941 7570
Eastenders work party	Graeme Paltridge	384 3592
Ohinetahi work party	Anne Kennedy	337 0364
Omaha Bush work party	Ian Johnston	332 8319
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 and corporate sponsorships, bequests, participation in work parties (non-members welcome—but why not join us as well!)		
Follow us on Facebook - Summit Road Society & Predator Free Port Hills for regular updates		



Earlier in the year, the speed limit for the Summit Road and adjoining side streets was lowered to 60 km/hour following a public consultation process. The majority of submitters, including the Society, supported this change for safety reasons.

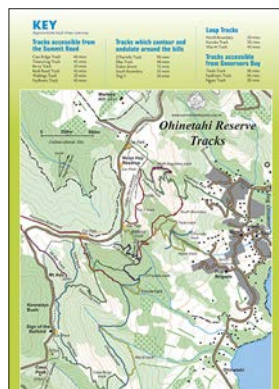
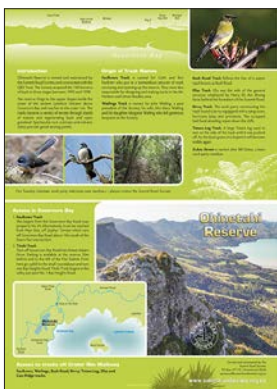


New Brochures

The Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust launched their new Governors Bay brochure at the Banks Peninsula Walking Festival Guides Dinner at Living Springs. There are some fantastic walks on offer including a heritage trail, coastal walks and two walks through Ohinetahi Reserve. The brochure is available from the Lyttelton Information Centre and is well worth a look. We were delighted to launch our new Ohinetahi Brochure at the same event. The brochure is similar to the previous brochure but has updated contact details and a new map. Special thanks to Janey Thomas for her graphic design work. Copies of the brochure can be obtained from CCC service centres, visitor centres and other popular locations around the Port Hills.



Launch of the new Ohinetahi brochure at Living Springs



John Jameson Lookout Project

For a number of years, the Society has talked about enhancing the carpark opposite the Sign of the Bellbird. This carpark forms the entrance to Ohinetahi Reserve from the Summit Road and is a popular spot with locals and visitors alike.

However, following the earthquakes and later the Port Hills fires, this project was put on hold. As our members know, John Jameson, the founder of the Summit Road Society passed away in March 2018. The Board started quietly discussing how to progress the project. John had advocated for many years to enhance this area, including adding a wall and steps down to the grassy area at Ohinetahi Reserve

Graham Densem, landscape architect and long term Society member has been working closely with the Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust and the Board of the Society to develop the concept. We are very grateful to Graham for his many hours of pro bono work on this project.

Graham and his colleague Nic Kaye have produced a series of diagrams and artist impressions for feedback and discussion. The proposed design involves a low stone wall, a lookout area, interpretation panels and steps down to Ohinetahi Reserve. The intention of this project is to increase enjoyment and knowledge of the area, maximise views over the harbour, facilitate access to the walking tracks at Ohinetahi Reserve and minimise antisocial behaviour.

The Board has decided to call this proposed area the John Jameson Lookout in recognition of the extraordinary contribution that John made to the Society and to the Port Hills.

The Society is in the process of applying for significant funding for this project and has been working to finalise the design and associated budget. This includes seeking feedback from members and other key stakeholders. Thank you to everyone who attended our members' feedback session on 4 December or who sent in their thoughts by email.

If our funding application is successful, we will still have a significant shortfall to find. To this end, we are busy exploring other funding options like grants, sponsorship and crowd funding. If any of our members are keen to donate to this project or can put us in touch with a major corporate sponsor, please contact the Secretary Marie Gray on secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz or phone **349 3409**.

Of course, there are many more steps to make this project a reality. However, we are feeling excited about progress to date and the possibilities ahead.



Artist impression of the proposed John Jameson Lookout. Please note this is a draft for consultation and the final design will be updated to reflect feedback received and the results of a preliminary engineering survey.

Conservation Week Award

The Society was thrilled to receive the Department of Conservation Mahaanui Conservation Week Award for our work on Predator Free Port Hills. Minister of Conservation Eugenie Sage presented the award at an event on 17 September celebrating 50 years of Conservation Week in New Zealand. Society Vice President Jeremy Agar spoke on behalf of the Society, reflecting on the vision and mission for Predator Free Port Hills, our partnership with Pest Free Banks Peninsula and the enthusiasm of the community for the Predator Free movement, not just the Port Hills but across the Peninsula or Christchurch City. The winds of change are here!



Marie Gray and Jeremy Agar with Minister of Conservation Eugenie Sage and Director-General of the Department of Conservation Lou Sanson.

Eastenders Work Party

The Eastenders group had 10 possible work parties for this period with two being cancelled.

Of note for this period was the development of the proposed Kowhai Track that starts near the bottom end of Rapaki Track but diverts over Montgomery Spur and will eventually link up with the Linda Woods Reserve in Avoca Valley. Eastenders spent three sessions cutting and benching a track to the top of the spur. Another two work parties were spent tidying up the Hidden Valley Track which is a subsidiary track in the Bowenvale Valley. A vegetation cut back of the Taylors Mistake track took one session and two Council Reserves, Jollies Bush and Rapanui Bush, occupied us for two separate sessions with vegetation clearing and track maintenance.

The second work party for November involved searching for Nassella tussock on the new Linda Woods Reserve. Nassella is present at low density on this Reserve but nevertheless, being a noxious weed on ECAN's watch list, the SRS is obliged to remove offending plants. This will probably be an ongoing task because of latent seed strike but eradication can potentially be achieved.

I currently have 48 volunteers on my email mailing list, an increase of three from last year, and there have been a couple of resignations. The average attendance for this period was eleven per work party (range 8-15).

I would like to thank all the volunteers who turn up every second and fourth Monday of the month for their "devotion to the cause", to Hamish Masters and Pieter Borchers, Parks Rangers, who supervise our work on Council land and Secretary Marie who unstintingly maintains the administration.

Graeme Paltridge



View of Linda Woods Reserve from Lamar Track

Linda Woods Reserve

We have been making excellent progress on the Linda Woods Reserve. We are delighted that retired landscape architect John Marsh has agreed to help us develop the management plan on a pro bono basis. John is well known in the Heathcote community for his work with Duncan Park which borders the Linda Woods Reserve. John has spent several days walking and mapping the 233ha Reserve. Meetings are now underway with a wide range of stakeholders, including CCC rangers, the grazier, local iwi, scientists, planners and the local community. The Reserve's ecological values are also being formally assessed. The Eastenders work party has offered to assist with essential weed control such as removal of the noxious weed nassella tussock. The Society will also be running a community meeting with Avoca Valley, Horotane Valley and Heathcote residents on 19 February 2020.

Members are welcome to visit the Reserve however should note that it is still undeveloped. Keep to farm tracks and be mindful of natural and farming hazards including the risk of rockfall. Please see our website for full details.



Boundaries of Linda Woods Reserve



The Eastenders enjoying a well-earned break on Linda Woods Reserve

Predator Free Port Hills

Predator Free Port Hills has taken on a life of its own! We now have close to 1000 households trapping on the Port Hills. The goal is 4000 households by 2024. The Society has been fortunate to receive significant grants and donations for this project, which has enabled us to offer traps at subsidised rates. Our volunteer coordinators have been very active connecting with their local communities via social media, mailbox drops and community newsletters. There are several events each month for Predator Free Port Hills, including local community events, trapping workshops, markets and talks.

We were pleased to support the Waihora Ellesmere Trust and Department of Conservation with their trapping workshop in Lincoln in July. Waihora Ellesmere Trust has set up a trapping project at Yarrs Flat at Te Waihora and Lincoln Envirotown launched a trap library in Lincoln in October. This is just the start of a wider Predator Free Selwyn project. In September, the Society and Department of Conservation organised a family-friendly trapping and monitoring extravaganza. Over a hundred people braved the rain and cold to attend this event at the Mt Pleasant Community Centre. The kids were kept busy with hands-on activities in the foyer, including mudfish in a tank, trap demos, Kiwi Guardian arts and crafts and building tracking tunnels from reused corflute.

We are really keen to work with children and their families. Predator Free Port Hills is a long term project with the goal to be effectively free of possums, rats and mustelids by 2050. It is the children of today who will lead this project into the future. We have recently completed a pilot project with a local school, making tracking tunnels, analysing the results and putting out rat trap tunnels. These tunnels were built by the youth unit at the prison. The kids were amazed to discover the number of rats, mice and hedgehogs on their school site and determined to catch them. With the help of the caretaker, the rat traps will be checked 5 days a week. They are also planning to fundraise for two DOC200s to target mustelids and hedgehogs.

In other news, the Pest Free Banks Peninsula initiative is continuing to gain traction. The initial focus is Kaitorete Spit and the Expanded Wildside. These areas are of high biodiversity value and can be defended from reinvasion. The Port Hills will initially be a buffer zone in this project.



We have Predator Free Port Hills t-shirts for sale (\$25 each) for those keen to support the project and spread the word!

Our long term goal is for the Port Hills to be predator free with Christchurch City as the buffer zone. This means we need all of Christchurch City to get trapping too!

Environment Canterbury is hosting a summer student to assist with the Pest Free Banks Peninsula project. The student will be helping us roll out a pilot monitoring project for Predator Free Port Hills in selected suburbs including both households and reserves. This data will be critical in helping us evaluate the success of the project and where we need to target.



DOC ranger Georgia Malbon demonstrating traps to the kids at the Trapping and Monitoring Extravaganza in Mt Pleasant.

Ohinetahi Reserve

During July we removed cages from trees big enough to look after themselves and planted just over 1000 trees. These were planted at the top of Bivvy track, near the O'Farrells and Ngaio Tracks junction, Faulkners Track and the majority in Sally's area. We cleared tracks and continued the never-ending attack on invasive weeds.

Polypodium, a fern native to Asia and Europe, was removed from areas on Bush Road track. This is one really tough plant as it does not dry out and die when left uprooted and left in the sun, and there is no effective spray. It was buried near the track so we can keep an eye on it in case it does not surrender easily. You will not find it growing at the moment as it dies off during the summer but is spreading on the hills at an alarming rate.



Collecting and sorting cages ready for planting

We also tackled spur valerian off Dukes St, South Boundary and Faulkners tracks. This plant which comes from SW Europe and the Mediterranean is very invasive. Both these weeds take over rock niches and displace native species including rare and important plants such as Heliohebe lavaudiana and Myosotis lytteltonensis, both of which are endemic to Banks Peninsula and the Port Hills.

This has been a good season for growth and, while appreciating the rain for our tree plantings, the weeds also romp away and the tracks become overgrown. Robin, Merv and Elliott have been operating the weed eaters in order to keep the grass under control but as usual we just cannot keep up with it. The broom is thriving and we battle to clear it from tracks and plantings.

Anne Kennedy



A job well done! The work party planted 1000 trees over several days.

Ohinetahi Predator Control

Our trap network has increased significantly this year with grants from the Cashmere Rotary Club, Mazda Foundation and Forest and Bird North Canterbury.

The trap network has grown quickly and now consists of 185 traps spread across the Reserve from Cass Ridge to Watlings Track and takes in Titoki and Ngaio Tracks. There is also a trap line within the southern end of the reserve, Orongomai. We have a full suite of trap types including DOC 200s, Victor rat traps, and Fenn, Timms and Sentinel possum traps. We aim to complete the network to best practice in 2020 as funds allow, taking in all the vegetated parts of the Reserve as far north as Faulkner's Track, and expand the existing trap network to the south. Tracks in open, un-vegetated areas will also be targeted for mustelids, with placement of additional DOC 150 and 200 traps.

Society member and Omahu trapping volunteer Brent Williams has built the DOC200s and Victor tunnel traps installed in the past months, and helped us place them across the reserve with Matthew Hellicar and Graham Corbishley.

Monthly checking is undertaken across 5 trap runs by a group of hardy volunteers including Helen Hills and Robin Collie, Brian Boyes, Russell Genet, Matthew Hellicar, and Derek and Gill Crombie. This Reserve is very steep so we are very grateful for the work they do. As the network increases we will be looking for more volunteers to take on a trap run, and be responsible for monthly trap checks.

For the 10 months to October this year, 35 possums, 38 rats, 5 stoats, 7 weasels, 2 ferrets, and 3 hedgehogs have been removed. Many of the specific rat traps have only been installed over the last 2-3 months. We are already seeing the effect of the increased trapping density, particularly with regard to rats and weasels. A recent open track trap line along Ellas Track and Totara Log Track has seen a large number of weasels caught.

The first monitoring was undertaken in October this year to determine relative predator abundance. PAI (pest abundance index) is determined by predator interaction with a peanut butter (or aniseed) impregnated corflute 'chew cards' placed out for 5-7 nights in a line of 10 cards at 20m spacing. Four such lines were placed through the Reserve to get a measure of predator numbers. The number of interactions (bites) helps us determine the relative abundance of predators. PAI (rat) was 7%— although we only picked up rat sign in Bivvy Track—where 80% of the cards were chewed. PAI (possum) was 7% or an RTC of 1.3 (another index)—which indicates low population at the time, reflected in our trapping numbers. We propose to repeat this monitoring in February/March which will help us build up a better understanding of predator numbers in Ohinetahi. Placement of ink tracking tunnels (for rats and mice numbers) is also proposed to help build up data on relative predator numbers.

Thanks again to the team, and all those SRS members who have been involved with predator control at Ohinetahi over the many years leading to today.

Greg Gimblett



Chewcard monitoring at Ohinetahi Reserve

Omahu Bush Reserve

The ongoing battle with gorse continues over the Reserve. The use of the Kubota 4wd RTV has made life much easier, especially when carting water for spraying and tools for general maintenance of tracks.

The sheep yards are again in working order with fences and gates repaired.

The track from the lower gate to the sheep yards has had culverts cleaned out and table drains cleared to drain the soggy areas. The stock fence at the lower grazing paddock fence has been repaired to keep the sheep in the upper end of the grazing block.

Rhodes and Prendergast Tracks have both had overhanging foliage and gorse cleared and drains added and cleaned out. More native trees have been planted in the area below Gibraltar Rock Track.

The work party attendance is usually between five and ten. Thanks to all our volunteers for all your help and enthusiasm over the year.

Ian Johnston



Clearing Rhodes Track

Omahu Bush Predator Control

The Predator Control team of Greg Gimblett, Graham and Tracey Corbisley, Brent Williams, Jeff Hall and Matthew Hellicar has had a busy six months.

The trap network has expanded to 250 traps, as a result of grants and donations. We now have possum, mustelid and rat trap networks across the majority of the 80 ha Omahu Bush Reserve at best practice densities.

Trap catch to November 2019 stands at 101 possums, 79 rats, 37 hedgehogs, 2 feral cats, 59 mice, 4 stoats and 10 weasels. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of weasels and stoats caught in the last 6 months. We have also seen an explosion of mice in October and November, with 41 caught in November!

We again undertook chewcard monitoring across the Reserve in May 2019, which showed a PAI (Pest Abundance Index) of 48% for possums and 50% for rats.

In order to knock back these populations, we undertook a baiting programme across the Reserve in August and September with funds received from the Sargood Bequest.

Approximately 80 bait stations were installed across the Reserve followed by pre-feed and placement of toxin over 7 weeks.

Follow up monitoring was undertaken in October and our PAI for possums dropped to 5%. The rat PAI was at 0%. We followed up with 40 tracking tunnels across the Reserve to more accurately confirm rat populations using a standardised method. This came back at a low 5%. The result for mice was 15%.

This confirmed a successful programme for rats. We are hopeful that this, along with our trapping, will suppress predators for some years before the need to use toxins again.

We are already starting to see reinvasion of possums in particular. Trapping of rats is much as it was before the baiting programme. Increased stoats and weasels are being caught as a result of expanding our trap network to catch these mustelids. The increase in mice catches is due to both better traps and a significant mice population in the Reserve, as shown by the tracking tunnel results. This also goes some way to explain the stoat and weasel results. Follow up monitoring will occur in the New Year.

We are continuing to modify and improve our traps, trapping techniques and trap placement, as knowledge is gained. As funding is available we will continue to expand the network into the grazing block and Gibraltar Rock.

Greg Gimblett

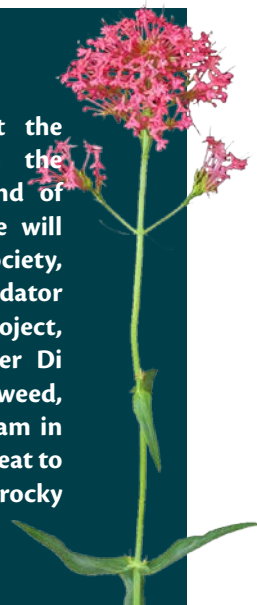


A stoat caught in a DOC200

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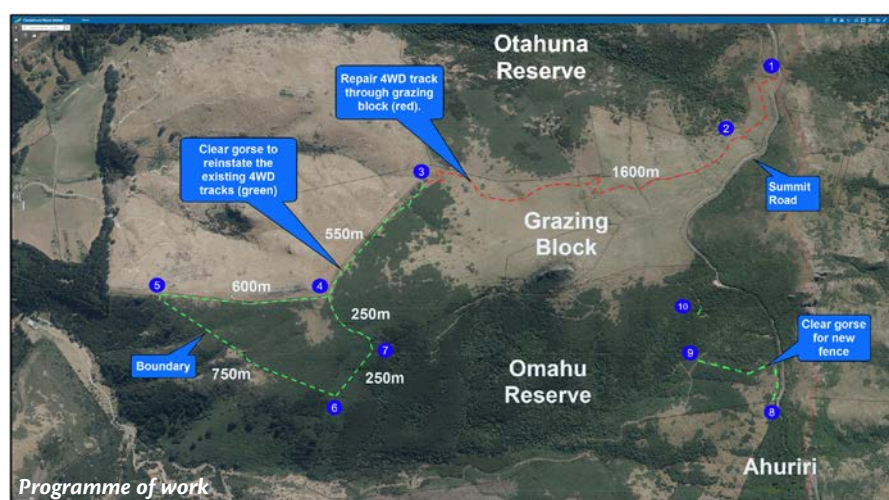
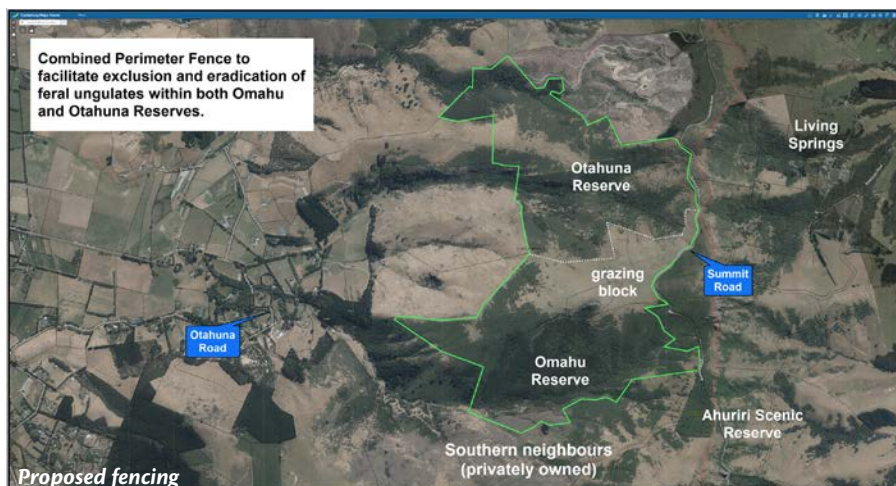
Visit the Summit Road Society at the Canterbury Horticultural Kiosk in the Botanic Gardens during the weekend of 29 February and 1 March 2020. We will be spreading the word about the Society, native bush restoration, pest and predator control and our community project, Predator Free Port Hills. CCC Ranger Di Carter will give a talk on the invasive weed, spur valerian, on Sunday 1 March 11am in the Kiosk. Spur valerian is a serious threat to rare and endemic flora growing on the rocky outcrops at Ohinetahi Reserve.

All are welcome.



Feral Animal Management Programme

A feral animal management programme (FAMP) was developed in July this year for Omaha Bush Reserve. It is designed to help provide direction for the control and eventual eradication of feral ungulates (pests) within the Reserve. A lot of progress has been made since that plan was compiled. Part of the process involved consultation with adjacent landowners to collate information on wider feral animal populations and look at collaborative control efforts to address the pests. This has been very beneficial, and we now have collaborative



arrangements in place with Otahuna Reserve on the northern boundary of the Omaha grazing block and with a neighbour adjacent to the southern boundary. This collaborative effort has led to the concept of completing a perimeter feral fence around Omaha, the grazing block and Otahuna Reserve by December 2020. The combined perimeter fence will largely follow the green line in the image *Proposed Fencing*.

Many thanks to the Selwyn District Council for contributing funding to this FAMP through their Natural Environment Fund.

Once the new fence is in place, a feral animal eradication phase will commence within both reserves and this will be followed by a period of surveillance and monitoring to check the effectiveness of eradication and to detect any new infiltration if it occurs. The fence is a significant part of the FAMP, and while some sponsorship is already in place, further sponsors are being sought to help fund aspects of the programme.

An excavation contractor will be on site during December to clear access tracks and alignments for the new fence. This work will also open better access to parts of the Reserve along the southwest boundary. This will enable better access for pest and predator control work and potentially the creation of new walking tracks. The extent of this work is shown in image *Programme of Work*.

Ian Johnston and the Omaha work party have been busy clearing some of the sections of boundary that are too steep to be accessed by machine. This is gruelling work and has involved removal of gorse on some very difficult terrain. Work on the new feral animal fence should start in January 2020. This project will enable a much higher level of protection against feral ungulates within the respective reserves and in turn help to enhance native biodiversity.

Graham Corbishley

Nature Delights

Omaha Bush is renowned for its native tree fuschia or kōtukuku. These unique trees are particularly common in the upper part of the bush, near the Summit Road. The kōtukutuku is the world's largest fuschia. The flowers are rich in nectar and are visited by honey-eating birds such as bellbirds and silvereys.

Tūi are beginning to thrive again in Canterbury, with a 245% increase in sightings from 2013 to 2018 according to the Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research Garden Bird Survey. These birds are only seen from time to time on the Port Hills. However, it is our dream that, with predator control and habitat restoration, their song will return to the hills.

PHOTOS: JON SULLIVAN

Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust

The Trust held its annual meeting on the 13th August and I'm pleased to say that the Trustees all agreed to continue in their roles. I'm also pleased that Paul Loughton (Treasurer), Jeremy Agar, Marie Gray and Paul Tebbutt were happy for me to continue as Chairperson.

After the purchase of Linda Woods Reserve, things have generally been business as usual. The most significant project at the moment is the Sign of the Bellbird car park. As I am sure you are now aware, this was a long held dream of John Jameson, who was one of our founding trustees. The Trust has tried for some time to make progress, but there have been a number of issues that have had more priority such as earthquake remediation and the Port Hills fires! It was always going to be a complicated process with a considerable amount of consultation and discussion needed. Graham Densem, the previous Trust's Chairperson, has championed this. We are delighted that the Society has now taken on the challenge of this project to make the Bellbird car park area a location to be proud of. The Trust has already made a firm commitment to contribute towards the cost and has paid

for the preparation of the initial plans. We'll continue to work closely with the Society and Graham as the process unfolds.

Once again, it would be remiss of me to remind you that the Trust is a registered charity reliant on donations and bequests, with the specific purpose of furthering Harry Ell's vision for the Port Hills by helping to fund the purchase of further land and the maintenance and improvement of existing land on the hills.

John Goodrich

Chairperson

Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust

New membership rates effective 1 January 2020

Membership subscription type	New rate effective 1/1/2020
Annual individual subscription	\$25.00
5 year individual subscription	\$100.00
15 year individual subscription	\$250.00
Annual family subscription	\$40.00
5 year family subscription	\$160.00

