



Launch of Te Kākahu Kahukura

Te Kākahu Kahukura is a collaborative project aimed at restoring and connecting 1000ha of native bush on the southern Port Hills. Led by the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, this project involves a range of private landowners, agencies, councils and organisations. Around the core area of regenerating forest, landowners are encouraged to plant native plants and undertake pest and weed control in a way which supports a thriving indigenous forest plant community and allows native birds and other native fauna to move through the landscape. Omaha and Ohinetahi are key bush areas in Te Kākahu Kahukura. Our Predator Free Port Hills project with residential households on the southern Port Hills also supports this vision. By working together in a coordinated way, we can achieve much better results than working in isolation.

As an initial step, Te Kākahu Kahukura is aiming to plant 10,000 podocarps on the southern Port Hills over five years. They have generously donated several hundred tōtara to the Society's reserves.

The formal launch took place on 3 April at Living Springs. President Bill Woods signed the MOU on the Society's behalf. It was a stunning day, set against the backdrop of the hills and the harbour.

Arbor Day

We were delighted to continue our annual Arbor Day planting with the Christchurch City Council rangers and local school children. Ninety children from Cashmere Primary and Our Lady of Assumption School planted trees at Latters Spur in Victoria Park with support from the rangers, parents and Society volunteers. As always it was a great day. The kids got stuck in and had lots of fun. However, the day was not without its challenges. We had to reschedule the planting at short notice to the following day due to an unexpected storm that swept through Christchurch. Then that evening we received a call from the bus company that 3 out of 4 of the bus drivers had gone down with covid! Luckily we managed to find some creative solutions, including a very big bus and double trips. A huge thank you to everyone who made the day such a success, including the Eastenders who pre-dug the holes and the bus company who moved mountains to get the kids on site.

Some History on the Society's Arbor Day Tradition

'In May 1948, the possibility of reinstating Arbor Day had been discussed. This resulted in the formation of an Arbor Day subcommittee convened by J.W Jameson which organised the Society's first tree planting by three hundred school children at Cracroft Reserve on Arbor Day in August 1948. This initiative with young people has been one of the Society's most enduring community contributions and has continued as an annual Society fixture.'

From *Fifty Years Along the Road: A History of the Summit Road Society Incorporated 1948—1998* by Jennifer Loughton, 1998, p.15.



Society President Bill Woods speaking at the launch of Te Kākahu Kahukura



Our Lady of Assumption students planting at Latters Spur



As a matter of interest, New Zealand's first Arbor Day planting was in July 1890 at Greytown in the Wairarapa. Arbor Day used to be celebrated on 4 August but in 1977, it changed to 5 June, World Environment Day.

Congratulations

Congratulations to President Bill Woods who recently received a Queen's Service Medal for services to conservation and the community in the Queen's Birthday Awards. Bill has been a member of the Summit Road Society Board since 1998 and President since 2009. He has also been a member of the Port Hills Park Trust Board (Mt Vernon) since 2009. Bill donated \$600,000 toward the purchase of Tussock Hill Farm. In addition to his duties on the Board, Bill has spent hours making gates for Omaha. He is now hard at work assembling a shed for Linda Woods Reserve.



Society President Bill Woods QSM

John Jameson Lookout

For a number of years, the Society has been working on a project to create a lookout and heritage and education area at the carpark opposite the Sign of the Bellbird. Last year, work focused on gaining the necessary approvals and funding for this project. One last vital piece of the puzzle was approval from the Banks Peninsula Community Board which came through in December.

Following a tender process earlier this year, we appointed Maugers Contracting as the contractor. Construction began in May 2022 and work is well underway. We look forward to its completion later in the year. The carpark at the Sign of the Bellbird is closed during construction but pedestrian access to the track network has been maintained.

Volunteers will be planting the area around the carpark in native plants and shrubs. Interpretation panels on the history and significance of the site are also being developed. We have been working closely with Ngāti Wheke of Rāpaki to incorporate the history and stories of mana whenua through the creation of a pou whenua.

We are very grateful to landscape architects Graham Densem and Nic Kaye and engineering firm Davie Lovell-Smith for their assistance with this project. And a final thank you to our funders, Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust, Rātā Foundation, JD Stout Charitable Trust, Christchurch City Council and Lotteries Environment and Heritage Fund.

Marie Gray



Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday 31 May at the Old Stone House under covid-19 orange settings. President Bill Woods opened the meeting and welcomed members and supporters. Following ratification of last year's minutes, brief verbal reports were presented. The reports are available to download from the Summit Road Society's website. We then moved on to the election of officers. All existing officers and board members were reconfirmed.

Under General Business, members also noted the Society needs to review its constitution to align with the new Incorporated Societies Act. Unfortunately, due to covid-19, there was no speaker or supper this year but it was still wonderful to see so many of our members in person for the first time in many months.

A highlight of the meeting was the awarding of Honorary Life Membership to Grant and Marilyn Nelson.

The Nelsons donated Omaha Bush to the Society in 2010 and have paid for much of the deer fence that now encircles it. Their contribution to conservation on the Port Hills and the wider Canterbury region has been extraordinary. Thank you Grant and Marilyn for your ongoing support of the Summit Road Society.



Grant and Marilyn Nelson

John McCurdy

John McCurdy passed away in February this year. John was a member of the Eastenders for many years. He was a keen trumper and loved getting out and about on the hills. John is remembered as a quiet and sociable guy. He enjoyed the camaraderie of the Work Party and could sit and talk to anyone for hours. Our sincere condolences to his family.



Kids Talk **CRATER RIM WALKWAY**



Paris and his brother on the Crater Rim Walkway

My brother and I went with my mum for a walk up a big hill. There were some parts when we went up really high and some parts when we walked down again. It was really bumpy so we had to walk carefully and I had to help my brother when he got scared. We got to see a mountain biking race which was happening near the track we were on. They were biking really fast down the hill on the bumpy track too! It was really cool when we got to the really high parts and got to see the ocean and all the land below us. I was like the King of the World!

Paris Whiley (age 6)

Carbon Credits

We have been working for some months on an application to the Emissions Trading Scheme for Ohinetahi and Omahu. We see carbon credits as an opportunity to generate an additional source of income to fund essential work, such as weed control, predator and pest control, fencing and planting. The ETS criteria for eligible forest includes trees planted or established after 1990, potential to grow over 5m in height, potential to reach over 30% tree canopy and a minimum forest area of 1ha. Pre-1990 bush is not eligible so we focused on the newer areas of regenerating bush. As part of our application, we needed to gather evidence to show land use changes from 1990 to present. Alice Shanks of the QEII National Trust was an amazing help, as the Trust had collated a great deal of evidence over the years about both Ohinetahi and Omahu including photo points. We also needed to supply current photos of the regenerating bush, both close ups and drone shots. A huge thank you to Society volunteers, Anne Kennedy, Ian Johnston, Greg Gimblett, Murray Smith, Peg Gosden and Don Bogie for traipsing over the reserves to take the necessary photos and to professional photographer Alex Hubert for taking the drone shots. We should hear the outcome by the end of the year. We will look to include the plantings at Avoca Valley in the next ETS application in 5 year's time.



Professional photographer Alex Hubert taking drone photos of the regenerating bush



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 Credit card donations can be made through the secure website:
<https://givealittle.co.nz/org/summit-road-society>

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	Ohinetahi work party	Anne Kennedy 337 0364
Omahu Bush work party	Ian Johnston 332 8319	
Linda Woods Reserve WP	Graeme Paltridge 384 3592	

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 & Instagram - **Summit Road Society & Predator Free Port Hills** for regular updates

Many thanks to Jennifer Loughton for her assistance with proofreading

EDITOR: MARIE GRAY DESIGN: THOMASGRAPHIK

LINDA WOODS RESERVE

We have been mainly focused on the restoration of Avoca Valley. 4km of fencing has been installed throughout the valley to protect the restoration areas.

The plants and trees planted in 2021 have thrived thanks to a wet summer. The valley is buzzing with the sound of tree frogs and invertebrates. Volunteers released 2600 plants in our volunteer planting area off Avoca Valley Road. Wai-ora Forest Landscapes maintained a further 6400 plants along the stream. This year, we are on track to plant nearly 30,000 trees and plants over the length of the valley. Our thanks to the team at Wai-ora. It is a massive job in difficult terrain. Thank you as well to our hardworking volunteers who are planting nearly 3000 plants and trees this year.

We have established our Avoca Valley steering group to help monitor the project, provide specialist advice and ensure we meet the Jobs for Nature reporting requirements. The group meets quarterly and includes representatives of key partner organisations, experts in ecological restoration and representatives from the Avoca Valley community.

Our new work party has been going strong. This group, led by Graeme Paltridge and John Marsh, meets the first and third Wednesday morning of each month. Six to ten volunteers usually turn up to carry out plant maintenance, planting, removal of invasive weeds, and more recently removing the old tyres dumped at the top of the valley. Anyone interested in joining this group on a regular or occasional basis please email Graeme on graeme_sue@slingshot.co.nz

Thanks to a grant from the Greenwood Environmental Trust, the work party now has essential tools for looking after the reserve.

Boffa Miskell are helping to develop a predator control plan for the reserve, focusing on possums, rats and mustelids. Possums are a threat to our newly planted trees and we have the opportunity to build in a predator control network right from the start. We are also encouraging predator control in adjacent reserves and households through our Predator Free Port Hills programme.

The QEII National Trust covenant over Avoca Valley has been lodged on the title. This will ensure that remnant vegetation on the rocky bluffs and our newly-planted forest will be protected in perpetuity. Thank you to our regional representative Alice Shanks for her support.

On the Horotane Valley side, the rock remediation was completed at the end of last year but there is one tricky rock that had to be trussed. Geotechnical engineers are working on a solution and it will probably involve helicopters! President Bill Woods and the work party are also assembling a shed to store equipment.



Public planting day at Avoca Valley

There is a lot happening and we are very grateful to everyone who has helped support the development of the reserve, both financially or through the gift of their time. Thank you to our funders of the Avoca Valley project - Department of Conservation Jobs for Nature programme, Christchurch City Council, Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust, Million Metre Streams, Environment Canterbury, Meridian, Boffa Miskell, Prima Roastery and donations from individuals, families and local businesses. And special thanks to John Marsh for his work on the management plan for Linda Woods Reserve and the restoration of Avoca Valley.

Marie Gray

We have set up a Givealittle page to help fundraise the remaining money needed for this year's planting project. If you can help, please check out:

<https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/avoca-valley-2022>

Every little bit counts.



That's a lot of tyres! Avoca Valley, under the Summit Road.

EASTENDERS

The Eastenders work party group have had a busy year to date with an emphasis on remediation of the Scarborough Bluffs Track. This is a long track which starts near Rapanui Bush Reserve at the top of Evans Pass, parallels the Sumner side of Evans Pass Rd then makes a sharp turn to head over the ridge, descending to Taylors Mistake. We have had about five work parties so far and probably another two are required to complete this project. Reports and passing comments from joggers and walkers have been most complimentary about the standard of our work so far.

We also had our annual hole digging at Victoria Park in preparation for Arbor Day where school children plant a couple of hundred trees to celebrate the occasion. Our Eastenders group dig the holes and had the soil ready for refilling and tamping in order to make the process easier for the children.

Finally, we also spent two work parties planting native trees and flax (supplied by CCC Parks and appropriate for the exposed cliff tops), beside the Taylors Mistake Track. Local householders were active in cutting boxthorn and tree lucerne (among the many weed plants that have "taken over" the area) in preparation for the Eastenders to do the planting.

Graeme Paltridge



Charles Brown and John Hicks clearing boxthorn and other weeds on Taylor's Mistake Track

OHINETAHI

Ohinetahi Work Party

The big plus this summer was no drought, no drooping trees, plenty of native seedlings and no wasps. However, there is always a downside. No blackberries to eat, the grass kept on growing and the weed seeds flourished. In one instance an area of about 2 square metres yielded over 50 passion vine seedlings.

So during this summer the weed eaters buzzed for weeks as we endeavoured to keep the tracks walkable. We cut and slashed our way through gorse, blackberry and bracken to tackle passion vine, old man's beard, polypodium and spur valerian. We released our post-fire plantings.

A new weed, climbing asparagus, was discovered. This vine twines itself tightly around trees and can strangle young seedlings. It was a good autumn for colour on exotic trees and this enabled us to find quite a few cherry trees growing in the Bush Road Track area where a grove of cherry trees had been cut out sometime before 2005.

So plenty of work to be done and we are still playing catch-up.

Anne Kennedy

Photo 1: Invasive vine climbing asparagus (photo credit Jon Sullivan)

Photo 2: Fabulous fungi on Faulkners Track.

Ohinetahi predator control

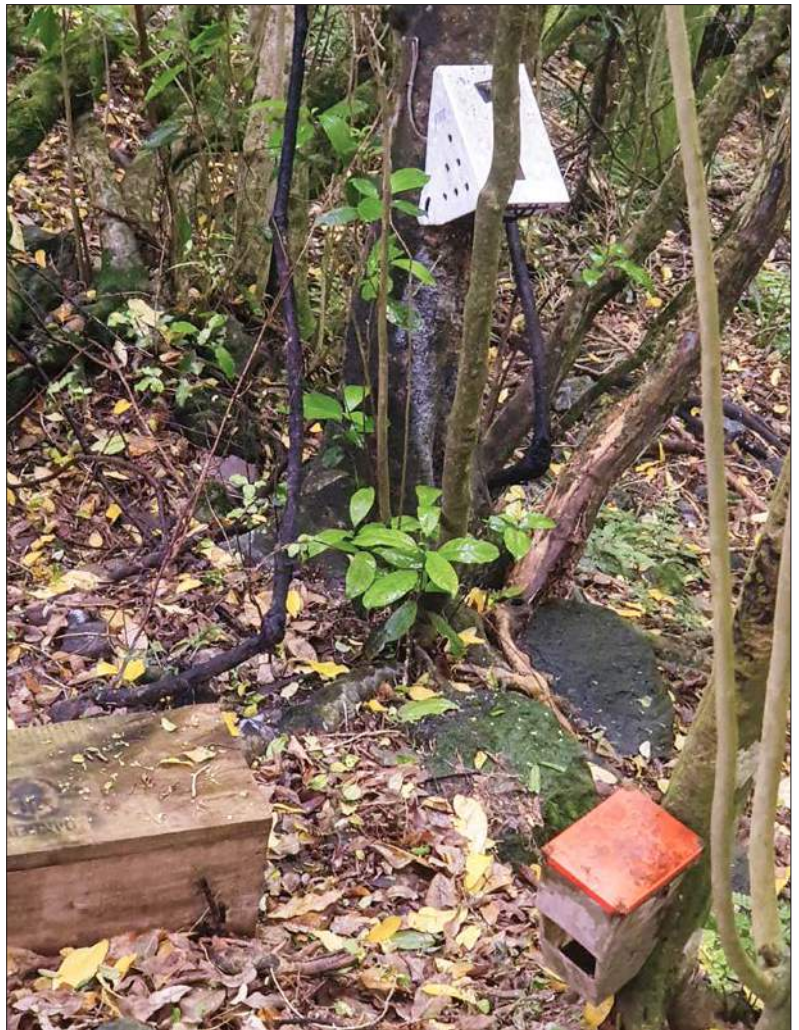
The first six months of this year has been busy in Ohinetahi. The team spent 542 hours on predator control, compared to 185 for the same period the year before. Two new trap lines, one on the southern boundary and one on the northern boundary of the reserve, have been established. In addition, tracking tunnels for monitoring predator numbers have been increased from 30 to 57.

Four new automatic traps have been installed and total trap numbers are now 265, up from 226 last year. This was funded by a grant from Pest Free Banks Peninsula. 10 traps were also donated by the Ryman Healthcare Men's Shed in Rangiora.

Tracking tunnel monitoring was carried out in early May, with our volunteers putting in a huge effort. The results of rat numbers did not correlate well with the huge numbers of rats we have been catching and chew card data showed a large increase in the possum population.

Our hardy trappers continue to put in a huge amounts of leg work and it is pleasing to see the numbers of predators caught has increased as a result. 213 predators were caught this year, compared to 116 predators for the same period the year before.

Murray Smith



A sentinel possum trap, DOC200 trap and bait station in Ohinetahi Reserve

OMAHU

Omahu Bush work party

Another 6 months has gone by with all the usual COVID restrictions and wet Fridays holding things up. The normal track maintenance and fence line spraying has kept us busy and is mostly up to date.

Te Kākahu Kahukura donated another 100 tōtara trees which have been planted near last year's plantings with the help of volunteers from the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust and Conservation Volunteers. With 25 people helping, the job was done by lunch time.

We have also planted another 250 native trees donated by Helen Hills.

The deer fencing is nearing completion, with the pig netting along the bottom of the fence going on at the moment. We spent a day tidying up left over fencing materials and replacing two broken posts at the sheep yards.

Many thanks to all our work party helpers over the last six months.

Ian Johnston



Planting tōtara at Omahu Bush

Omahu Bush Predator Control

It's been a busy summer for the predator control team at Omahu. With funding received from Pest Free Banks Peninsula, we have increased our trapping footprint to the adjacent 'Grazing Block' reserve. There is significant regeneration of vegetation in the lower block that has been fenced off from sheep grazing. 70 traps have already been installed, with 25 more traps planned. Results from the last four months of trapping indicate significant numbers of predators (particularly hedgehogs) when compared with the main reserve where we have had undertaken predator control for a number of years.

Within the main part of the Omahu Bush Reserve we have rationalised our trap network, reducing the number of traps to 230 from a high of 250. Many of these traps were not catching (open tracks), so it was decided to reduce the number of traps and replace Victor traps with DOC200s to improve mustelid capture.

Numbers of predators are tracking similar to past years: an average of 6 rats a month (peaking at 18 in March), mustelids at 1.33 and possums at 9. With 5 years of records we can now see 'mast years', such as 2020 where we had 32 mustelids for the year and 126 mice!

Recent monitoring undertaken by the University of Canterbury ecology students showed our possum population was below the range we seek to achieve (RTC of 2.5) but rats were up again at 15% when measured with tracking tunnels. Mice were at 48%.

We have installed 10 new battery-powered AT220 automated kill traps where we have seen high rates of reinvasion of possums, mostly at the perimeter of the reserve. Some have recorded multiple kills per month. These traps are designed to catch both rats and possums and we can attest to that fact!

We have used a generous donation from a Summit Road Society member to purchase 3 passive infrared cameras and three auto lures. We have been placing the cameras out with the auto lures, within the reserve at our normal monitoring locations, to observe predator numbers and interaction with our traps. We intend to repeat at key times during the year to get a comparison of interactions throughout the year. We have also confirmed the presence of feral cats within the reserve and increased our network of Timms traps as a response in winter months, with some success.

Greg Gimblett



AT220 trap catching possums at Omahu

Omahu Fencing Project

The deer mesh was completed around the entire perimeter of Omahu Reserve in December 2021. In April 2022, professional pest control contractors undertook systematic sweeps of the reserve to remove any remaining feral ungulates. This work was done over a two-week period while the reserve was closed to the public. No feral pigs were encountered during that process and the vast majority of the feral deer have been removed. Thank you to the Christchurch City Council for their support with the cull.

We will continue to monitor for presence of any residual animals and will boost the monitoring and surveillance equipment shortly to help keep an eye on the long-term performance of the new perimeter fence. There is a strong collaborative working relationship with CCC's Park Rangers on feral ungulate control and this united focus to protect both reserves will pay big biodiversity enhancement dividends in the future.

There is some minor ongoing work to complete, but this mainly relates to the installation of a 600mm high layer of 50mm equine mesh around the base of the entire perimeter fence to help

prevent future feral pig infiltrations. This is quite an important addition to strengthen the effectiveness of the perimeter against future feral pig infestation. The mesh has been installed on a large portion of the fence on the Omahu/Otahuna common boundary and it is not visually obtrusive. There's minor work to complete adjacent to several of the pedestrian gates and at some creek crossings to strengthen the first line of defence that is already in place.

Some attempts have already been made by feral pigs to get through the normal deer mesh, but this has been relatively isolated. If large feral pigs sense a potential food source within the reserve adjacent to the fence, it is likely they will work away at the fence to get in. That's why it's very important not to locate possum traps or bait stations on the fence line, advice also given by the pest control contractors.

Volunteers have been clearing the base of the fence in preparation for installation of the 50mm mesh and those efforts have been much appreciated.

Continued next page...



Equine mesh is being installed on the deer fence to deter feral pigs

The contractors also did systematic sweeps of the adjacent Otahuna Reserve (which is now also largely fenced). The operation complimented the trapping work that had been undertaken over the past 18 months. The next phase involves monitoring and surveillance to detect any residual animals or any new infiltrations. There are resources and options in place to deal with any unwanted feral ungulates in the future.

The Gama Foundation has funded most of the fencing work around the perimeter of Omaha Reserve and their support has been invaluable. Some grants were also received from the Selwyn District Council and were put to good use. Neighbours (including CCC) on common boundaries also shared the cost of the new fence and this was hugely appreciated. Now that the fence is in place, it's easy to just take it for granted. I hope that doesn't happen because it is not easy to get funding for projects like this and the reserve is now in much better shape for the future because of this important work. The understory is regenerating nicely.

Construction of the fence was not just as simple as putting a stock fence up. It required a lot more attention to detail to act as an effective exclusion fence for feral ungulates. Signage has also been installed to remind people to close the gates after use.

Graham Corbishley

Predator Free Port Hills

Covid-19 has presented a number of challenges, with most community events postponed and a number of volunteers sick with covid-19. There has been a lot of last minute shuffling to keep things ticking along. We have therefore been focusing on small local outdoor events. Recent events include our regular monthly stall at the Mt Pleasant Farmers Market, a trapping workshop in Otahuna and trap building days in Heathcote, Charteris Bay, Otahuna, St Martins and Redcliffs. Our thanks to the team at Conservation Volunteers who help cut the wood and mesh for our community trap building days.

Growth has been steady. There are over 1300 households signed up to Predator Free Port Hills.

The rollout of the new website is now complete, with very positive feedback. Our attention is now turning to reserve data and how to show results on our maps. We are very excited to see the increase in individual trappers reporting their results. The more people report, the more we can see the difference we are making and the more others are inspired to get started with backyard and community trapping.

In November 2020, we ran a small pilot project with the Christchurch City Council to set up community-led trapping lines in CCC parks and reserves. The pilot was very successful and CCC have now published an excellent trapping guide for those

interested in setting up a community trap lines in their local park. CCC, SRS and Conservation Volunteers held an introductory trapping workshop for the next intake of parks in March.

Pest Free Banks Peninsula have been very busy. Their sophisticated trapping network at Kaitōrete has gone live and they have been working with Akaroa Area School to undertake a trapping pulse, focusing on possums, rats and hedgehogs. New Zealand is internationally renowned for its island eradications but the mainland is much more complex and difficult. There is a difference between eradication and elimination, which can be likened to New Zealand's early approach to managing covid-19. Eradication can only be achieved on islands or in fenced sanctuaries. Predators are completely removed and then we rely on the sea or fence to defend against reinvasion. On the mainland, elimination is the only practical option. Predators are removed from an area but inevitably there will be reinvasions from surrounding areas. The key is to quickly detect the reinvasion and mount a response.



The team at Conservation Volunteers cutting wood for our community trap building days

Congratulations to Predator Free Riccarton and the Spencerville Predator Control group who recently received funding from the Predator Free NZ Trust. We recently organised the inaugural meeting of the new Predator Free Christchurch network. In addition to the Port Hills, there are now backyard trapping groups along the Heathcote and Styx Rivers, in Somerfield, Riccarton, Upper Riccarton, Fendalton, parts of the Red Zone and Spencerville. There are still a lot of gaps but watch this space!

A big thank you to our volunteer coordinators and backyard trappers for helping to make our vision of a Predator Free Port Hills a reality. And thank you to our funders Rātā Foundation and Environment Canterbury.

Marie Gray & Jeremy Agar



Catches reported on the Predator Free Port Hills website

All Those who Wander Are Not Necessarily Lost



The Summit Road Society has been carrying out predator control for at least 20 years but this has significantly ramped up in the last five years. A comprehensive trap network has now been installed at Omahu and Ohinetahi. Traps are also being installed in the Linda Woods Reserve as it develops.

Omahu Bush has over 300 traps spread out over the bush and grazing block and Ohinetahi has 265 traps. In addition, Omahu now has a deer fence installed around it and pigs and deer have been removed from the reserve. This will see the already stunning native vegetation literally shoot away and make it more attractive for bird life.

Trapping of predators enhances both the vegetation and bird life. Possums browsing native plants cause a great deal of damage and also predate eggs of native birds. The mustelids—stoats, ferrets and weasels—along with rats complete the toxic threat to birdlife.

There has been an upsurge generally in trapping programmes and it is great to see our neighbours setting up networks. This includes community-led trapping through Predator Free Port Hills, trapping programmes in CCC reserves and the work of Pest Free Banks Peninsula.

Trapping involves a great deal of legwork, literally. Members of the public who walk the tracks in Ohinetahi and Omahu soon realise there is a lot of hill work, with the task multiplied for trappers following lines through bush and scrub.

The trap network now established follows a grid pattern and is mapped with GPS coordinates to make sure there is even coverage. Trappers know the reserves intimately and reach the most inaccessible areas. All those who wander are not necessarily lost!

Possum and mustelid trap lines are 100 metres apart and at least 100 metres away from the next line. In Ohinetahi this consists of nine traps lines and in Omahu there are four. Of course, predators do not hunt following a grid pattern but having such a pattern makes it easier to monitor the traps and increases the chances of predators interacting with a trap.

The traps are checked at least once a month by a hardy group of volunteers who record the predators caught and rebait the traps. Three main trap types are used. The Sentinel possum trap, the DOC200 wooden traps for mustelids, hedgehogs and rats and the Victor Rat traps, very similar to the common rat trap used at home. Baits used include aniseed dough for possums, eggs and dried salted rabbit for mustelids and peanut butter for rats.

There is a rapidly expanding scientific field surrounding trapping and the Society's programme is solidly based on scientific principles. Traps and baits are being constantly tested and evaluated. Evaluation is surprisingly difficult and it can take months of monitoring to decide whether new baits are attractive to predators. Additionally, calculating success rates of predator control monitoring sometimes doesn't correlate well with numbers of predators caught. Pleasingly though, the numbers of predators being caught has gone up with the trap numbers increasing.

Andrew Crossland, CCC Ranger has been carrying out native bird surveys on the Port Hills for 20 years and one would expect to see dramatic increases in bird numbers with effective trapping programmes. But there are other factors at play, such as food supply, weather and habitat change, which impact on bird numbers. The 2017 fire in the Ohinetahi Reserve is a prime example.

It does seem that trapping is having a positive effect on bird numbers. Certainly, the bellbird population seems to be increasing on the Port Hills and bellbirds are now seen and heard in the city, along with kererū. Further data will help confirm these observations. For example, the University of Canterbury ecology students will be undertaking 5-minute bird counts annually at Omahu Bush and Andrew Crossland will return in 2023 or 2024 for the next bird survey.

There are also other exciting developments in trapping, with lures now available which don't go mouldy like salted rabbit. New AT220 automatic traps have also been developed in recent years. Small numbers of these traps have been installed in Omahu and Ohinetahi. They have the same mechanism as a DOC trap but automatically reset after the possum has been killed, and constantly feed mayonnaise from a reservoir. The battery life for these traps can be up to a year.

A trapping programme may seem simple at first glance but a lot of time and effort, all voluntary, goes into developing and maintaining it. Pest Free Banks Peninsula recently granted funds to the Summit Road Society programme to expand our reserve trapping but ongoing money is needed to maintain the programme. Any contributions from the public are appreciated and will be used wisely. The investment will have massive payback for future generations.

Murray Smith

HERITAGE WALK

Walking in Harry Ell's Footsteps

Saturday 15 October 9.30am-2pm

This free event is part of the Christchurch Heritage Festival. Starting at the top of Kennedy's Bush on the Summit Road, this walk will follow the Crater Rim Walkway to the Sign of the Kiwi before returning on the loop track. The walk will be led by Board member and Harry Ell's great granddaughter, Paula Jameson and will focus on Harry Ell and the Summit Road Society's efforts to protect the Port Hills. The walk offers spectacular views of both the harbour and city and provides an ideal backdrop for the stories of this special place.

The 7km return walk will follow a well-formed tramping track with undulating terrain and some rocky and muddy sections. Walkers need to be reasonably fit, wear sturdy walking/tramping shoes and dress for the conditions.

To register email: secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz or phone 03 349 3409



WEED OF THE MONTH

Weeds are one of the greatest threats to the biodiversity values of the Port Hills. In September 2020, we started a regular 'weed of the month' feature on our Facebook page to help raise awareness of invasive weeds such as boneseed (photo), spur valerian, banana passionfruit, elderberry and polypodium. It has been hugely successful. These posts are shared widely and some have reached up to 6000 people. We need education and vigilance to stop garden escapes and detect new invasions so it's great to do something practical to spread the word among the wider public. Thank you to Murray Smith for his work on this initiative.

www.facebook.com/summitroadsociety

[click on the magnifying glass at the top and type "weed"]



The Port Hills are the signature of Christchurch and provide its recreational lungs. The longer I spend exploring and researching the Port Hill reserves and walking tracks, the more I have come to appreciate the generosity of donors who over the last hundred years have contributed land, money or their labour to provide the amenity we can all enjoy close to our City. Their names live on as a lasting tribute, with Rhodes, Morten, Ell, Skellerup, Scott, Douglas and others commemorated throughout the Port Hills. Try typing 'H G Ell' into the 'Papers Past' search engine and follow through the numerous results. Alternatively, go to the Summit Road Society website and search our newsletters to provide a rich history of more recent times.

The primary objective of the Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust is to enable the ringfencing of funds for the future purchasing of suitable Port Hills land, as and when it becomes available. The secondary objective for the Trust is to provide a ready reserve fund for the unexpected, such as remediating rockfall in Society-owned reserves. Legacies or donations can be ring fenced for either or both of the above objectives.

Have you considered a lasting gift? As Honorary Treasurer for the Trust, I am available to discuss in confidence the appropriate wording for inserting a clause or codicil to your will. Although no guarantees can be given, the Trustees will look favourably towards naming land purchases after benefactors, thus providing a lasting memorial. I can be contacted on 027-868-8478 for a no obligation discussion.

Alternatively, a donation during your lifetime has the advantage of a 33% charitable tax rebate up to the level of your annual taxable income. For larger amounts, a suspensory loan to the Trust can be written off in annual instalments up to the limit of your charitable rebate entitlement.

Paul Loughton

Honorary Treasurer

Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust