

Korokoro Environmental Group Annual Report September 2009-August 2010



Committee

Chair: Vanessa Browne
Treasurer: Ken Marner
Secretary: Julie Haggie
Members: Jaqui Knowles, Lee Davidson

Thanks for the regular support from: Ruth Mansell, Jim Mansell, John Vanisselroy, Paul Thomas, Lynette Clelland, Cheryl and Barry Maister, Helen Maddox, Gerald Davidson, Joe Ede, Tony and Nancy Athfield and Kate Malcolm, and those who helped with the pest monitoring and working bees, including Gareth Minshall, Stephen Church, Rod Phillis, Chris and Susie Miles, Syd Moore, Cathy and Mike Priest, Amitha Ilangakoon, and Jenny and Claude Gibbs.

Thanks also to Rosie Doole from Hutt City Council for her continuing support with the working bees, Kim Broad Environmental Ranger from GWRC for his management of the pest monitoring and Peter Glensor for keeping in touch on GWRC matters.

Committee

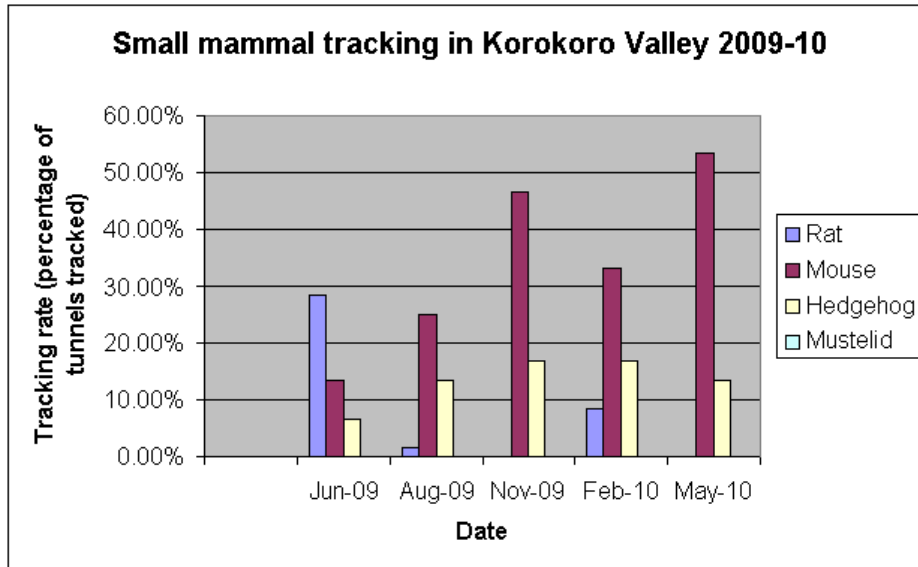
The Committee comprised a small core of six, but each of us has taken responsibility for specific projects during the year. We have been ably led by Vanessa Browne and we appreciate the extra time and commitment that she has given as Chairperson. We took the view after the AGM that we would identify key areas for action and retain a focus on these. We have been fortunate to have the support of others in the Korokoro community, and we feel proud of what we have achieved. Within our focus areas we have covered a wide range of activities with monitoring, working bees, writing and making submissions, identifying new opportunities, attending meetings and campaigning for Korokoro's environment. We feel that KEG remains respected as a community voice, and has been an active and successful community organisation.

Mustelid and Rodent Monitoring

During the year since the previous AGM, Vanessa coordinated quarterly monitoring of rodents and mustelids in the Korokoro valley with the next scheduled for late August. These went very well, with some adventures (get the story from Ken Marner), and people really enjoying the chance to get out into our wonderful back yard. Working to protect the Korokoro Valley is one of KEG's key objectives. Understanding the impact of rodents and mustelids is important for GWRC to support our regenerating bush and enhance habitat for native species.



The following diagram shows the results for the 2009-10 year:



Kim Broad has advised that GWRC would like to continue the three monthly monitoring for another year.

As an aside, GWRC recently completed a possum monitor in the Korokoro Valley. Ten lines of ten traps (100 traps in total) were laid throughout the valley and set for three nights. No possums were caught. GWRC are obviously pleased with this result and the effectiveness of their possum control programme.



Draft Regional Parks Network Plan.

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) has produced a draft plan covering all regional parks, containing both generic and specific provisions. KEG has submitted on this plan and attended consultation meetings. Overall we are very supportive of this plan and have complimented GWRC on the contents and the concise and clear manner in which the Plan is written. We support the objectives, policies and methods in the plan. We feel that specific implementation strategies will need to be prepared in a number of areas to achieve the objectives and policies. We are also unclear on the time period of the plan and how frequently it will be reviewed. Key points included in our submission:

- More emphasis on heritage, including the historical Maori routes through Belmont Regional Park (BRP).
- More detail on how GWRC proposes to implement the objectives and policies. In particular how regenerating bush will be protected and supported.
- Recognition of the regenerating nikau in BRP.
- Tidying up the Cornish Street entrance to BRP and improving this area (car parks, toilets, picnic areas) to really enhance its accessibility.
- Enabling bush to beach access way from Cornish Street through to Petone foreshore.

- Creation of a riparian bush corridor to connect the bush of the Korokoro Valley, over the ridge of the Belmont Hills to the bush in the Cannons Creek Valley.
- Enhancement of native fish passage in Korokoro Stream ; we would like GWRC to take the lead in this area.

HCC Annual Plan

KEG also made a submission to the HCC Annual Plan, commenting on:

- Request not to defer the funding of the replacement of McKenzie Pool.
- Dangerous elements of the Dowse to Petone 'improvements' that now need to be addressed.
- The negative impact that D2P has had on access between the bush/stream and the foreshore.
- The need for HCC to increase its funding in the area of track maintenance and development of reserves. KEG is concerned that the eight year funding plan provides the barest minimum in terms of the development and upkeep of reserve areas.
- The need for HCC to allocate funding for the Cross Valley Link to take heavy traffic off the Esplanade, which would also allow the Council to promote the Esplanade area further as a community and recreational asset.

KEG received the following response from HCC:

- Funding of the replacement of McKenzie Pool has now been put back into the year ahead and not deferred.
- The HCC is not planning to take action on our concerns about dangerous elements of the Dowse to Petone 'improvements'.
- HCC considered that any amelioration of the negative impact that D2P has had on access between the bush/stream and the foreshore would have to wait until there was further work on the Petone to Grenada road.
- HCC is not planning to increase its funding in the area of track maintenance and development of reserves.

We will continue to communicate with HCC on these issues.

District Plan

HCC sent out a discussion document on options to review the Petone part of the HCC District Plan (Korokoro is part of Petone in the Plan). Ruth Mansell led KEG's response. KEG members met with HCC senior officers to discuss ways in which the District Plan could better protect Korokoro. In our submission we presented our vision for Korokoro for the next 20 years, and listed the outcomes we want to see achieved through a reviewed District Plan. KEG wants to retain Hill Residential with its 1000sqm minimum lot size as the underlying zoning, but would like to explore other more creative options, such as cluster housing and character overlays. Currently HCC have deferred any further consideration of Korokoro in the review, focusing on the Petone 'flat' area. We need to continue to stay in touch with HCC and ensure Korokoro is also considered. KEG liaised with the Petone Community Board and Petone Planning Action Group on this issue.

Reserves status in Korokoro

Considerable work was undertaken by KEG members during 2009 convincing HCC of the value of gazetting areas of land in Korokoro as reserve during HCC's land review last year. KEG, in close association with Lower Hutt Forest and Bird has worked hard to persuade HCC and GWRC that Korokoro's bush reserves which are part of the catchments of Korokoro Stream, Percy Stream and Galbraiths Gully, will all be better protected as Scenic rather than Recreation. KEG members presented a submission on 3 March to HCC's Strategy and Policy Committee meeting. We were very pleased that the committee then voted to classify those areas as we wished, as Scenic Reserve. This was quite a victory for KEG and Forest and Bird. Thank you to Ruth Mansell for leading this initiative.

Communications and publicity

Thank you to our secretary Julie Haggie who did a great job in keeping up communications and publicity for KEG. We continue to regularly contribute to the Korokoro Newsletter, make regular reports to the Petone Community Board and stay in touch with Hutt City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council on relevant matters. Some key initiatives include:

- Community Engagement Fund: KEG successfully applied to the Petone Community Board under this fund for equipment (loppers, gloves) for our working bees— up to \$500.00.
- KEG Flag: We ordered and have received a flag, to be used at our events to advertise our presence and promote further interest.
- PO Box Number: KEG has set up a new PO Box number for all written communication; PO Box 32056, Maungaraki Post Centre, 5050.

We are also investigating the possibility of setting up our own website. Thank you to Jaqui Knowles for progressing this.

Working Bees

KEG again held a number of working bees throughout 2009-10 as follows:

- 4 October 2009, Ratanui; mainly clearing tradescantia and wilding karaka seedlings. A good number of Korokoro folk turned up on a fairly bleak morning. This land is held by NZTA and we are hoping that HCC may be able to acquire this historic site.
- 13 December, Puketiroiro: light attendance (it was really windy) but some good work done then and the following weekend to clear gorse from plants put in there on a previous planting.

- 27 February, Puketirotiro trig: a well attended event, using the tools bought with a grant from the Community Engagement Fund (thank you to Petone Community Board).
- Sunday 20 June, Korokoro Road: working bee held in persistent rain to plant and weed clear on the bank above the carpark at the bottom of Korokoro Road. The seedlings planted there last year are thriving well.

Our thanks to Jaqui Knowles who has organized all our working bees. Thanks also to all of those who attended and, once again, to the great support of HCC's Parks and Gardens Liaison Officer, Rosie Doole.

Closed for Good – BNZ help at Cornish Street

The BNZ 'closed for good' riparian planting at Korokoro Stream at Cornish Street on 4 November went extremely well. With over 400 plants provided by GWRC, a good team of planters from BNZ, the area was planted by lunchtime. We made some good contacts with BNZ key staff and identified the possibility of further support. Thanks to Ken Marner for the huge effort he put in coordinating the team and liaising with GWRC.

Triangle Study

A group of 10 KEG members and Korokoro residents met with Bruce Sherlock (HCC) and Gunter Wild (NZTA) on 2nd February 2010 to discuss the results of the draft Triangle Study. The study recommended projects including Petone-Grenada link via Horokiwi, a cycleway btw Horokiwi and Petone and a Cross Valley Link and provided high level costings and benefit cost ratios. KEG members raised a large number of questions and requested further information from NZTA on the evaluation criteria. The study will be submitted to the GWRC Hutt Corridor Plan Review (commencement date not yet determined). In the mean time KEG have discussed their opinion of the initial results and have communicated these with HCC accordingly and are now waiting for the corridor plan review to commence. Thanks to Ruth Mansell and others for assisting KEG on this issue. We will continue to stay up to date with this issue coordinated by Lee Davidson.

Inorganic Rubbish Collection

KEG held another successful inorganic rubbish collection on 10th April with the financial support of Hutt City Council who also provided trucks and drivers. Thank you to Joe Ede who organized this useful community event.

Petone Millworkers Walk.

On Sunday 13 June KEG organised a heritage activity as part of the Wellington Heritage Promotion Council's Heritage Week. Ruth Mansell was the lead on this project, and she did a great deal of background research, including discussions with the children of millworkers and one surviving millworker. 25 people attended. The 'walk' element was curtailed somewhat for some of the attendees by wet and windy weather. Korokoro folk gathered at the house of Tony and Nancy Athfield (who own and have 'restored' one of the original millworkers cottages) enjoyed Tony's talk, as well as the anecdotes of Elaine Vermeeren, who worked at the mill as a young girl, and



Ruth Mansell who had many interesting facts and stories to pass on. Jack Perkins intends to record some of the information for Sounds Historical (Radio NZ). A brochure was put together for the event, using historical photos including from the library archives. Folk were fortified by Ruth's Yorkshire curd tarts and Tony's damson wine.

Fish project

KEG is still keen to progress a project to improve habitat for native fish in the Korokoro Stream. Progress this year has been slow because of the availability of others. There have been discussions about co-funding between a private body and GWRC. This remains on our 'to do' list.

Peter Jagger

KEG notes with sadness the death of Peter Jagger. Peter died on 7 April, aged 83, after a long fight with leukaemia. Most residents have seen Peter walking around the hills, he was a trumper and had written books on tramping in the Tararuas. He had emigrated to New Zealand to work at Petone Woollen Mills. KEG have purchased a plaque and will hold a planting in Peter's honour in the near future.

For any communications regarding KEG or this report, please contact Julie Haggie, Secretary, Korokoro Environmental Group, 5891704, or visit our website www.keg.huttcity.org.nz

