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"Creating the future by regenerating the past"

HOCHSTETTER- July 05



MEG Display Site at Mystery Creek Field Days-

15th-18th June



Model of northern Coromandel made by Tim Fuller, and Coromandel Area School students.

Four, very full and rewarding days spent at the National Field Days saw two of us each day demonstrating to about 150 people. Our busiest day had us talking to 214 people directly. Very dry throats at the end of that day! Some 660 people spoke to us directly over the four days. There is a lot of interest and support out there from the general public for our type of conservation approach. The scale model was a real hit and made the process of describing and explaining the size and scope of some of the projects so much easier. Explaining the rationale for the Pest Proof Fence and being able to show the extent of the area protected was easy.

Besides the networking, we've come away with a heap of contacts to follow up on and a range of new ideas and approaches to look at for the future.

There is also a fit, keen, bunch of townspeople out there more than willing to volunteer a weekend of time to help out, so that will be one of the tasks over the next couple of months to follow up on and organize.

Looking to September for the first Volunteer Weekend.

A very special thanks to :-

Waikato Conservancy of the Department of Conservation and Waikato Biodiversity Forum, for inviting us to be part of their display area. Also, Tim Fuller and students from Coromandel Area School, for construction of the model of the northern Coromandel.



Klimbing for Kiwi - 25th June

A very dedicated bunch of students gave up their Saturday night (after end of exam celebrations on Friday, and the Lions/All Blacks game on at the same time) and climbed through the night at The Extreme Edge Climbing Centre to raise funds for Moehau Environment Group. These climbs were sponsored.

Wayne Todd went along to do a presentation and hang out as a belay person for a couple of hours. A great bunch of people and a

special thanks to student, Darlene Weiss (pictured), who organized the event. They raised \$405 for us. The Extreme Edge manager is keen for another event in October of this year.

Projects:

The “Possum Patrol”- the Paeroa Block:

This is the project proposed some four years ago to install a possum and rat baiting station infrastructure, up to 1km deep in places, across the peninsula, from the west (Otautu Bay) to the east (Waikawau Bay). A distance of about 8-10kms, it is centred around a bush block known as the Paeroa Block, which is part of the DOC estate. It involves 11 landowners and will cover about 2500ha. It is a partnership project with Environment Waikato.

It will become the interim pest control buffer, to the proposed Pest Proof Fence, to reduce rats and possums and hopefully take some of the pressure off the lands to the North.

DOC have just given Moehau Environment Group \$12,000 for this, out of their ‘Exacerbator Fund’.

This will mean the animal pest control, at Otautu Bay, will be totally buffered, extended, and protected. It also means that MEG’s partnership with Environment Waikato’s pest control programme - the “Stage Three Key Ecological Sites Pest Control on Private Land “ - is secured and on target. They have begun this stage this month.

It’s more work for us, but great news, and means we will be able provide some employment in the area. The funds will mean we will be able to do follow up work in these blocks through into next year.

The Rat Attack Project:

This is about two thirds complete, thanks to the support from the Global Volunteers Network people and several other individual volunteers. At the last monitor in May, rat presence was down from 70% to 60%. It is planned to have another pulse (putting toxin in bait stations and trapping) in September for the Spring rat population jump. The Global Volunteers Network will be back to help in August to help on this and other project for nine days and we will also be hosting at least two individual volunteers for one month starting in September.* This will give the project an enormous boost. Certain areas where rats are now known to be at very low numbers are showing marked signs of seedling increase. Some areas of bare ground under old mature trees are a carpet of native seedlings.

* We are looking for locals to assist with accommodation for the longer term volunteers. Financial contributions are available to home stay hosts.

Please contact Diane or Lettecia on 07 866 6926 for more information

Moehau Environment Group Kiwi Sanctuary:

Traps were spaced approximately 180m apart using a GPS to determine point-to-point distance. Trap lines were spaced approximately 1,000m apart on existing tracks, ridges, roads and valley floors.

After discussing the relative merits of performance contractors and employees the Moehau Environment Group committee decided to opt for staff, partly due to a subsidy offered by the WorkBridge employment support agency. Ron Peters and Erle Williams were hired in mid October 2004 to cut the tracks and carry out the trapping. They made excellent progress with the dry weather during the early part of 2005 and have cut about 110km of track and installed 595 traps. A few days of track cutting remain to complete the trap line grid at Karuna Falls.

The first trap was set on 29 January at a ceremony in Waikawau Bay. The trappers have since caught 82 stoats and 72 weasels as detailed in Figure 1.



MEG Stoat trapper
Erle Williams



MEG Stoat trapper
Ron Peters

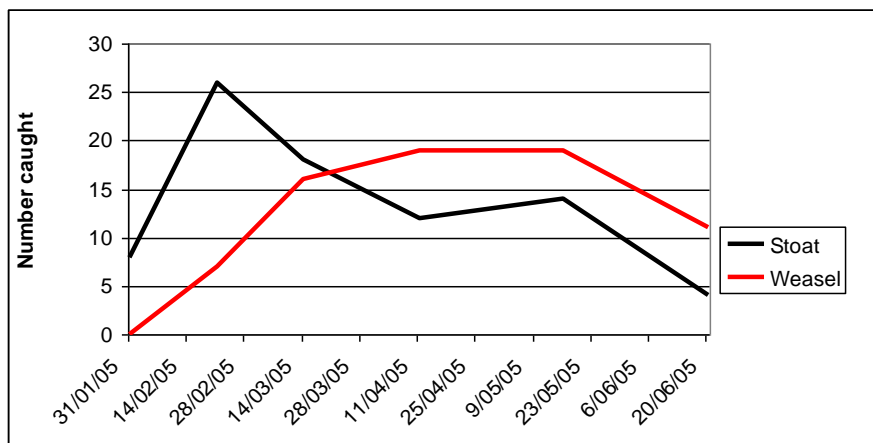


Figure 1: Predator catch rates at the Moehau Environment Group Kiwi Sanctuary, Jan-Jun 2005.

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In addition to the targeted species, we caught 299 rats, 12 hedgehogs, 2 feral cats, 2 rabbits, a mouse and a blackbird. Unlike the DOC operation we have yet to catch a beer bottle or small piglet!

Good news. Our funding from the BNZ Kiwi Recovery Trust for the upkeep of the MEG Kiwi Sanctuary has been secured for the next twelve months and we will be able to continue to employ locals to manage the stoat lines.

Feral Goat Project:

Moehau Environment Group is supporting the DOC/Environment Waikato initiative to remove or eradicate all the feral goats off the northern peninsula from Whangaahahei to Waikawau Bay and north.

Those landowners wishing to keep goats are being encouraged to upgrade fences and some funding is available to help them out.

It will be a three year project with funding secured already for that time frame.

Contractors are planning to start late October, early November.

Maungatautari Trip.



MEG and friends at Maungatautari.



Checking out the Pest Proof Fence at Maugatautari

9th-10th July

A great gathering of the Committee down at Maungatautari to look at the progress of the Maungatautari fence project so far, and to hear from Chris Smuts Kennedy more about their processes and approaches. They have a 65 ha block completely fenced with an amazing walkway, footbridges and interpretation, ready to go for the reintroduction of endangered species. Kiwi are due to arrive before the end of July. It was also an opportunity for us to catch up on a bit of 'visioning', future planning, and celebrate a year of successes.

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 6 August 2005

10.30am – 2.30pm

Colville Hall

Lunch provided

Guest Speakers:

* **Jo Ritchie: (Natural Logic)**

- Tawharaunui Regional Park Pest Proof Fence Project: the process and the experience.

* **Hamish Kendal: (QE II Trust)**

- Covenanted: what this could mean for you.

Further information:

Ph. Wayne 07 866 6928

Or email wayne@landcare.org.nz

We are holding our AGM In:

{ Conservation Week-1st to 7th August }

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