

HOCHSTETTER- Sept 05

Annual General Meeting a Great Day.



Jo Ritchie

A wonderful turnout of 42 local landowners and iwi representatives, and two stimulating speakers made a recipe for a successful day at Moehau Environment Group's AGM on the 6th of August.

Jo Ritchie, the Project Manager, for the Auckland Regional Council's Tawharaunui Park Pest Proof Fence and protected area, spoke on the success of that project and suggested pointers for MEG's proposed fence project.

Hamish Kendal, QEII Trust covenanting representative, spoke on the varied ways landowners are now able to covenant their lands, and how they can go about it.

To top it off MEG were able to announce their successes in receiving significant funding this year for :-

Maintaining the MEG Kiwi Sanctuary (7000ha) and the stoat trapping programme for the next twelve months, from BNZ Kiwi Recovery Trust - \$32,000.

The completion of the Rat Attack project infrastructure (300ha rat traps and poison bait stations) and a full maintenance programme over the next twelve months, from Biodiversity Condition Fund - \$42,000.

The installation of possum control (bait stations and control over a further 200ha) to add to the existing 2000ha already in place, from funds ex DOC and Environment Waikato - \$13,500.

And a paid coordinator four days a week for the next year, from Biodiversity Advice Fund -\$50,000.

Project Updates: MEG Kiwi Sanctuary

It's a quiet time for stoat trapping at present with Winter and early Spring still upon us. Fewer animals are about and fewer trapping rounds.

However, DOC has helped put up money and materials for a consolidation of MEG's Kiwi Sanctuary southern boundary, with the addition of 83 more traps to cover a further 1200ha (approx). After tracks were cut by the contracting team, a group of MEG volunteers, and our trapping crew went and installed most of it in a day. The trapping crew of Ron Peters and Earl Williams will complete their initial contract next month and they will carry on with some of the trapping lines, under a new system for the next six months or so. We will keep some trap lines for our volunteers to do. This involves checking, cleaning, and resetting the



Volunteers on Stoat Trap Installation

traps once a month during Winter(or left a little longer) and once a fortnight in Summer

We would welcome anyone interested in taking on a trap line, which could become “theirs” to maintain. A very worthy activity, which not only helps with the survival of Kiwi, but protects so many other native species of birds, insects, and reptiles, as well.

For further information contact: Wayne 07 866 6928 or Lettecia 07 866 6926.

Rat Attack

Getting the funding for this project has been a wonderful boost.

Diane and Lettecia, with support of the local community, have been hard out over the past month, getting the traps in and baiting. We are now employing two extra people part time to help, and phase one is almost complete.

Extra support funds have also been received from individual land owners or land owner group to cover their part of this project, and QEII National Trust will be supplying some further funds for the Erson Holdings Covenant .

A huge effort was put in by the last group of Global Volunteers from the Global Volunteer Network (see article below) The area protected is now approaching 300ha.

If we can keep rats down to a 5% presence over the next two years we will be eligible for the re-introduction of rare and endangered species as they become available.- Blue Duck, Stitchbirds, Saddle Backs and Robins, to name but a few.

Incidentally, DOC also have a rat removal project at Stony Bay and theirs is now out to 800ha.

Information is shared and it is hoped that joint re-introductions of endangered species will be able to take place. The DOC project has successfully kept rats to very low numbers for over a year,now.

Possum Patrol: The Collar Buffer

This is the one kilometer wide setup of tracks and bait stations coast-to-coast to remove possums and reduce rats.

MEG are carrying out installation over a 190ha reserve of very steep bush and scrub country in partnership with Environment Waikato who have a contracting crew doing a further 1500ha.

Up to five people have been employed by us part time to get our part in. It has been hard work with the country very steep and rugged and slippery with winter wet.

This block has some wonderful coastal forest remnants with huge old ratas, pohutukawa, and puriri, but is in serious



deterioration at present from possum damage. There are many grey, dry, bleached-out tree-crowns and some old forest giants may not survive. On a more positive note- one of the track-cutters found a gully full of King Ferns (*Marattia salicina*) which had somehow missed the ravages of cattle and pigs over the past 100 years. This fern is fairly rare on the northern Coromandel and found in very few places. This gully is lush and fairly extensive.

Global Volunteers Network

We are now connected into the Global Volunteers Network and have groups of 6-8 overseas young people spending a couple of weeks at a time helping with our conservation projects. They do an awesome job and are a lot of fun to have around. It gives them first hand experience of conservation work and the rural lifestyle we live.

There will be groups coming about every three months for the next year to join in. And as well we have individual overseas volunteers coming for longer periods with four already booked for the coming six months.

For our longer stay visitors we do need occasional billets. Support for board will be given. If you can help please call Lettecia or Diane on: 07 866 6926

The Pest Proof Fence Proposal.

This is progressing well with twelve of the landowners having given provisional consent.

This covers over three quarters of the distance (6kms approx). The proposed route so far has been GPS surveyed, at 100m intervals; and will be pegged, for further discussion and negotiation with these landowners.

Discussions are also underway with the QEII National Trust legal team and a lawyer to look at best legal options for everyone. Also with Thames Coromandel District Council to assess resource consent needs and look at proposed fence ends at the road edges.

In the meantime surveying and landowner consultation and negotiations continue.

Environment Waikato and DOC have recently indicated that, given an appropriate business case is put together, and all landowners involved are signed on, they will give support to MEG for the project.

Pateke(Brown Teal).

The breeding season is underway with 15 ducklings seen.

Of the 63 birds released back in mid-May 9 have died. This is sad, but is far fewer than would be expected. Four were run over by vehicles! Seems they're not very savvy about the road code. Five were also predated (by Harrier Hawks).

A windbreak fence has been erected along the road edge by the flock site, at the mouth of the Tangiaro River, Port Charles, to help reduce deaths. It redirects the ducks away from the road.

Rebecca Caldwell, local farmer, who is monitoring the ducks, says “it’s all looking pretty good so far this year”.

NZ Landcare Trust partnership.

The paid coordinator's position is now solely with Moehau Environment Group rather than a joint position with NZ Landcare Trust . After some initial glitches it is now business as usual, with the coordinator giving all energies to MEG's projects.

Please note the new coordinator contact email address.

Volunteers Weekend- November 12th +13th.

We would like to invite you to take part in this our first 'Outside Volunteers' weekend.

A chance to get to know the committee, help with projects, see the country, fabulous views, and have a good time.

Get to see NZ Dotterels, Brown Teal, and even maybe a Kiwi.

Accommodation will be provided with shared meals, Friday night, Saturday and Sunday.

For more information ph: wayne on 07 866 6928 or email: wayne@meg.org.nz

Visit our web site at www.meg.org.nz

Membership is now 130 fully paid to date.

To those who have given generous donations as well, we thank you so much.

Do you know someone who might be interested in supporting Moehau Environment Group?

Why not encourage them to join?

Membership is still \$10/person or \$20/family.

Protecting the future by regenerating the past.