

megaphone

THE FACTS & ISSUES

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"That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics. That land yields a cultural harvest is a fact long known, but latterly forgotten."

-Aldo Leopold. March 4, 1948.

A CHILDREN'S FOREST IS STARTED

EDITORIAL

Kia ora and greetings! After some fairly long silences, we are endeavouring to keep you all up to date more often. So here is our 'deluxe edition'. We hope you like it.

Our AGM passed without incident with a good turnout. It was a fairly low key affair this year. Many members took the opportunity to renew their membership and we thank you.

Speaker, Jason Roxburgh from DOC, Hauraki Area Office, talked about the proposed translocation of two bird species to our area in the next twelve months. This is exciting news and will be the "icing on the cake" to a lot of hard grind to reduce predators over the past five years.

DOC and MEG will work in partnership towards the release of Kokako and North Island Robins. MEG's Rat Attack project area, (Port Charles) will be one of the release sites for the Robins. Kokako are to be released at Stony Bay and will add yet more "flavour" to an already beautiful bay.

This year's committee remains the same, but we welcome new committee member, Thomas Everth, IT professional, of Coromandel. He and partner Lisa Kearney, are both committed to supporting conservation and have a keen interest in environmental sustainability. It will be great to have him on board. He will be doing the MEGaphone from now on.

We were also able to announce the very good news of funding secured for the next three years (see article next page). So the new year will definitely be off to a good start.

Over the next six months our focus will be "Eggs in Nests". Ensuring eggs survive, hatch, and chicks fledge. From Kiwis to Crakes and Pateke to Pied Tits. Trapping is well under way for the spring for rats, stoats, feral cats and other "little vaminants". From the map (page two) you will see we have begun some new and very different projects. Besides the Wetlands project at Waikawau Bay, we have established a 'Children's Forest' there as well, with the Colville School. (See article). Moving in new directions with children's environmental programmes is also part of the new year's operations, especially school groups.

So there we are. Be great to have your continued support. We are in need of more on-the-ground volunteers so why not come along, get fit, have fun, and enjoy some healthy outdoors!

Till next time...happy reading! Oh and don't forget to check out the website for updates in between issues at www.meg.org.nz

Wayne Todd - Projects Coordinator



Colville School joined forces with Moehau Environment Group (MEG) members during Conservation Week, to create the beginnings of a "Children's Forest".

Eighteen children and 20 adults spent an enjoyable two hours planting in a small valley at the north end of Waikawau Bay, on Department of Conservation lands in the northern Coromandel. Thanks to funding from the Honda Tree Fund, administered by Environment Waikato, 200 eco-sourced native trees will create the beginnings of this forest.

"This is a dream we have had for about ten years. We were overwhelmed by the turnout and had to send someone to get more trees!" says Wayne Todd, Coordinator for MEG.

Environment Waikato land management officer, Emily O'Donnell, who helped initiate the project, was on site to give a hand. DOC's Area Manager for Hauraki John Gaukrodger gave his support saying it was an exciting project.

"This activity comes as a special extra to our new 'Enviroschool's programme", says Heath Sawyer, principal of Colville School. The Enviroschools programme, now part of the curriculum in many schools throughout the Wakato, promotes the idea that schools are part of the ecosystem they are within, and encourages pupils to create and care for living landscapes.

"It's about how to make our school environment better for all of us," said Heath Sawyer. Moehau Environment Group will provide support for this programme whenever possible.

The Childrens Forest will grow, with further plantings planned for the next two years.

EGGS IN NESTS

This is our eighth year of operation!

The map below is our latest update of all existing and proposed projects. As funding and donations come in we look to maintaining the established, and expanding the new. Contractors are used if possible to ensure a "professional" approach, but most of the work is done by local and overseas volunteers. Help is always needed;- wonderful views and a great way to get fit. Accommodation provided.

The aim over the next twelve months is:

- (1) To expand and consolidate the pest control areas for possums and rats
- (2) Encourage more landowners to participate
- (3) Get more leaves on trees
Bugs in the bush—and--
Eggs in nests of those wee birdies!!

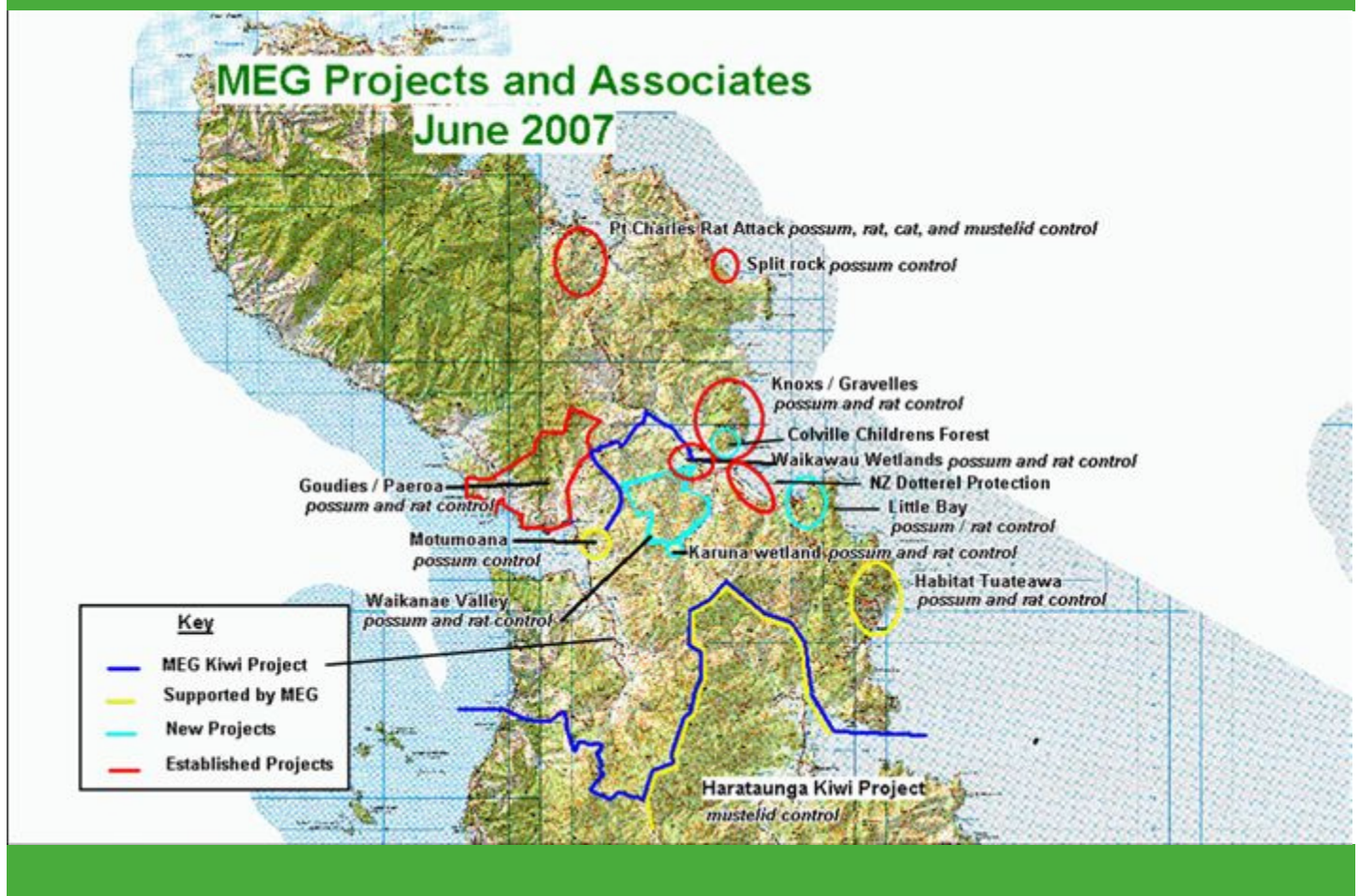
WETLANDS PROJECT UPDATE

Started in June 2006, the project has grown to 62ha. It is a mix of estuarine/salt marsh ecosystem and freshwater wetlands.

From a small beginning of 45 bait stations for poisons to keep down rat numbers, there are now 160 stations and 75 rat traps as well.

Monitoring in May, 07, indicated zero rats, but 43% mice presence. Since October 06, there have been 65 rats and 110 mice trapped. This is as well as the bi-monthly poisoning. A recent survey has indicated at least 10 pairs of Fernbirds and we are now looking for nests to monitor. One pair of Spotless Crake has been seen in recent months, which is great news and there are several Banded Rail, but are very hard to locate. Only the occasional chance sighting tells us they're there. So here's hoping for more eggs in nests this year. We welcome inquiries and would love your support!

Current MEG Projects and Associates



MEG RECEIVES THREE YEAR FUNDING PACKAGE!

On Friday before Labour Weekend, MEG received the wonderful news of three years further foundation funding' from the DOC, Biodiversity Condition and Advice Fund.

This central govt funding grant will enable the Rat Attack project to continue at current levels of operation and the work with the translocation of North Island Robins to be carried out. It will ensure part time work for at least two local people, for those three years.

A further three year grant was received also for the MEG Coordinator's position and will ensure that MEG has an on-

the-ground person to work with the local community, promote projects in the area, support the education and awareness programmes, and work as a liaison between MEG and government agencies.

What these grants do overall is give MEG security, and stability: a solid base to work from to promote ecosystem management and environmental sustainability for the area. It also means that new projects can be looked at seriously, and existing ones consolidated.

Many thanks to the Biodiversity Condition and Advice Fund, for investing in us.

We will give it our very best!

COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILE

Yuri Forbes

Brrrrrrrrnnnggggggg!! It's 3:18am and Yuri Forbes is woken for his half hourly check on whether Rangipo, a male kiwi nesting near the summit of Mt Moehau, is off the nest. He yawns, turns on the headlight in his tiny tent and unzips the door, once again letting in the cool south west breeze on this October night. The TR4 receiver is switched on and Yuri listens for the familiar "beep...beep...beep" of the kiwi's transmitter. It's fainter than before and varies every few seconds, indicating that Rangipo is out looking for a feed. Yuri pulls on his bush-shirt and heads out to the nest.

Just as he approaches the nest under a clump of Gahnia, he notices an Archey's frog perched on the dripping leaves of an epiphytic lily, and smiles to himself. Then, as he shines his torch beam on the tiny kiwi chick inside Rangipo's hidden burrow, a female kiwi calls 30m away to his right, standing up the hairs on his neck. Yuri reaches into the burrow and attaches a small transmitter to the bird before releasing it and retreating back to his tent.

Yuri's job as a Ranger in DOC's Moehau Kiwi Sanctuary puts him in some strange places. The chick he has caught will be one of 27 monitored this season to improve our knowledge of what is happening to kiwi at Moehau. Indications are that the work Yuri and his team have been doing for the last six years is contributing to a 14% increase in the number of kiwi present each year.

Pim De Monchy

BUSH RECOVERY LOOKING GOOD

Having lived in Port Charles for nearly thirty years, and driven the road in and out more times than I care to count, it was a thrill to see last summer a sight I have never seen before – a whole small valley of Rata trees in full bloom! They were quite hard to see between the immediate roadside growth of Manuka, but the tantalising glimpse of crimson was enough to make me stop and investigate. There were possibly six or seven trees, and they were magnificent.

This can only be due to the intensive predator pest control being carried out in the Tangiaro Stream catchment area. What an incredible result of the hard work done by so many people.

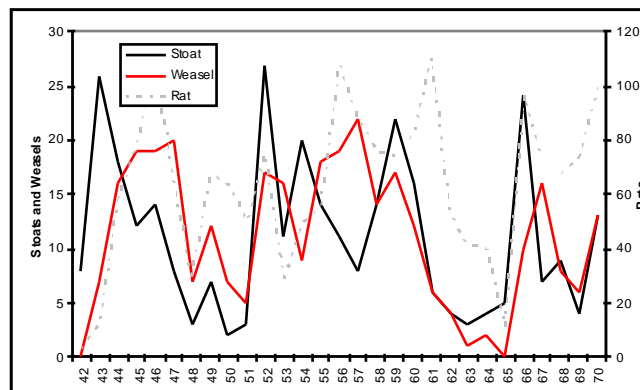
It was hard to tell how big the trees were, due to the steep nature of the land, and the difficulty in getting a really good view of them.

My impression is that flowering trees and plants have had a bumper year. The Pohutukawa, Rata, Olearia (tree daisies) and Akeake seem laden with blossoms, while even the weeds (unfortunately) have flowered prolifically. Ragwort and woolly nightshade have been particularly noticeable, and wild ginger seems to be creeping back steadily, especially on roadsides in Port Charles. It is to be hoped that both local and regional councils will make attempts to keep on top of the weed problem, to back up efforts already made by many volunteers.

Tina Morgan

TRAP REPORT

MEG Kiwi sanctuary trapping report 27/7/07



Trap results from trap run #42 (Jan 05) to #70 (June 07)

Numbers for Stoats and Weasels are down from the same month in 2006. This is hopefully a good sign that the hard work of our volunteers and workers is bearing fruit.

TERRY'S CRITTER HOMES

While producing some more of his critter homes, two teenage girls and a middle age English tourist came past Terry's place and said they couldn't believe how open and friendly and accommodating every one was in New Zealand.

Terry showed them how to make his critter homes and the girls were blown away with being able to use power tools and being able to make such usable things in a short time.

Terry often works with children who are very enthusiastic in making wood working projects as they go towards gaining their proficiency badges for 'Cubs and Guides'.



SUMMER PROGRAMME '06 A SUCCESS!

I was fortunate to take part in the Moehau Heli-Hike, part of MEG's wonderful Summer Programme. One participant mentioned that he and his 9 year old son had taken part in the walk to Karuna Falls, another Programme item. The walk was not an easy one, but his son had managed very well. When the walk was over, he told his Dad "*That was the second best thing I've ever done in my life!*" When asked what the best thing was, he replied that it was holding a kiwi, which he had done on a Kiwi Encounter in 2006.

When the MEG Committee were told this story, they were thrilled, to know that the Summer Programme was such a success for one small boy, and to know that he will remember his experiences with the natural world for a long time to come – a conservationist of the future!

Tina Morgan



Colville School Summer Camp Programme

5th & 6th Dec

Coromandel Steiner School Summer Camp- 6th & 7th Dec

Waikato Tramping Club Visit

2nd & 3rd February, 2008



Happy Trappers...

Volunteer for MEG, assist us in our pest control and environmental protection work. It's fun!

MEG SUMMER PROGRAMME 2008

Starts January, 2008

Date	JANUARY 2007
3	Heli-hike
	Critter Home & Restaurants
4	Pateke
	Nocturnal walk
	Tangiaro Botanix
5	Kiwi by Night
6	Junior Rangers
7	What's in a Stream
8	Cuvier
	Kiwi Close Encounter
	Bugs & Creepy Crawlies
9	Cuvier
	Kiwi by Night
10	Cuvier
11	Stoat Line Walk
12	Junior Rangers
14	Kiwi night
	What's in a Stream
15	Kiwi Close
	Bugs & Creepy Crawlies
17	What's in a Stream
18	Rocky Shore
	Bugs and Creepy Crawlies
21	Kiwi by night
22	Kiwi Close Encounters
28	Kiwi by night
29	Kiwi Close Encounters

For Details Please refer to the official MEG Summer Programme Schedule, available on the MEG website and published separately.

For any inquiries call us at 07 866 6928

JOIN MEG AND SUPPORT OUR PROJECTS

Membership application

Name:

Address:

Ph:

E:

I am interested in helping with MEG's projects: YES NO

Annual Membership fees:
Single: \$10.00 Family: \$20.00 Corporate: \$50.00

I would like to donate a further: \$

Payable to: The Membership Coordinator
Moehau Environment Group, Sandy Bay RD 4, Coromandel.

For further information: Wayne Todd, MEG Coordinator,
Waikawau Bay RD 4, Coromandel Ph: 07 866 6928
E: wayne@meg.org.nz W: www.meg.org.nz

WE THANK YOU!