



Waimate North Landcare Trust Inc. Annual Report 2024

Chair's comments - Phillip Saunders

When the Trust was set up over 25 years ago, part of its kaupapa and philosophy was to encourage a sense of community and this is still a priority today. A healthy environment is protected by and for its residents. When you plant a tree or remove a pest or two, you are working for our community's environment.

After covid and the caution about holding public events, Waimate North Landcare Trust, as with many organisations, has found it challenging to reconnect with the community. A wider approach is needed, whilst maintaining our bedrock engagement.

Funding and Resources

Another major challenge for us is funding and resources. We are operating in a very competitive environment with reduced funding available for this work nationally. Therefore, we are very grateful for the support given to us from our main funder Save the Kiwi. Save the Kiwi is the only national charity devoted to kiwi survival and wellbeing, and it has funded much of the local predator control in recent years. Save the Kiwi funds are key to keeping Waimate North forests in good health.

This year we continued to enjoy a good relationship with Kiwi Coast who is doing some wonderful work supporting, enabling and connecting community-led kiwi recovery. Co-ordinators Andrew Mentor and Mae Lewis have been very helpful to us with advice, workshops and resources such as traps, bait and signage.

We also appreciate our connections with Northland Regional Council (NRC), in particular Bernie Buhler from the Partnership Team. This year we were fortunate to become part of the Mid-North High Value Area partnership supported by NRC.

After the last AGM, the Trust decided to take a different approach to structuring the way we work. Instead of a formal Chair we took on a shared chair approach so that all members can have turns at planning and chairing committee meetings. Our work is divided into sub-committees and members report back on progress to each meeting.

Each member leading their 'portfolio' has provided a brief report to this annual report.

Pest control – Phillip Saunders, John Todd, John Beachman

Animal pest control work continues to be a major activity for the Trust since it began. We have been able to fund our long-term professional trapper to continue predator trap checks and some possum control again this year. Thank you to Rid Em Pest Control staff who have been working with the Trust for many years.

The Trust operates over an area of approximately 9,400ha and there are 43 kms of traplines in the Waitangi Valley and Waikaramu and Showgrounds roads, targeting predators and possums.

In May, Kiwi Coast lent us 10 automatic traps to place on the Okuratope Pa site and helped us install them. Two cameras were also placed by two of the traps and, disturbingly, captured cat, pig and hawk activity. We estimate that at least 100 possums, and many rats also, have ended their predatory lives here. Thank you to Te Rau Allen, representing Te Whiu hāpu, who gave consent for pest control work on the Okuratope pa site.

If residents log their monthly volunteer hours and pest/predator kill details, under the Activity Return button on the trust’s website, or to a trustee, it helps the trust to show funders the community is committed to supporting the trust’s work. Those volunteer hours are critical to both the environmental welfare of the Waimate North district and to obtaining funding from Save the Kiwi and philanthropic organisations. This year there were over 30 regular contributors from the community providing data of pest kills.

A special thank you to our past Chair Daryl Way who continues to help the Trust in a number of ways, including providing regular bait for the trapper.

Pest control totals for 2023/2024:

Weasel	Stoat	Ferret	Feral cat	Possum	Rat	Mouse	Rabbit/Hare	Hedgehog	Other
26	12	0	31	762	918	143	18	160	3

Tree nursery – John Dryburgh, Isobel Dryburgh

Landcare runs a small native tree nursery where we grow on native seedlings for use in regenerative projects and to sell on to the local community as a fundraiser for the trust.

We held a tree auction and community barbeque this year for the first time for a number of years due to covid. Unfortunately, there was a low attendance on a very cold winter’s night. Thank you to our great auctioneer John Locke and to Caroline Locke who helped with sales on the night. We did sell a lot of the trees at the auction and through advertising on social media and word of mouth.

The remainder will be planted locally in wetlands or grown on. We are always keen to source seedlings to replenish and maintain stock.

Kiwi Listening – Phillip Saunders

The kiwi listening dates go across the financial year of this report and the following year. Because of this it is sensible to speak of both years at the AGM. This year there was a great deal of help in organising the listening to make it possible. Every site was listened to for the full four nights which was excellent. Two long term sites were unable to be listened to.

A basic overview of June/July 2024 kiwi listening shows the total number of calls on four sites were down, and five sites were up. The overall total of calls was around the same as the previous year again. The figures can be interpreted numerous ways; overall the indication would be a holding of the population level. Full analysis is in progress to show which sites are doing well and which are being challenged.

Thank you to the landowners who allow our listeners to come onto their land every year.

A particular thanks to our awesome team of listeners. The names are listed to acknowledge the level of commitment and effort:

Daryl Way	Helen Horobin, Chris Boniface
Claire, Riley and Aila Wooldridge	Robyn Hayes and Michelle Lewis
Roger and Allison Atkinson	Jane Little and Sara Rogers
Alan Hookway	Amber Brindle and Adam Jones
Mike Edwardson	Trina Upperton
John and Isobel Dryburgh	Anne Chiaroni, John Todd and Carol Nicholson

Kauri Snail Monitoring – Phillip Saunders

Snail monitoring was carried out in November 2023. The monitoring is used as a guide to how the population is doing, but also as an indication of predator activity and effectiveness of our pest control work. No live snails were recorded on the latest visit but there was evidence of snail presence. The indication over the years is of a consistent population.

The plots are on difficult terrain, especially for our helpers who are ageing. As one helper said, the hill gets steeper each year. It was decided that, since there are hazards for the less agile, members will develop new accessible plots for this year.

Kiwi Aversion Training for dogs – John Beachman

This event was held on 18 February at Daniel Miers property on Waikaramu Road. The trainer is a professionally certified contractor from Whangarei.

Training involves fitting the dog with an electric collar and then walking the dog with the owner and the trainer around a short (150 metre) circuit where three dead kiwi have been placed. The dog picks up the first kiwi scent and if it moves towards the dead bird the contractor administers an electric shock via the collar. This deters the dog from further investigation of the kiwi. The walk continues and almost invariably the dog studiously avoids the second and third kiwi. This short 10-minute exercise seems to imprint kiwi avoidance in most dogs. It is noticeable that dogs repeating the training usually avoid all the decoy kiwi.

The trainer is a serious dogman whose fondness for all breeds of dogs and empathy and willing engagement with dogs and owners provides a really positive environment for these training days.

This coupled with Daniel Miers generous hosting and the beauty of his streamside property adds up to a good day in the Waimate North calendar.

A few issues with kiwi aversion training.

- Cost. Because the Trust hires the trainer, we seek a donation of \$25 for each dog trained. Most people pay willingly, some pay more than the \$25, some don't pay at all.
- Targeting. The Trust tries to get the word out ahead of the training day. But we do miss a lot of dogs in the catchment. These owners might be unaware. But we do know that kiwi are still being killed by dogs in Waimate North.

Wetland Restoration – John Beachman

For about 15 years the Trust has been actively restoring the wetland margins on the Heritage NZ (HNZ) and Church properties on Showgrounds Road. Plantings have been quite successful and there is now a developing fringe of native forest and wetland plants along the margins. A working bee last spring removed invasive weeds, particularly Kahili Ginger, Tobacco Weed and Taiwan Cherry and also carried out further enrichment plantings of native species.

The restored wetland margin is quite narrow and some of the planted trees have toppled in high winds. The margin would be more resilient if it was wider. To that end the Trust has applied to HNZ for the fence to be relocated to provide a wider area of native plants adjoining the wetland. HNZ is considering this option and will get back to us with their decision.

Events and social media – Anne Chiaroni, Phillip Saunders, Robyn Allpress

Last year, we began again to make a determined effort to have social functions.

We started with a safe outside function, a picnic in the Mission House grounds in autumn 2023 and another one this year, both on days when the weather wasn't at its best. We had our first Xmas BBQ last year and our annual tree auction in the lovely Showgrounds Hall this May.

None of these events however have been well attended despite our efforts at promoting them with hand-delivered mail outs, and postings on the local Google group, and our Facebook page, along with the community Facebook page. We are keen to hear feedback on how to better connect with our community.

During Covid and following it Waimate North Landcare has worked hard to develop a social media presence. Special thanks to Vicki Allpress, arts digital communications manager, who helped us to develop a Social Media plan with the focus on Facebook to increase our profile. With the average age of trustees around 73 plus it's a learning curve!

In addition, we've launched a new website and would like to express our gratitude to Peter Haythornthwaite, who has designed a new logo for us. Peter is one of New Zealand's most celebrated and successful industrial designers who now lives in Waimate North.

Waimate North Landcare Trust committee members:

Phillip Saunders	John Beachman	Isobel Dryburgh	John Dryburgh
Anne Chiaroni	John Todd	Paul Fieldman	Robyn Allpress