

Centennial Park Bush Society Inc

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Annual Report 2011

1. Summary

- We lost our two wonderful patrons Pat and John Morton in March this year.
- Membership – 147 households, excluding corporate sponsors
- Finances are healthy with a snapshot balance end of year of \$7800
- Volunteers put in 2091 hours of work in the 2010 calendar year and over 800 year to date
- CPBS has continued to work proactively on the native forest restoration of Centennial Park in Campbells Bay. We do this by controlling invasive weeds, mulching, and planting both with volunteer and contractor input over numerous sites.
- The summer has been wetter than usual promoting amazing growth of new plants
- The Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary has seen work continue outside the main bush block on sites throughout the catchment especially Park Rise Bush.
- We continue to grow ecosourced plants
- Erosion continues to be a serious issue and a catchment plan process has started
- Volunteers continue to maintain the track network, including reconstructing the Tui Track and finishing and opening the Park Rise Bush Track.
- We continue to trap for possums, rats and stoats and have increased our trapping effort
- We continue to monitor water quality, bird life, weed invasion and other markers

2. Pat and John Morton pass away

Prof John Morton died in March this year. He was very frail with Parkinson's disease which he hated. His funeral at St Mary's in Parnell was well attended and his basic coffin was dressed with shells and native plants. The handles were woven by his lovely Maori caregiver and his grandson played the cello. John was a very clever man, an inspiring teacher, an accomplished illustrator, zoologist, activist, and Christian. He and Pat originated the Bush Society in 1977.

Sadly Pat Morton died only two weeks later. Her funeral at St Johns in Campbells Bay was well attended. Friends and family bought up our stock of Just Scrub as a memento. Pat was the rock behind the Bush Society for many years, planting many of the rimu, totara, kahikatea and kauri which are now just bursting through the manuka canopy in the park.

3. Membership

Current membership stands at 147 households.

4. Finance

Our main expenditure this year has been the removal of wattle and pines on the edge of Park Rise Bush and the ongoing weed control by contractor of the Park Rise Bush gully. In addition we spent \$6500 on plants for Kowhai Rd. The \$20,000 grant from the DOC Community Conservation Fund is being spent on the Kowhai Rd restoration project and Park Rise bush with the remainder for removing acmena. Finances were boosted considerably by donations received in honour of Pat and John Morton.

5. Volunteers

Volunteer work days continue with "Wednesday Workers" meeting every week, weeding, mulching, planting and maintaining tracks. "Weekend Workers" work days occur every month with excellent support of up to 20 people at a time. Our main focus has been continuing a progressive systematic sweep of the main bush block this year from where we left off near the 14th tee and only getting as far as the 13th tee. In addition we have concentrated on the build of the Park Rise Bush Track which is now complete. Peter Bioletti has supervised Community Service referrals from youth justice. Jan Knight has

been supervising a small crew of workers on Wednesdays who have been concentrating on weed control of our planting areas – absolutely essential work.

6. Management Plan

We now have a new park management plan. This protects the stand of wattles near Rae Rd however those on the edge of the bush have been swiftly removed by the parks department. The Acmena patch is an ongoing source of contention with the plan stating that the acmena should be removed over an indefinite time frame. Pine removals are now limited to 3 per year.

7. Bush restoration work in the main bush valley

7.1 Avenue of Remembrance

Weed control has continued with a new weed *Carex divulsa* being a particular target. We are removing agapanthus in stages from the “Dugdale gully” above and below the road, and the gully next to court 6. We are continuing to slowly replace agapanthus in these gullies and replace with native plants.

7.2 Acmena replacement program

Most of the replacement planting from previous removals is doing well. After much discussion, meetings and aggravation, a new replacement planting plan for the acmena was developed. Eight acmena have been removed by parks using DOC funding leaving five behind. The timing for removal of these five is dependent on success of mitigation planting and is indefinite. We feel that all remaining acmena in the park should be removed as soon as possible.

7.3 Pine reduction program

The management plan revision almost completely removed our right to slowly remove pines from the park. Last minute lobbying by us resulted in councillors overriding the Takapuna Community Board and allowing three pines to be removed per year. We took advantage of this by removing one near the wattles and two others in the main bush. Mitigation planting will occur this season.

7.4 Wattles

The new management plan allows removal of all the wattles on the bush edge in the main valley, protecting the remainder of the wattles surrounded by grass. It is astounding that elected representatives of the community would protect wattles in a park management plan despite their obvious invasive characteristics. The Takapuna Community Board people involved in this plan displayed remarkable lack of awareness of the importance of native forest restoration work. They refused to meet on site to view the issues first hand with Bush Society representatives. Having said that, the parks arborist ensured that those wattles which could be removed, were removed smartly, at council expense.

7.5 Wetland

The wetland restoration area is growing well. Steve Cook had a contract to control tradescantia which lapsed allowing a lot of regrowth in this area. Fortunately he has started work on trad control again. Bindweed is making a come back and will need ongoing work.

7.6 Aberdeen Track

Rae Rd gully has not been touched since last year. Erosion is serious in this gully which receives pipes from Rae Rd.

The jasmine infestation on “Joe’s ridge” below the large rewarewa has not been revisited.

We have continued weed control in “Harvey gully”. *Setaria* (palm grass) and trad keep reappearing.

Under the flame trees, Steve Cook had been controlling trad under a council contract which again lapsed. Ongoing maintenance of trad is so important. Fortunately this has restarted. Below the flame trees is “honeysuckle city” but the kahikatea are growing well as is all the regeneration from where the pines were felled 3 years ago.

From here through to the swimming pool in the area of Mary Hardwick-Smith’s macrocarpa seat, trad regrowth has been controlled by Steve Cook in the past, lapsed and now has restarted.

The planting under the pool, where jasmine has been removed is doing well. Nearby a cedar had been deliberately poisoned and illegally felled – this area was planted last year by the Bush Society and is growing well.

Further along the area on the left where the bamboo was removed several years ago is regenerating well. An uncommon weed, *Callistachys*, is still a problem here. Trad and jasmine needs monitoring.

7.7 Kohekohe track

This is the gem of the park. Minimal work has been done removing the odd ginger patch and the occasional Mexican devil weed. Selaginella is still a problem and the track needs work in places. At the top end of the track straggler bamboo are being controlled here. Erosion is an issue in the upper kohekohe as are falling pines which occasionally straddle the track and require arborist attention.

7.8 Below the 14th tee

Our planting area at the 14th tee continues to mature. The riparian planting in the slip site on the 14th fairway is doing really well.

7.9 The main bush weed sweep

The main bush block in Centennial Park has been the subject of a systematic sweep carrying out a thorough blitz on all weeds found. Last year we worked the south side of the kohekohe from the tennis club up as far as the golf course and back along the 15th and 14th fairways as far as the 14th tee. This year we only got as far as the 13th tee as we spent more time on Park Rise Bush. When the bush dries out again we will be back.

8. Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary (CBUS)

CBUS is about working with the community to improve the ecology of Campbells Bay, to provide a weed and pest free environment to welcome native birds and wildlife. In practical terms this has meant weed control in the golf club lease, particularly Park Rise bush, at All Hallows church, and the corner of Huntly and Red Bluff Rise. We have made little progress with the proposed rhamnus removal project and the response to our call for removal of acmena on private land has been patchy. The school has removed a large row of acmena, a major plant pest, and replanted with titoki. Pest control is discussed later.

8.1 Golf club acmena

There are now only 4 significant acmena in the whole of the golf course near the 6th tee. We have permission to remove these this year.

8.2 16th tee

Our 16th tee restoration project is doing well as are the blue cedars on the edge of the 16th fairway planted to replace acmena.

8.3 17th fairway bank and plantation

This area has received little attention from the bush society. There is a wattle there on death row. Dead and falling gums in this plantation require attention and we are working with the golf club on this.

8.4 15th tee/old workshop area

The planting area below the old workshop and adjacent to the 15th tee has recovered after the drought as has woolly nightshade, tradescantia and other weeds. The three giant redwoods are growing now.

8.5 The plantations and other trees

We have had discussions with the golf club about what would be good replacement for the dying macrocarpa at the 13th green. Our suggestion is kanuka. Discussions continue. We have prioritised work on the plantations with the 17th top of the list, followed by those at the 14th, 8th and 5th. We have met with the club about the 17th plantation and how to progress felling the dead gums.

8.6 The 8th fairway plantation

There is plenty to do here with ladder fern, ginger, wattles. Currently it is down the list.

8.7 Park Rise accessway

At the top of the path the planting site continues to struggle slowly with severe competition from the large gums nearby. It would help if neighbours stop dumping there. At the 11th tee fence line, the 2007 planting is doing well. Blue passion flower an invasive climber keeps returning in this area.

8.8 Park Rise bush

Natural regeneration continues in this area as privet and wattle are controlled or felled.

“Park Rise gully”, runs from the redwoods on the 7th fairway to the steep drop off to the main gully. We have spent \$4500 on initial control + \$2000 on maintenance weed control here funded by the DOC grant. Volunteers planted this area in June 2010 with 400 plants which are all doing well. Alligator weed recurs at the top of the gully and volunteers keep returning to snuff out blue morning glory when it appears. We will fund another year of maintenance weed control here by our contractor Steve Cook who is doing a great job.

We removed agapanthus along the edge of Tree Fern trail with neighbour consent, and a small dingo excavator, replanting with native species. We hope the neighbours will keep this under control.

The big news in Park Rise bush has been the completion of the track. Takapuna Community Board paid for the last 80 metres of track near Park Rise (\$6500) and volunteers worked on the remainder. About 7 loads of metal and many hours of work assisted by Milford Rotary saw the track opened by Julia Parfitt, chair of the Hibiscus & Bays Local Board in April. About 100 people came to this event then walked the track. We planted two beautiful puriri in the gully for John and Pat Morton and enjoyed drink and food at Park Rise. The total cost of about 600m of track was less than \$10,000. This track now almost rivals the kohekohe track for magic.

We also funded the removal of about 20 wattles and 3 pines along the edge of the 6th and 7th fairways and have replanted the gaps this season.

8.9 4th tee

Peter's patch at the 4th tee has seen Peter B and his charges doing more weed control and fostering the planting there. Dead gums are bad here too.

8.10 Kowhai Rd restoration

Stage one and two of this area adjacent to Kowhai Rd are growing well as is the entrance to the golf club workshops. I hope they appreciate it. The final stage 3 has been planted in June this year by 24 willing helpers. We are grateful to Jan and her crew who keep the weeds under control here.

8.11 All Hallows Church bush

This is now in weed maintenance mode with one site visit in the past year and volunteer control of tradescantia. We heard that this bush may be under threat of sale due to the finances of the church. Over our dead bodies!

8.12 Huntly Rd

With council and neighbour permission we are removing honeysuckle, ginger, wattle and privet from the roadside at the corner of Huntly and Red Bluff Rise, another CBUS initiative. Planting has gone well and we will continue the staged removal of agapanthus here.

The planting around the buried retaining wall on the west side of the stream below Huntly Rd bridge is doing really well and it is now impossible to tell major work occurred here recently.

For the record, the Campbells Bay bridge finally became a reality at a cost of about \$500,000. Most people say it looks pretty good. Contrast the eyesore which is the broken retaining wall on the other side of the stream. We have asked for this to be looked at.

8.13 Campbells Bay School

A CBUS supporter, Campbells Bay School removed a row of large acmena trees last year. They have planted titoki, some of which are struggling and a hedge of griselinia.

8.14 Rhamnus

Rhamnus alaternus or evergreen buckthorn is widespread in the private properties in Campbells Bay and sporadic specimens crop up in the park. No further action has occurred on this unfortunately as we sadly did not get 75% neighbour approval of a community initiatives program. Volunteer resource is focussed on the park but we may get the chance to get into rhamnus.

9. Ecosourced plant propagation

Stan Knight has about 3000 ecosourced plants on his property. Stan has had more than his share of medical issues this year but continues to foster these plants. John Chapple in View Rd is also helping out with about 100 plants. Last year we planted about 1400 plants in numerous sites around the bay.

10. Erosion

The catchment management plan is finally kicking off. We have had two site meetings with council engineers and stormwater planners. We have shown them all the worst sites, some of which have deteriorated markedly in the past year. In particular there is a large eroded hole on the edge of the 13th fairway and a huge hole and tomo in the Asbury gully is causing clay to spew out at the beautiful glade near the large kahikatea on the Kohekohe track. This is a direct result of the sheer volume of water coming off the Park Rise subdivisions. It is now 10 years since the new subdivision went in and it has taken this long to deteriorate. We are carrying out more riparian planting to try to help stop erosion.

11. Rae Rd

Several meetings have been held to discuss our plans for a landscape upgrade of the Rae Rd entrance, including one with new local board members. The plan, designed by landscape architect Geraldine Bayly, is to soften the clutter of signs and railings with a simplified planted entrance and to link the Aberdeen track with the Avenue of Remembrance. We are pushing on with trying to turn this into a reality.

12. The track network

Volunteers continue to do most of the track maintenance in the park.

We created a new deviation on the mamaku track near the top of the kohekohe track to bypass a steep slippery area. This new track works really well and we have received many positive comments about it. It was a great days work, aided by remetalling by Ben Lenting. Each barrow of metal had to come from right up near the old workshop!

We fully metalled the new deviation at the southern end of the mamaku.

BNZ volunteers joined us for a day to reconstruct the entire length of the Tui track.

Council has supplied a few new track signs which will be installed soon.

13. Nature Trail

The new nature trail guide remains available at Rae Rd and now at a new pamphlet holder at the start of the trail. These are ably topped up by Jan Knight and others and vandalism repaired a few times!

14. Communications

We put out a 4 page newsletter twice a year, now in full colour, thanks to sponsorship through Garry Browne of Print Advisor Ltd. The printing is sponsored by Crucial Colour. We are very grateful for this wonderful sponsorship.

We send out an email once a week to those on the volunteer lists.

Our website at www.centennialparkbushsociety.org.nz needs improving and adding to. If anyone wants to be "Webmaster" please put up your hand. It needs a champion.

15. Animal Pest Control

We now have two trap lines, patrolled by 4 volunteers, covering about 40 rat traps, 6 possum traps and 2 stoat traps in the main valley. We continue to kill rats and mice. We have caught only two possums this year and one more weasel. In addition we commenced a line of bait stations in private properties

adjacent to the park along the Aberdeen Track. The potential of CBUS is yet to be realised. Only when we have a grid of bait stations through the entire catchment will the bird life really take off.

16. Bird Counts

Monthly bird counts continue by Alan Emmerson, Jenny Chamberlain and Liz Goodwin. Bird life continues to do well but could be loads better with decent pest control. Still no bellbirds.

17. Looking ahead

We have a good volunteer team who enjoy making a difference in the park. There is plenty of weed regrowth in all areas needing attention. We will push for the removal of more wattles and acmena as well as ensure our quota of three pines per year is taken up. There are more track projects awaiting attention in the wet months when planting is over and the bush too wet to get into.

18. Thankyou

Thanks to the golf club for working with us. Thanks also to Nicki Malone, Tony Hart, and Paul Cliffe, Parks Officers for supporting us with plants, spray gear and tools. Thanks to Andre Le Claire, parks arborist, who has supported the removal of wattles and acmena. Thanks to Recreational Services for removing multiple piles of weeds.

The biggest thanks go to the committee and the hard core of volunteer workers, without whom all this would not happen. Special thanks to Stan and Jan for giving up your garden for our plants. Thanks to Jenny Chamberlain for her secretarial and newsletter skills. Thanks to Max Thomson and Marg Palmer for handling the funds so well.

Richard Hursthouse
Chairman
June 2011