

Centennial Park Bush Society Inc

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www.centennialparkbushsociety.org.nz



Chairs Annual Report - June 2018

It is my pleasure to report on another busy and innovative year for the Bush Society.

1. Membership

Current membership is 158 households. Membership is by donation. We have as many non-members on our email lists as members.

2. Finance

End of year bank balance \$23,583. Most of this is linked to specific grants, although \$5600 is not committed. For details on finances and statistics please see associated Performance Report.

3. Volunteers

The Bush Rangers team and the Wednesday weeders team meet to weed, mulch, plant trees, maintain tracks, and chew the fat. Often the two teams work together.

"Weekend Workers" meet on the first Saturday of each month.

We hosted a team from Fonterra who helped install new black pipes on the Tui Track.

In the 2017 calendar year we contributed 1497 hours of labour in the bay, not counting predator control.

4. Contractor pest plant control

4.1 Council funded Eco-contractors

We have new park eco contractors, Wildlands, who are controlling a very limited suite of weeds in the main reserve area. The vast majority of pest plants are not covered and are left to volunteers to control. However this proactive council funded weed control is a major step forward and we appreciate contractors thoroughly controlling climbing asparagus. We persuaded council to include tradescantia in this suite as we have paid for a lot of tradescantia control over the years and do not want to see this flourish again. Wildlands are working in the 5th block and Park Rise Bush, areas which our contractor has brought under good control. Time will tell if we need to supplement this work with our paid contractor.

4.2 Bush Society Funded Eco-contractor

We are funding John Barber to control pest plants in the 4th, 8th and 17th fairway blocks of the golf course from a Hibiscus & Bays Local Board grant. He is also controlling pest plants in Campbells Bay School Community Forest and Greville Reserve funded by a Takapuna Devonport Local Board grant.

4.3 Tree Contractor

The Bush Society funded the felling of 3 pines in the reserve as part of our gradual pine reduction program. At least ten native plants are planted for every pine removed.

We also funded the removal of monkey apple and privet from the road reserve on Beach Rd and three cherry trees on the Aberdeen Track. Cherry is a pest plant in the reserve.

5. Volunteer Pest plant control

Most of our volunteer work is control of pest plants and most of the pest plants are controlled by volunteers. We have been working in most areas of the reserve, Campbells Bay School bush and roadside, Greville Reserve and along Beach Rd. We have assisted the Playcentre with pest plant control.

For most of the summer we have been carrying out a "weed sweep", consisting of comprehensive weed control, moving from Beach Rd along the southern side of the South Branch (kohekohe Track). So far we have only reached the Harvey Ridge near the flame trees.

6. Planting

We planted approximately 600 plants in the reserve and surrounds, mostly funded by council but also some grown by John Chapple and Eric Martin. Plant survival was relatively poor due to a drought in November 2017.

6.1 Beach Rd entry

We planted this site in winter 2016 with a mix of exotic and native species after removing agapanthus and ladder fern. The understory planting has been a failure due to plant theft and damage from a vehicle. However the fenceline planting of Camellia setsugekka is surviving, as are two Elingamita.

6.2 Aberdeen Track

We planted a small block of native plants on the Aberdeen track and three large grade kowhai to mitigate the removal of three cherry trees.

6.3 Greville Reserve

We planted two areas on the eastern boundary of Greville Reserve after removing a large quantity of pest plants including monkey apple and agapanthus.

6.4 Riparian planting

We planted more riparian plants in the upper reaches of the North Branch of the Campbells Bay stream in the 5th fairway block below the golf club workshop.

We replanted a strip of the stream margin at Campbells Bay reserve and have revisited this site several times to mulch and weed.

6.5 The dairy garden

We continue to maintain this demonstration native plant garden and have recently labelled some of the native plants there.

7. All Hallows Church bush

Bush destruction by the child care centre developer means we are no longer involved there. We were saddened to see the destruction of a mature kahikatea and the death of a large puriri due to works around the tree.

8. Healthy streams

Erosion continues to be a major issue in the park with sites including the Avenue of Remembrance, the Aberdeen Track, and several sites in the golf course on the 13th and 5th fairways. New tomo formation and deep scouring of channels is occurring due to excess stormwater from housing.

Council have engaged Morphem, environmental consultants, to assess and make recommendations on stormwater and erosion in Campbells Bay. Members of the Bush Society have met with the consultants and we await their report and hope to see some real action soon.

Fiona Davies, an ecologist and committee member has finalised a stream restoration plan for the bay. We will be working to see that this is implemented.

Volunteers moved rip rap into a severely eroded part of the Brosnahan gully on the Avenue of Remembrance.

Mairangi Bay School are involved in Waicare water quality monitoring.

9. Track work

Volunteers continue to do most of the track maintenance in the park. New park contracts require the contractor Ventia to maintain the vegetation envelope and drains along the track network. For many years volunteers have done this work but now we are ensuring the contractors are doing the work they are funded to do.

A very wet summer/autumn of 2016/7 and a wet winter meant the entire track network needed a lot of work last year. Volunteers worked very hard maintaining drains and spreading about 8 metres of track metal on the network.

Volunteers installed a new boardwalk extension to a bridge on the Kohekohe track and a new bench seat on the mamaku track. We installed a new bridge at the bottom of the Sandford St steps. We also installed about 30 metres of geogrid on the wattle steps, Kohekohe and Putaputaweta tracks. A section of the Putaputaweta track was rebuilt with proper drainage. We are gradually replacing white pipes with black and small pipes with larger diameter pipes.

The planned new track from Rae Rd to the gully under the Avenue of Remembrance has been delayed due to stormwater outflow issues.

Council is working on some major track upgrade planning – we expected to see this work done over summer but now it is not likely to be started until later this year. In particular the walking bus track, the top of the Aberdeen track, parts of the mamaku and Putaputaweta tracks all need significant work. All the directional signs are rotting out and need replacing.

10. Morton Way

We met with council staff about the state of Morton Way. Asphalt is breaking up and roadside carparks are eroding out.

11. Predator Control

Volunteers continue to maintain a comprehensive rodent control bait station network of about 100 bait stations in the reserve under the supervision of Peter Aimer. This year we have moved to a pulsing regime of bait every 3 months at the request of Auckland Council Biosecurity. We are sceptical about the merits of this and are waiting to see how this affects monitoring results.

Peter also manages several possum traps and 2 stoat traps in the main valley.

We have established a network of bait stations and self-resetting traps on 8 bait lines in private land on Aberdeen Rd, Beach Rd and Park Rise as a halo around the reserve. We had a very generous donation of 10 resetting traps. The idea is to reduce rat and possum numbers in the whole catchment. We will be extending the network this year to cover the entire bay.

We have bait stations, bait, traps and trap covers available for residents to use.

Three rabbit bait stations in the park were removed when the contractors changed.

12. Monitoring for predators

Bruce Rogers is monitoring two lines of 10 monitoring tunnels in the reserve and Imogen Cunningham is monitoring two lines in the bay – one on View Rd and one near the beach. Peter Aimer monitors a line in Park Rise Bush. These are checked three times per year. Rat presence according to these tunnels is very low.

13. Dogs

We have installed appropriate signs at every entry point to inform owners of the dog bylaws. Bylaws require dogs to be on lead in the bush tracks, but this is regularly flouted by dog owners.

14. Wildlife monitoring

Monthly bird counts have been continued by Jenny Chamberlain, Liz Goodwin, Marilyn Gulliver, Sue Rawstron, and occasionally Richard Hursthouse.

15. Tree Loss

Several of the protected pohutukawa on the Avenue of Remembrance in front of 5 Rae Rd were attacked by contractors. The landowner was fined \$300. A large mature totara was lost from an Aberdeen Rd property and we have lost a large number of mature trees from the All Hallows land.

16. Management Plan Review

Council is preparing an omnibus management plan for all Hibiscus & Bays Reserves with supplements for reserves such as Centennial Park. We have met with the people preparing this plan and will be consulting on the draft when it appears.

17. Pest Free Hibiscus & Bays

The Bush Society is a member of the Hibiscus & Bays restoration network which is now working on a Pest Free Strategy for the entire local board area. You chair is a member of the Pest Free steering group. Watch this space.

18. Communications

Jenny Chamberlain edits our newsletter, published in April and November. This is now sponsored by Barfoot & Thompson and Benefitz. 1400 are printed and distributed throughout the bay.

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

We are also now on Facebook (group), Instagram and Neighbourly.

Our website is at www.centennialparkbushsociety.org.nz.

Victoria Morris is reviewing looking to improve our communications.

Dick Downing distributes about 700 nature trail guides to Rae Rd and the start of the nature trail.

We are investigating more interpretation in the reserve, such as plant labels and some interpretive signs.

19. Park Camp & KCC

We held another very successful camp in the park in March. About 20 families pitched tents, went on bush walks, played games, toasted marshmallows on the fire and went on a night bug hunt. Thanks again to the camp subcommittee especially Dick Downing, and to Paul Duffy and Anna Baine from council. The camp is a great way of introducing younger people into the reserve.

Kiwi Conservation Club held a very successful bug hunt in the reserve with the assistance of entomologist Peter Maddison.

20. The penguin project

The Bush Society is proud to support the penguin project at Campbells Bay beach, celebrating our marine wildlife and the work of Sylvia Durrant and Annwyne Standish. These bronze penguins are a real treat at the beach.

21. Thankyou

Our genuine thanks to:

- Council Parks officers Paul Duffy and Anna Baine for their support with plants, spray gear, tools, contractors and materials
- Lesley MacDonald, manager, and Mat Cheer, head groundsman, of the golf club
- Wildlands for council funded weed control
- John Barber of Rahopara for weed control in Campbells Bay School, Greville Reserve, 4th, 8th 17th bush blocks
- Hibiscus & Bays Local Board and the Devonport Takapuna Local Board for funding support
- Barfoot & Thompson and Benefitz for sponsoring our newsletter
- Our committee and the hard core of volunteer workers
- Arnold Elley - our honorary auditor
- The predator control and monitoring teams
- And all our wonderful donors.

Richard Hursthouse
Chair
June 2018