

# Rimutaka Forest Park Charitable Trust Inc.



## Annual Report 2014

Presented by the President on behalf of the Executive Committee

This Annual Report is presented to the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Rimutaka Forest Park Charitable Trust Inc. to be held in Wainuiomata, Lower Hutt on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on seven occasions during the year and considered funding-raising, including an application for funds under the Community Conservation Partnerships Fund, public relations, pest control trapping, the Kiwi Translocation Project, the Catchpool Restoration Project, the Dawn Chorus Project, public relations and long-term planning.

The 2013/14 Committee:

President	Ian Armitage
Vice President	Rosemary Thompson
Secretary	Grant Watt
Treasurer	John Cranefield.
Committee members	Janet Lawson, Melody McLaughlin, Penny Evans, Pierre Tellier and Karl Arndt.

### Membership

Membership stands at 81 (72 ordinary members, 7 associate members, 2 Life members), up slightly from last year. Good progress has continued in improving the management of the membership database. We are pleased to welcome new members who have joined during the year and we thank all members for their support to the ongoing work of the society.

### Finances

John Cranefield has set out the Financial Statements for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014. Our financial position continues to be sound and has improved from 2013. Grants have exceeded \$50,000, somewhat higher than received previously and as in past years our funds have been used effectively to implement various conservation-related activities, particularly to support the Kiwi Translocation Project. Donations, 'Sponsor a Trap' and 'Sponsor an Egg' schemes continue to provide valuable financial support for kiwi translocation activities.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of grant sponsorship during the year, namely, from the Department of Conservation, New Zealand Lottery Grants Board, Hutt Mana Charitable Trust, Pharazyn Trust, WWF New Zealand, Hutt City Council (Kiwi Project), Hutt City Council (through the Wainuiomata Community Board) and two generous private donations. We are also grateful for and wish to thank several companies, Trusts, other agencies and individuals for a range of services and support they have provided. All have helped to advance the society's goals of achieving improved conservation of Rimutaka forest ecosystems and wider public enjoyment of the forest park.

We wish to thank our Honorary Auditor, Phil Rundle, for his continuing help in auditing of Society accounts.

### **Pest Control Trapping**

Pest control trapping is a continuous and critically important task that focuses on the control of small animal pests, primarily stoats, possums and rats, and has been enthusiastically carried out by a volunteer team of trappers throughout the year. Our sincere thanks go to all trappers who put such a lot of effort into the effective servicing of the traps. The summer trapping rosters have been maintained throughout the winter because of the high numbers of rats being caught. Planning, coordination and operational arrangements have been led by Penny Evans. Within the initial-trapped area best practice activities for operating a stoat-trapping network continue to be met, or are exceeded. Trap repair and testing continues to be led by Mike White who ensures that traps are maintained to a very high standard and Grant Watt leads a group that checks the operation of all traps in the network.

I would like to thank Penny, Mike and Grant for the dedication and effort they provide to the trapping programme that is significant for achieving long-term protection of a large area of native forest in the southern Rimutaka Range. As reported last year, without a consistent volunteer-supported pest trapping effort there would be no brown kiwi translocation programme at all and the population and the distribution of other birds and the health of the forests would not be what they are today.

### **Dawn Chorus Project**

Closely related to the pest control trapping is the Dawn Chorus Project that continues to control all animal pests that are threatening forest ecosystems, including birds, in the vicinity of the Catchpool Valley. It has been led for two years now by Martin Tonks and his efforts build on the pest control efforts of others over many years. Thank you very much Martin for your support.

### **Kiwi Translocation Project**

The Kiwi Translocation Project that is introducing a North Island brown kiwi population into the Rimutaka Forest Park continues to be a flagship programme of the society. Volunteer work has continued energetically and it is now estimated that more than 100 brown kiwi are established in the Park and on adjoining land. The practice adopted two years ago of leaving some eggs in nests and allowing chicks to hatch naturally has continued and is step towards the establishment a kiwi population that can prosper with minimal intervention, other than pest control and monitoring. Melody McLaughlin has continued to coordinate the implementation of the kiwi programme and would like to thank Melody once again for your leadership in this important role. A short term contract of six months was awarded to Ms. Joanna Sim of Ohau to provide a range of ecological services last summer, mainly to monitor the wild hatch chicks, and this has proved to be an effective way of supporting the kiwi programme.

### **Catchpool Restoration Project**

The Catchpool Restoration Programme has continued to make a meaningful difference to the revegetation of parts of the scrubby slopes of the lower Catchpool Valley using treestocks held in a small holding nursery at the DoC Catchpool HQ and with the support from a range of corporate teams and schools. This programme steadily continues to improve the amenity value of the lower slopes near the Catchpool Valley car park and camping ground, to widen plant biodiversity and to provide a richer habitat for birds. Once again I would like to thank Peter Cooper for the considerable personal effort he has put into planning, the leadership and coordination of this important programme.

### **Fund Raising and Administration**

The Fund Raising and Administration sub-committee met several times and considered and arranged several initiatives for raising funds for the society. These have been successful in supporting our goals, in particular the flagship Kiwi Translocation Project. Much of the credit for this essential aspect of our work goes to Rosemary Thompson for her enthusiastic leadership.

The society has responded enthusiastically to an invitation from the Department of Conservation to apply for funds under the Community Conservation Partnerships Fund. A working group of members closely associated with the Kiwi Translocation Project assembled a Year One programme of activities expected to cost more than \$70,000 to expand the existing trapping network and for monitoring of animal pests and brown kiwi. The Year One programme will also propose a detailed plan for future funding and will review the effectiveness of different pest management strategies.

## **Public Relations**

Publicity about the Society to the wider community has, once again, been promoted during the year. Our website, [www.rimutakatrust.org.nz](http://www.rimutakatrust.org.nz) continues to be popular with visitors in New Zealand and overseas and is the major point of access for information about us. Our Facebook page has more than 300 followers and has broadened our public presence to a wider audience. Can I thank Peter Cooper, Karl Arndt and Kelly Anso for their respective roles in managing the society's website and Facebook page during the year.

Press releases were issued on various topics, mostly concerning the Kiwi Project. Talks to school and corporate volunteer groups by Society members further advanced our public relations and three issues of our informative newsletter, "The Rag", were printed and distributed to members, other volunteers and to a range of other readers.

## **Long term Planning and Cooperation with the Department of Conservation**

Little progress has been made during the year following approaches in 2013 from the Department of Conservation to initiate a dialogue on long-term planning for the future management of the southern part of forest park, including the Catchpool Valley. The committee briefly reviewed possible strategic options on how we can best achieve our objectives into the future and this topic needs to be kept alive.

## **Appreciation**

On behalf of the Committee may I thank all who have helped the society to operate successfully as a voluntary community organisation during the year. Members and non-member volunteers have contributed enormously to pest control trapping, kiwi establishment, Catchpool Valley restoration, fund raising, public relations and other activities, a big thank you to you all. The support from Wainuiomata Marae and the hunters and dog walkers who have put their dogs through the kiwi avoidance training programme is appreciated.

I would also like to acknowledge the friendly cooperation of the staff of the Department of Conservation for helping with the implementation of society activities; we are most grateful for your support and we look forward to cooperating often in the future. May I also acknowledge the friendly cooperation and support offered during the year by the staff of the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Executive Committee for the thought and effort they have contributed to the effective running of the society during the past year.



Ian Armitage  
President

9 September 2014