



Report from the

Waikato Biodiversity Forum

held at St Pius School Hall, Melville, Hamilton
on Friday 23 June 2017

Purposes of the day

- Work together to maximise outcomes for biodiversity in Hamilton City
- Network and share ideas with others who undertake conservation work
- Give feedback to Hamilton City Council as part of consultation on the development of a Biodiversity Strategy for the city
- View Mangakotukutuku gully - a site of biodiversity enhancement in the city

Field trip

The day started with a fieldtrip in Sanford Park Melville to view restoration work in the Mangakotukutuku Gully. Grant Blackie and Kevin Collier from the Mangakotukutuku Stream Care Group (MSCG) detailed the group's activities to improve instream habitat environments. Sanford Park is where the Mangakotukutuku Stream Care Group's activities started about 11 years ago, with the objective of establishing native riparian plantings to improve instream habitat environments. Most of the plantings within Sanford Park have been established by the MSCG with the plants supplied by HCC. About 5 years ago MSCG decided to take more of a 'catchment wide' approach and now have 11 active sites throughout the catchment, including 5km's of riparian planting on the Rukuhia headwater streams in farmland, and a 3ha gully restoration project in the Peacockes area. The group's work also includes fish pass remedial work on a large stream culvert, establishment of artificial fish habitats and creation of a wetland, which included the introduction of black mudfish. MSCG is currently operating two different

implementation 'models' by using volunteers to undertake plantings and maintenance of smaller high profile sites (like Sanford Park) and obtaining funding and using contractors to implement larger scale fencing, weed control and plantings on farmland. For the larger projects MSCG have adopted the WRC 'system' with regards to landowner agreements, specification of fencing, and planting and maintenance where funding is obtained for up to 85% of the costs, making the projects very attractive for landowners. Apart from physical work, MSCG have also lodged submissions on large policy and project developments affecting the catchment. After this winters planting, MSCG will have established over 60,000 indigenous plantings and has estimated that the accumulated value of their activities over the past 11 years (in 2017 \$'s) is in excess of \$600,000.

Back at the Hall to Inspire

When fieldtrip participants returned to the hall a series of presentations took place to inspire discussion on the enhancement of biodiversity in Hamilton City. Bruce Clarkson's presentation focused on urban biodiversity and bringing nature back to towns and cities to help young people connect with the environment and improve biodiversity. Professor Clarkson says 87 percent of New Zealanders are urban dwellers and young people are increasingly disconnected from the environment. He says bringing nature back to towns and cities will not only help solve problems with a lack of biodiversity, it will help young people connect with the environment.

Some cities are already doing a good job, incorporating nature into the built environment by using parks and gardens, he says. New Plymouth at 8% has the greatest amount of natural green space still within the built up matrix of the city." That compares with less than 2 percent in Hamilton. Bruce however, is encouraged by remedial efforts taking place throughout New Zealand, including the work in gullies in Hamilton. Bruce says our first priority is to look after things which are native to our country, starting with plants and pest control. He is hopeful that people will take action in their own backyards to help accommodate nature. He says "anybody anywhere in the country who has a reasonable sized garden can do things which ensure that they bring back more native plants into the system." The complete video of Bruce's lecture about Urban Restoration can be found at the youtube link www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIEPx488wnc

Wiremu Puke highlighted the names of various important sites around Hamilton which were valued by Maori, including the Mangakotukutuku gully and the Donny Park area where ancestors described the abundance of kererū and inanga. Wiremu recalled that there was an abundance of kowhai



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along the Waikato river and as we get more trees planted he proposes the establishment of a Waikato anniversary around the flowering of the trees. Wiremu would also like to see a calendar of the flowering/berries of native trees and the use of indigenous science in ecology.

Kemble Pudney, from Predator Free Hamilton suggested that Hamilton's gullies, riverbanks, lakes and Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park are the backbone of Hamilton's biodiversity. The success of the Halo project means more native birds are living in the city and therefore it's time to control pest animals. Predator-Free Hamilton (PFH) Trust aims to support and extend the partnerships in Hamilton city to work towards a predator free status for the city. Its vision is that Hamilton is an attractive, livable city where native plants and animals flourish. PFH has commissioned research on the range of rats and possums in Hamilton to help guide trapping work and has a pilot predator control program in Onukutara Gully. Based on results, this will be extended to new areas. PFH will provide clear guidelines for anyone interested in monitoring and trapping predators, with a higher level of support for priority areas. PFH also intend to run workshops and set up a trap library with Waikato Environment Centre.

Adrienne Grant, an Enviroschools facilitator, detailed the views of educators in the city and highlighted the education work of various kindergartens, schools and groups. For example, children from Cambridge Road Kindergarten return to the same site regularly so that they can notice the changes over time and through seasons. Involving children in work such as installing bat monitors and tracking tunnels is fun. Enviroschools are involved in Trees for Survival (growing plants) and often plant in gullies near their schools. She suggested it's important to make conservation events family focused, and create opportunities for experts to work alongside schools to make conservation accessible.

Andrew Sinclair, from Whapaupoko Landcare Group, presented on the theme of working together. One of Andrew's strengths lies in his ability to bring people together and lead by example. He believes one of the answers to enhancing biodiversity in the Waikato is behaviour / attitude change. To be effective this change has to build on the positive steps that are being

made at community level. There also needs to be a level of coordination with communities working in partnership with Councils, private and government agencies through "grass roots" models. He suggested that the conservation community build on the momentum of the goal of Predator Free 2050. It is important to engage private landowners who account for over 65% of NZ land. There is a need for simple monitoring so that landowners and funders can see progress that is made towards enhanced biodiversity needs to be simple first steps to engage all landowners in their own backyards on a regular basis. Also, ideally creating community 'Bumping Places' where people can share their stories, recharge their environment batteries and plan for the future.

Moira Cursey presented on working together as a Forum over the past 14 years and highlighted the activities of the Forum that have contributed to working together more effectively for biodiversity. Her presentation can be viewed on the Forum's website www.waikatobiodiversity.org.nz under the Forum report Hamilton June 2017.

Paula Rolfe highlighted the work of the Hamilton City Council to develop a Biodiversity Strategy for the city, and the rest of the Forum was spent developing ideas for this strategy. The common themes put forward included progressively increasing proportion of indigenous (2-10-20%), forging connections and partnerships, inspiring people to get involved and making it easy, providing funding and support, engaging people as well as political support, bringing back species, ensuring that biodiversity is seen as normal, valued and implemented, planting of a kowhai corridor with hundreds of kereru, and the people of Kirikiriroa knowing the history to connect through stories and resources. All the findings from the workshop have been written up and will be used as part of the Hamilton City Council's consultation process for the development of the Biodiversity Strategy for the city.

The following table sets out the ideas on how to be more effective towards enhancing biodiversity in Hamilton City.



Sandford Park

Champion ambassadors
Promote conservation events
Identify taonga to drive eagerness-branding
Provide art and QR codes to assess info
“Greening Taupo” use Enviroschools paid co-ordinators’ ‘Kids Greening Taupo’ model in Hamilton city
Videos, On-line
Subdivision biodiversity incentives/levies/quotas-10% +
Coordinators in different areas of expertise
Policy tied to environmental education-to foster environmental values
Reconnecting Hamilton and get competitive-30% Biodiversity
Involve everyone its everyone’s responsibility – everyone can be involved in backyard habitat restoration
Community groups need succession planning
Linking with children through schools- children have some influence over parents outside schools
Increase funding for environment education so that not just Enviroschools do projects, but all schools
Coordination of groups to share information and avoid duplication which conserves resources
Education of wider community
Schools adopting Local areas e.g. what Ohaupo has done
Bulk funding for community groups
Require structure - need an action plan e.g.a Hamilton Biodiversity Forum
Requires a funded position
Learning from other regions e.g. Taranaki Maunga project
Community owned
Reduce duplication of effort
Community groups to collaborate on a joint submission to LTP to obtain resourcing
Community ‘green letter’ avenue e.g. Neighbourhood Support, Neighbourly website, City News
Community backyard growers - sharing plants with each other/organisations
Biodiversity focused plant sources/nursery
Broader pool of participants - encourage new faces to attend workshops instead of same person each time
Getting engaged with District Plans e.g. preventing loss of biodiversity to housing developments
Point of contact for all e.g. coordinate plants, activities, promotes concepts
Fonterra and developers levy/contribution
Promote and celebrate Wiremu Puke’s Maori calendar city wide
A hub that will connect people to opportunities, groups and other events, provide resources and information and support people to engage at whatever level they want
Visual regional vision
Map online so it can be shared and accessed easily
People can see links between their work and that of others
People can see where they can fit into the big picture
Providing opportunities and forums for this to happen and share good ideas
Not reinventing the wheel
Make it easier and make it fun
Make connections with schools
Involving media and sharing stories
Be proactive
Celebrating successes, environmental themed festivals, fun/competitive
Encourage backyard habitats
Good things take time
Set achievable goals

Moira Curseley Waikato Biodiversity Forum coordinator