



Ngā Uruora – Kāpiti Project Incorporated

27th Annual Report

2023 – 2024

14 May 2024



Committee 2023/2024

Convenor

Andy McKay

Secretary

Ollie Gibson

Treasurer

Maree White

Committee

Peter Kentish, Pete McLaughlin, Andy McKay,
Ollie Gibson, Maree White, Amelia Geary, Rachel Patrick

Introduction to Ngā Uruora - Kāpiti Project Inc.

Ngā Uruora - Kāpiti Project Inc. was established in 1997 by Fergus Wheeler and the Paekākāriki community to halt and reverse the decline of coastal forest on the Kāpiti – Porirua coast.

While the focus of Ngā Uruora has shifted over the past 27 years, the core activities of planting, weeding and pest control have continued. Over recent years, as other community conservation groups have formed around us, activities have become geographically constrained to a 292 hectare strip of land between Paekākāriki and Pukerua Bay.

This area contains the Paekākāriki Escarpment, recognised as an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL)¹ under the Resource Management Act and in accordance with the Greater Wellington Regional Policy Statement.

Within this ONL exists the Paekākāriki Escarpment Key Natural Ecosystem (KNE) which is 118 ha of land that straddles the boundary between the Kāpiti Coast District and Porirua City councils' jurisdictions². The KNE site comprises an exposed, steep coastal escarpment and contains remnant and regenerating coastal forests, grey scrub, and flaxland. The majority of the KNE site is legally protected, either by agreement between KiwiRail and the QEII National Trust, or by being within local council road reserve and recreation reserve designations.

Convenor's Report 2023/2024

This is the 8th annual report I have written as convenor for Ngā Uruora, and it is nothing short of inspiring looking back over the last 27 years that Ngā Uruora has been in existence and see everything that has been achieved.

With new members and volunteers come new ideas and enthusiasm, and I thank the committee especially for their efforts this year. One of the biggest achievements of the year at the committee level was changing banks from Westpac to Kiwibank. This was far more difficult than it should have been, but we got there in the end!

On the ground, we got the last of the major planting completed at the Waikākāriki Wetland. We will now maintain these plantings for the next few years until they achieve canopy cover and shade out most of the weeds. Unfortunately, there are a few weeds like morning glory which will require constant vigilance regardless of how established the forest becomes here.

We have also maintained a pretty good run with regular "roaming" working bees up in the hills. The majority of these have been in the Waikākāriki Gully, with a particularly enjoyable trip targeting wilding pines along the northern ridgelines of the escarpment.

Our trappers continue to great work, and we have made a commitment this year to review our pest control strategy and make some changes to ensure we are keeping up to date with best practices and technology.

And of course, the stalwarts that are the Tuesday group continue to meet on a weekly basis, with one day a month spent at the Pukerua Bay end of the track.

¹ Kapiti Coast District Council Proposed District Plan, Landscape and Coastal Environment Addendum, August 4th 2015

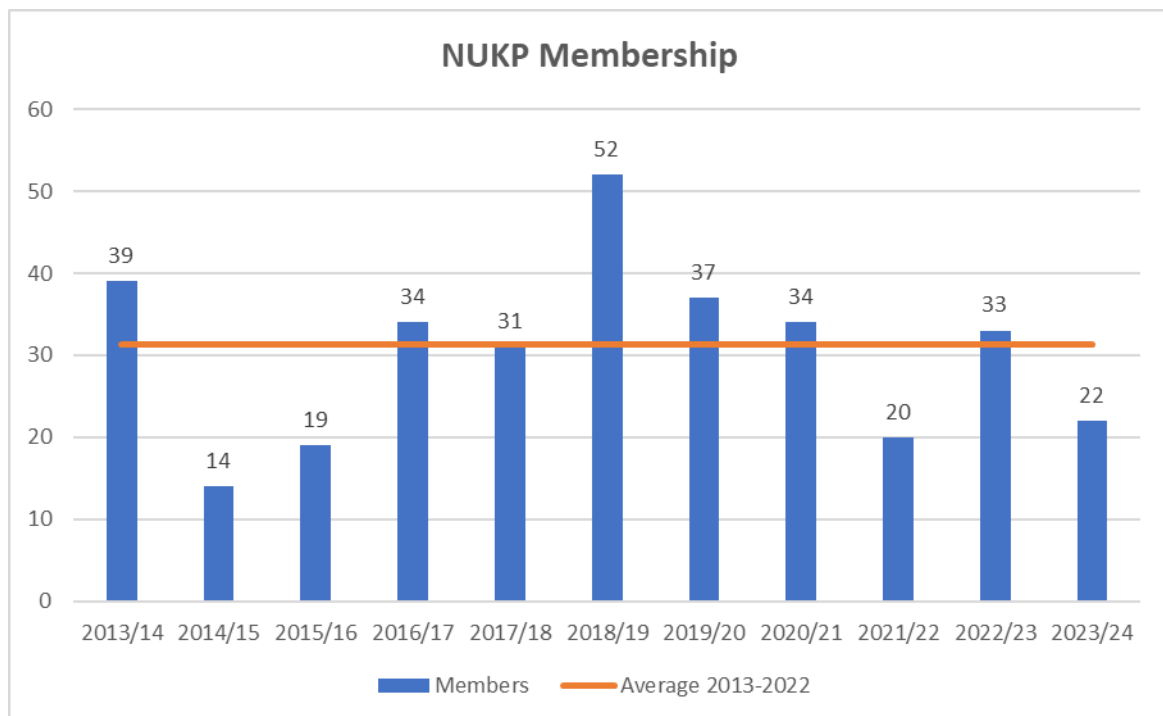
² Key Native Ecosystem Plan for Paekākāriki Escarpment 2015-2018, Great Wellington Regional Council

Thanks to everyone for their support this past year and I look forward to seeing what this coming year brings.

Membership

We had 22 individual and household members over the 2023/2024 financial year. This is a decrease of 11 members compared with the previous year, and below average for the previous decade. We are keen to grow our membership and the committee will look at ways to increase this in the coming year.

We are always grateful to our financial members as this money and the associated donations give more freedom for the committee to spend funds as required, especially when compared with funding from organisations such as DOC and philanthropic trusts that are for a specific purpose.



The Year in Review

April/May/June 2023

- Installed new signage and wayfinding at Waikākāriki Wetland
- Helped to host Forest and Bird's Centenary celebrations
- Installed new picnic table at Waikākāriki Wetland thanks to RDCL
- Hosted the Victoria University Climate Clinic group
- Hosted Raphael House

July/August/September 2023

- Finalised planting over various sites, over 1000 plants for the season
- Matariki planting day in collaboration with Māoriland, with support from Kāpiti Coast District Council.
- 4 year anniversary of the Waikākāriki Wetland Weed Whackers in September

October/November/December 2023

- Lots of releasing
- Hosted the F & B walking group

January/February/March 2024

- Lots of releasing
- Blackberry removal up Waikākāriki Gully
- Wilding pine removal on northern Escarpment ridges

Kāpiti Coast Biodiversity Project

Ngā Uruora continues to benefit from being an active member of the Kāpiti Coast Biodiversity Project (KCBP).

KCBP was granted \$276,000 in 2021 by the Wellington Community Trust Climate Action Fund to undertake restoration projects in our local area. Our part of the project involves planting 2,000 enrichment species (the types of trees that would have once been common in our area such as northern rata, matai, miro and totara) and giving a boost to our Waikākāriki wetland project work.

This funding has paid for the recently installed 'Sanderson's Way' and interpretive signage and street signage at the Waikākāriki Wetland, along with a large number of plants and contractor hours to help keep weeds under control. In association with the Kāpiti-Mana branch of Forest & Bird we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of Forest & Bird in 1923.

We contracted Ngā Uruora Contracting Ltd (NUCC) to prepare the Waikākāriki Wetland for planting and provide ongoing maintenance and they did a great job spraying and scrub barring weeds. Volunteers also continue to meet on a monthly basis to remove weeds.

Planting and weed control

Planting

In the previous winter season, we planted over 1000 new plants across the escarpment and Waikākāriki Wetland sites.

Paul Callister continues to supply enrichment plants and we have a big order of totara and other canopy species ready for planting Winter 2024.

We are grateful for plant donations from the restoration group at Queen Elizabeth Park. Thanks also to Te Rito Gardens and KCDC for providing the majority of our other plants.

Weed control

During the year this work included controlling climbing asparagus, English ivy, pampas, blackberry, tradescantia and boneseed control and has been undertaken by NUCC under a contract, reviewed annually. We thank NUCC for carrying out a substantial amount of extra weed control work for us free of charge.

In addition, Ngā Uruora has continued work weeding and planting at the Pukerua Bay end of the escarpment as well as controlling wilding pines and blackberry up Waikākāriki Gully and elsewhere on the Escarpment.

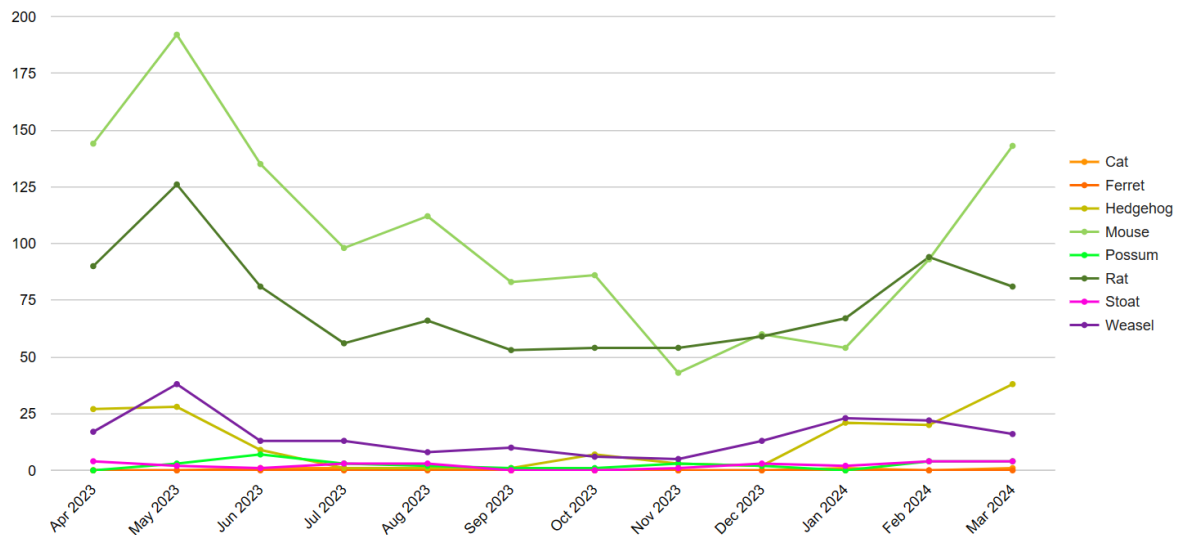
Thanks also to Greater Wellington Regional Council for their weed control efforts on the escarpment.

Pest control

We run a network of 255 traps and 169 bait stations, which has grown since last year.



585 pests were caught over the 2023-2024 financial year (330 the year before), with 344 rats (237), 128 mice (19), 50 weasels (37), 26 hedgehogs (19), 8 possums (0) and 9 stoats (6) and 4 cats (0). There were 2,291 trap checks over this period compared with 1,561 traps checks last financial year, a 47% increase in effort.



Thank you to Greater Wellington for continuing to supply bait and brodifacoum.

Appreciation for support

During the past year many organisations and individuals have helped us with field work, office work and many other activities that make Ngā Uruora continue to hum. All of this help is greatly appreciated.

It is difficult to provide a list of everyone, but we would like to thank the following people and organisations, in no particular order:

- Porirua City Council for track support
- The team at Greater Wellington Regional Council, particularly Kim Broad for advice
- Department of Conservation, especially Angus Hulme-Moir
- Kava Kata and Aidan Mitchell from Kāpiti Coast District Council for supporting our field work
- The team behind the Kāpiti Coast Biodiversity Project - in particular Glenda Robb, John Hay and accountant Peter Huse,
- Queen Elizabeth Park restoration group
- Guardians of Whareroa Community Trust
- Queen Elizabeth II National Trust for their support and engagement over the year, especially, Rob Cross and Jess Stevens
- All the Pukerua Bay end Tuesday volunteers
- Russell Bell and Paul Callister for their fundraising efforts and advocacy
- Groundtruth for providing Trap.nz free of charge
- NZTA and Kiwirail for ongoing access to their land, and Kiwirail for fencing
- Pamela Meekings-Stewart for allowing us continued access through her farm over many years
- Te Rito gardens for growing plants
- Te Araroa, and their funders, for all their work maintaining the escarpment track
- Fly-by-Wire for giving us access via their track for trapping and weed control work.

- EPA for weed work in the Waikākāriki Wetland
- Predator Free Paekākāriki
- Victoria University Climate Clinic Group
- Paekākāriki Dairy for providing monthly morning tea to the Waikākāriki Wetland Weed Whackers

Our pest control team continued to keep rats, stoats, weasels and possums under control. We would like to thank Drew Kear, Terry Brown, Sue Boyde, Nick Thompson, Tony Older, Andy McKay, Paul Callister, Tom Pesendorfer, Malcolm Garnham, Rachael Ashdown, Amelia Geary and Pete McLaughlin for all their hours spent checking traps.

Paul Callister, Ken Fraser, Vicky Griffin continued to grow plants at Pukerua Bay Nursery, Queen Elizabeth Park nursery or in their home gardens.

We would like to thank the regular Tuesday working bee team including Peter Kentish, Ken Fraser, Drew Kear, Paul Callister, Steve Mann, Michael Stace, and Vicky Griffin and we are grateful to Ken Fraser and Peter Kentish for the many hours they have put into controlling cape ivy, blackberry and other weeds. Thanks also to the Pukerua Bay end volunteers including Ashley Blair, Janette Tolley, Victoria Roberts, Jim Cox and Vicky Griffin.

Thank you to all those that have contributed over the year whether on the committee, planting, setting traps, potting up plants or one of the many other jobs that are needed.

Financial report

Ngā Uruora - Kāpiti Project's accounts record an equity of \$70,070.12 at the close of the 2023/2024 financial year. This is a decrease of \$5,439.31 from the equity from the previous years \$75,509.43.