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## **Items for Rimutaka Forest Park Trust Newsletter RAG. From Bill Milne 15<sup>th</sup> Nov 04**

### **Interested Kindred Member Group Activities**

#### **Lower Hutt Forest & Bird.**

The Weekend of 12/14<sup>th</sup> November was the 6 monthly Council Meeting of the National body for New Zealand wide representatives and was held in the Hutt Valley.

Two field trips were held on Sunday ,one to Barton's Bush at Trentham and one to Matiu/Somes Island.

3 Guides Stan Butcher ,Bill& Elaine Milne & Reg Cotter ,all members of Mum & Dad's Army on the Island were seconded to escort & explain the total revegetation programme undertaken over the last 23 years .We each had a group of 10/14 members from areas from North Auckland to the deep South Invercargill ,

All were quite amazed to see the Island well covered with a great variety of NZ natives From understory species ,Hebes Ngaio,KoromikoKawakawa,etc through to now established Totara,Miro ,Matai , Rimu ,Rewarewa, Kohekohe, TeToki to name just a few.

Great interest was shown in the sightings of Tuatara now established and the great numbers of skinks about ,plus of course the recently transferred Kakariki from Kapiti Island.

Planting for this season is about complete but work parties are held the second & fourth Monday of each month at Matiu/Somes and the first & third Monday of each month at the Pauatahanui Wetlands project ,helpers always welcome.

One of the main thrusts from the meeting was to encourage new members to the Society.

#### **Kaumatua Tramping Club.**

Still very active with a good range of trips. Many KTC members are also members of Rimutaka Trust & Forest & Bird plus Friends of Belmont Reg Park.

A recent Commerative trip to Warren's Saddle 14<sup>th</sup> Nov it was an F&B trip and was the 17<sup>th</sup> trip up there,17 years ago time sure flies.

#### **Friends of Belmont Regional Park.**

Still a lot of work going on with Pest control in most areas ,also now in the Speedy's Stream Further tree planting on going .Rangers have been busy with wind damaged trees. .Wind Farms are of interest to members, and some are hoping to go to view the Meridian Energy wind turbines at Ti Apiti.

An open day is being organized early new year ,walks in the park ,displays at the Woolshed ,Stratton St,Historic walks .

#### **Rimutaka Forest Park Trust.**

Conservation Week was a big event Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Aug in conjunction with DOC was well attended by around 300 on a crisp fine day .It was held at the Visitor Centre

The open day participants including school groups planted around 1000 native trees. The programme included displays and presentations by officers of DOC and the Regional Council, also a very good one prepared by Melody McLaughlan for display at Wellington Cathedral during Conservation Week.

Walks were taken to the proposed Kiwi release area by Susan Ellis, Orongorongo loop area by John Rush and the Tawa Grove area by Bill Milne. The windup was followed with a great BBQ.

Trapping in The Dawn Chorus area over recent months. Bill's closer area reports 117 possums, 218 rats, 23 hedgehogs, 5 stoats, 2 rabbits and 2 feral cats. John's larger area yielded 560 possums, 309 rats, 8 hedgehogs, 2 hares, 1 feral cat and 1 rabbit. This wider area is also covered by Chris Mitchell, and Colin McLaughlan. Keith Dyett, who works for DOC, does his trapping very early before work and has trapped 159 possums over the last few months, mostly in the former pine plantation areas, this will help the recovery of native plant species and slow reinvasion of predators.

The Rimutaka Forest Park now has some magnificent well built picnic tables at selected sites ready for the summer season.

I hereby acknowledge the assistance we have had in the way of a generous Grant from The Wellington Community Trust to enable us to purchase further traps and equipment to continue this ongoing project.

Recently we invited a team from MIRO to observe our trapping programme around the Tawa Grove area and to explain our strategies. While this meeting was in progress outside the Visitor Centre, the Kowhai trees, just 30 meters away, loaded with flowers, must have had 50 plus Tuis gorging on the nectar, we were all very proud.

The impressive growth of species such as RewaRewa, Tawa, Titoki and others plus the increased Birdsong in the Park is very satisfying and makes the effort worthwhile.

This report from Bill Milne.