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South Wairarapa Biodiversity Group Inc

Newsletter - January 2014

Reports

Beach Clean - Friday 6th December 2013

The South Wairarapa Biodiversity Group held its annual beach clean-up on Friday 6th December 2013. This was a roaring success with a huge turn-out (over 100 helping hands!) to pick up rubbish from the tiny coastal settlement of Whangaimoana through to Lake Ferry. This stretch of coastline is beautiful and we were blessed with the weather and all the helping hands - which included both Pirinoa and Kahutara School students, teachers, parents and members of the community. While the amount of rubbish was certainly down from last year (which is a great thing) we still managed to recycle 40 odd bags of rubbish. Special thanks to Joe Hansen of DOC for manning the after-match BBQ at the Lake Ferry Hotel, to South Wairarapa District Council (for the skip and rubbish bags) and to all the community for pitching in - especially the children, who had a long walk under a hot sun.



Lime Gully visit and Christmas function - Saturday 7th December 2013

Around 25 of us assembled for the visit to James and Barb's Lime Gully property. Barbara gave us a brilliant overview of the property and its development in their ownership - she had crafted a beautiful map of the property which was a brilliant illustration of the various activities, actual and aspirational. We then donned boots and went for a look through the Queen Elizabeth II covenant block that borders the Whangahau River - since stock were excluded there has been further expansion of the bush along the margins into the grassed areas and also under the willows along the river bank which James and Barbara are encouraging. The site also includes some huge specimens of totara and maire which a number of participants braved a river crossing to view.

On our return we enjoyed tasting some Lime Gully wines and a great shared meal in James and Barbara's relocated and converted houses with a 'law and order' history (one being an ex jailhouse with the other being an ex police house)! There were a number of spectacular Christmas themed hats of great charm and imagination, and some that were just plain silly! Altogether a great afternoon and evening - thank you James and Barb for having us!



SWBG Dates for your calendar:

(keep up-to-date by checking our [website](#))

February:

Date: Tuesday 18th February

What: Visit to Ted and Dawn Colton's East/West Access property to view early Catchment Board plantings.

Other Updates:

Dung Beetle Update

We have been contacted by the Wellington Regional Council who are keen to have another release of beetles in the Pirinoa area. This time they will be releasing *Digitonthophagus gazella* who originate from the Eastern cape of South Africa, so are most suitable for low rainfall areas such as ours. Scotty McDonald on

Where: Ti Tipua Farm - Turn down East West Access Road (on right before Ruamahunga bridge if coming from Featherston, or first left over Ruamahunga bridge from Pirionoa or Martinborough). Travel several kms and turn first right onto Te Hopai Road. Go to the end of the metal road around a right hand corner to Ted and Dawn's house - 236 Te Hopai Road (Ted tells me that you can tell when you hit private road for all the potholes!). [Click here](#) for a google map directions.

Time: 5.30pm *sharp*

Program: Plan is to meet at Ted and Dawn's house where we will transfer into farm type vehicles (bring a 4WD if you have one) then travel down farm to the site of the planting done around 1982/83 by the then Catchment Board, with funding from Department of Internal Affairs. Many different varieties were planted to see which would grow the best. Fish and Game were involved also as they wanted to grow a habitat for ducks. Ted and James will fill us in on the detail on site. There will be a BBQ available for use at the house at the end of the visit so please bring food and drink for a shared meal.

March:

Date: Tuesday 18th March

What: Visit to DoC's Carters Reserve then on to Tiffen Hill, home to SWBG members Duncan and Jan.

Where: Meet in the car park. Carters Reserve is 12km south-east of Carterton on the Gladstone Road. From Carterton follow Park Road to the end, turn left into Carters Line and right into Gladstone Road. The reserve is signposted approximately 3kms along Gladstone Road. The car park is about 500m along the driveway. [Click here](#) for google map directions.

Time: 5.30pm *sharp*

Program: DoC's Carters Reserve, one of the few remaining remnants of patchwork landscape once typical of the Wairarapa - featuring grasses, wetland,

'Yeronga' (neighbors to the original Wairarapa host farm) will be hosting this release which is happening mid January. In addition, Caitlin Cherry of National Radio's Summer Report program did a 6.5 minute program on dung beetles and was hosted by Heather and Ian on their farm 'Wharerata'. To listen, please [click here](#).

SWBG and Lake Ferry on the radio.

Caitlin Cherry of Summer Report for National Radio was interested to tell some good luck stories about local communities taking ownership for management of local water resources so interviewed Ra Smith, Vanessa Tipoki, Heather Atkinson and one other for the show on 8 January. We spoke about the work that we have been doing along the riparian zone of the lake. You can listen to this by clicking [here](#).

Okourewa/Onoke Lagoon.

On 22 December, five of us did a monitoring day at Onoke/Okourewa Lagoon, to record the "baseline" lagoon water quality. A commonly accepted measure of wetlands health is the quantity, diversity and *species* of "macro invertebrates". These are animals like crustaceans, snails and worms which live in the water. The "macro" bit just means that if you use a 0.5mm mesh on a net, you'll catch them. Vertebrates such as fish can also be caught in the same type of net. Five points in the lagoon were swept with the net and there was a surprising amount of life in the net when I pulled it up each time, given how dead the lagoon looks. We don't yet have a full interpretation of the data, but Ella Buckley (ecology graduate) came along and was able to give advice on sampling and then do a first pass at identification. Water samples were also taken at 3 locations.

The lagoon was truly mucky and had a nasty smell, especially down the eastern end. It was unclear where the bottom was, it was so soft. In places it was too sticky underfoot to walk and I had to float and swim even though the water was shallow. My gear ended up taking on board some of the muckiness and it took 4 lots of soaking, then washing then drying my wetsuit before it was in a state where I was

shrubland, and forest. It is home to native birds, fish, lizards, and endangered plants. We will be hosted by Gary Foster of DoC and are likely to enjoy the 30 minute bush walk along with enjoying Gary's knowledge of the reserve.



Then around 6.30pm/6.45pm we will jump in our vehicles to head to Tiffen Hill, the slightly eclectic home of Duncan and Jan, along with 3 hectares of pasture land and garden. This house has an interesting history as it was originally built by Gerald Melling for Peter Rankin (might mean something to some of you?). It then became a retreat for Buddhist monks and until very recently was completely off the grid.

Jan and Duncan were foundation members who used to live at 'Summerhills' on the road to Ngawi - it will be great to see how they have managed the relocation to Carterton.

We will finish the day enjoying Duncan and Jan's hospitality, so bring food and drink to share - there will be a BBQ available.



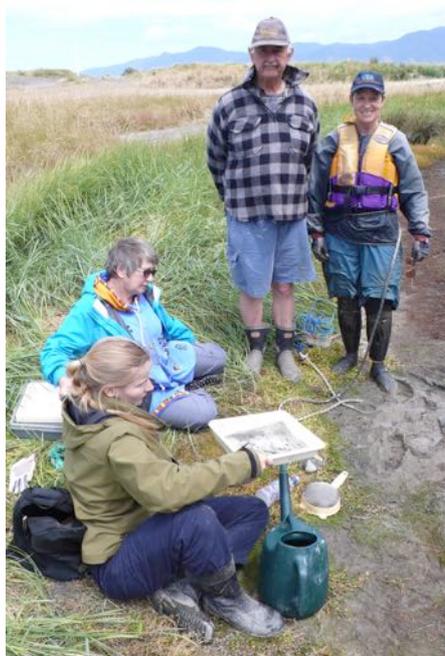
Other stuff you might be interested in

Country and Western Music Day at the Lake Ferry Hotel

I can hear you all asking.... 'what has this to do with biodiversity'. The answer

happy to use it again!

It was great to have the support of SWBG committee members Perry (safety officer) and Dianne (sampling assistant) as well as my husband Victor (scribe and photographer) and Ella.



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is, the SWBG have kindly been chosen to be the financial beneficiary's of the day and are going to use the day to promote our activities to a broad audience.

Date: Saturday 1st March 2014

What: Resident band the 'Rimutaka River Band' plus a host of other local Country and Western bands are going to be playing for your enjoyment.

Where: Lake Ferry Hotel

Time: From 11.00am until late

We will have some (yet to be created) but I know, fabulous display material at the Hotel. There is no cover charge but patrons are being invited to give a donation to a local charity - THAT'S US! Hopefully we will sign up some new members too.

Jane Lenting

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