



Kakabeak ngutukākā

Photo: Richard Hursthouse



Newsletter No. 98

November 2024

Tracks, tracks, tracks

Bush Society volunteers' fitness has improved after a big season maintaining the 4.7km track network in Centennial Park, so our community can enjoy walking in this special place. The secret to lasting tracks is good drainage, including pipes, channels, humps on slopes to move water off tracks and moving tracks out of flood plains. Our most ambitious project this winter was raising a 30m section of the upper Kohekohe Track by 300mm, wheel-barrowing hard fill to the site and consuming over 200 volunteer hours. We even had a group of St Kentigern students helping us move fill over four weekends! We also built a new 40m deviation on the Kohekohe Track to avoid a flood plain, installed a 6m x 375mm diameter pipe on the upper Aberdeen Track to remediate a badly eroding stormwater outfall, installed four handrails on the steps from the Pine Tree Carpark, replaced the rotting seat and installed a new step on the Aberdeen Track, did a major upgrade on the Sandford Street steps and more. Numerous trailer loads of fill and GAP20 metal have been moved about. Lots of fun and lighthearted banter keeps us going, as well as discussions about swales, bunds and sock drains, but the best thing about this work is the coffee and wonderful cake at our 10:30 am compulsory breaks! New working bee volunteers are always very welcome.



Richard Hursthouse



Track teams impressive new track
Photo: Richard Hursthouse

Richard's Old Blue

On June 22, 2024, CPBS chair Richard Hursthouse was awarded an Old Blue, a Forest & Bird honour, for his three decades of outstanding contribution to conservation, both in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and nationally. The detailed Forest & Bird commendation (F&B magazine, September 2024, p52) outlines Richard's environmental career, beginning with his work on the Campbells Bay School Community Forest in the 90s, moving on to chairmanship of Centennial Park Bush Society from 2003, his eight-year chairmanship of Forest & Bird North Shore branch and four years on the F&B national board. Among his skills mentioned are "initiating projects, connecting people and championing new and better ways of doing things". Helping establish Forest & Bird Youth, proposing and leading the expansion of F&B's Millennium Forest at Tuff Crater – a 15-year ongoing project which has resulted in a radical ecological transformation of this unique natural habitat – helping set up Restore Hibiscus & Bays and Pest Free Kaipatiki are a few of the initiatives he was commended for. More recently Richard led the establishment of EcoNet, "a charitable trust which is developing technology to help conservation groups throughout Aotearoa to achieve better results and make administration easier". In April 2024, EcoNet's Conservation Activity Management System



Richard with granddaughter Maddi

Photo: Jenny Chamberlain



Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary

(CAMS) toolkit won the Mondiale VGL Innovation category at the New Zealand Biosecurity Awards.

Richard's Old Blue places him in the company of many well-known New Zealand conservationists and coincides with F&B's centenary and the 140th anniversary of the establishment of Centennial Park as a recreation reserve. From all of us, Richard, congratulations!

Jenny Chamberlain

Riparian Rules and Restoration

Do you own a property in Campbells Bay with a stream running through it? I have often been asked by Campbells Bay homeowners, what the rules are for the riparian zone on their property.

Riparian zones are the strips of land along the edges of a stream or river in an urban environment. Auckland Council regulations stipulate that no vegetation may be altered or removed from within 10m either side of an urban stream, where the plant species are native, or non-native but not listed in the Regional Pest Management Plan.

I am Restore Hibiscus and Bays' Campbells Bay Catchment Activator. We provide support and guidance to homeowners who would like to improve the ecological well-being of their stream. Stream-edge restoration is a no-brainer! Apart from aesthetic enhancement, the benefits of removing weeds and planting natives are huge! Erosion is reduced and banks are stabilised, meaning less sediment entering Hauraki Gulf. Native grasses (carex) and other selected natives filter pollutants and help preserve and enhance biodiversity. Flood peaks are also reduced when riparian zones are planted effectively.

I also believe these precious green spaces need all the help they can get – we all need to nurture nature.

If you would like advice and help please contact me at viv@restorehb.org.nz

Viv Walker



Dramatic improvement in stream edge following dog exclusion

Photos: Viv Walker

Happy Campers

"I thought it was just going to be camping in the park, but it's the gift that keeps on giving," said one very happy camper lucky enough to experience the March 2024 Family Bush Camp in Centennial Park.

After a little village of tents was erected, a shared afternoon tea set the ball rolling. Anna and Dan from Auckland Council Parks and Reserves, Aileen and Kate from Whitebait Connection and Om from Craftlab presented a programme of bush walks, stream investigations and bushcraft to 69 enthusiastic children and their whanau. Bush Society volunteer John informed and entertained everyone with a predator control presentation while the BBQ was being prepared. Sausages and salad eaten, everyone gathered around the fire pit to learn how to make fire without matches. The demonstration concluded with the making of bush doughnuts, cooked over the fire on long sticks and the finale was a torch-lit bug hunt, before exhausted children and parents retired to their tents.

The next morning started quietly without the threatened rain and after an essential cup of tea or coffee, the by-now experienced campers packed up and departed for home.



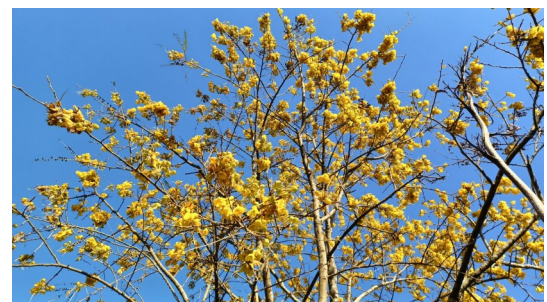
Bush doughnuts on the campfire

Photo: Victoria Morris

Liz Goodwin

Come On Kōwhai Road Residents!

On June 19, CPBS Wednesday workers planted eight new kōwhai trees along Kōwhai Road's golf course berms and re-staked and re-composted several others. They were all *Sophora chathamica* – a primarily coastal species, indigenous to the northern half of the North Island. Each new tree had a scoop of mature kōwhai soil dug in around it, to encourage mycorrhizal fungi, which help growth and survival. We will wait and see if it makes a difference!



Kōwhai Road kōwhai in full spring glory

Photo: Richard Hursthouse



Meantime, what would make an even bigger difference to Kōwhai Road's golden spring display is small bits of help from residents. We're talking two hours' effort per year here! Come on Kōwhai Road kaitiaki, pull the grass away from the trunks of your kōwhai trees, stake them, mulch them and water the young ones in dry weather. And please keep the weed eater off the trunk. So easy! So tui-friendly!

Need guidance? Email: bushsoc@gmail.com

Jenny Chamberlain

Rush Coffee's Working Bees

Here's a happy working bee story -- one of many from 2024. Following our June 19 Kōwhai Road assignment (see above), the Wednesday gang deep dived into a golf course bush block to enrichment-plant some (trust me) very challenging pine forest terrain. We then decamped to the beach for a well-earned morning break, on a real table, with homemade apple crumble slice and actual freshly ground, plunger-brewed Rush Coffee. Nothing beats a fresh Rush coffee in the fresh air! Rush Coffee is a niche family-run operation based at Wellsford and, thanks to a generous CPBS volunteer, their fab coffee has been enjoyed at many working bees since. To place your order contact: hayden@rushcoffee.co.nz

Farewell To Peter Aimer

Much-loved Centennial Park Bush Society volunteer and committee member Peter Aimer passed away peacefully at home on Saturday August 17, aged 89.

Peter's humour, intellect and unwavering commitment to the ecological well-being of Centennial Park and the wider Campbells Bay community are among many qualities he will be remembered for.

Peter volunteered in the park for 15 years. He headed the Pest Control Programme (PCP) for eight of those and served on the committee for five years, before stepping down from official duties in June 2021. Although "retired" from CPBS, he continued to run his own bait line, ordered and distributed bait, trained new PCP volunteer baiters and supported new co-ordinator Jo Broad. He was, says Jo, always truly interested in pest control issues and future planning. Peter oversaw the growth of the Bay's pest control from its early rat-trap stages to the comprehensive, catchment-wide, 36-volunteer programme it is today. Peter was an engaging writer and communicator and wrote 10 informative items for this newsletter, encouraging locals to join him in our war on rats. He also gave thrillingly realistic talks to rapt primary school youngsters at our annual Bush Camps, using taxidermies of real animals as visual aids.

In earlier years Peter was a university lecturer, legendary runner, mountaineer and trumper but we knew him as a devoted husband and family man and a warm-hearted volunteer and welcoming host for CPBS committee meetings who could bake a cake with the best.

A service for Peter was held at Romaleigh, Northcote on Saturday, August 24, 2024. Haere rā Peter, you are greatly missed.

Jenny Chamberlain



Peter Aimer

Pond Pine Replacement

The old dying pine, which crashed into the pond during January 2023's horrific storms, was chopped and chipped on April 10, 2024, just in time for winter rains. The operation took over five hours and entailed using a crane to lift the main trunk so contractors could chainsaw it. Several mountains of mulch later, plus large piles of free firewood, and the pond was finally cleared of rotting branches and cones. Eight months on there is a young totara in its place and a visiting little shag has been spotted perching on the stump, in-between fishing for frogs and tadpoles.

A Māori Name for Centennial Park

On August 9, 2024, Auckland Council and Hibiscus & Bays Local Board announced the Local Board is working with iwi to add māori names to some of the area's parks.

The intention is to adopt a māori dual name for Centennial Park, thereby adding a layer of cultural narrative. Māori names often reflect or link into the cultural history of an area and the aim is to honour and showcase the names and rich māori stories of Auckland – some of which have been lost over many years. Centennial Park's māori name is expected towards the end of 2025.

2024 Special Events Roundup

Bush Society's 2024 **Fungal Foray** took place on Saturday May 25, in the Tennis Club. Mycologist Peter Buchanan gave a fascinating talk on New Zealand's fungi followed by a foray into the park where abundant intriguing mushroom species were found.

Our second **Matariki** celebration kicked off at Rae Road, at



6:15am on Friday June 28. Once again tikanga guide Kendall Fricker empowered our star-gazing and waiata singing. A ngutukākā (kakabeak) was planted to mark the park's 140th anniversary and a hot breakfast, served in the Tennis Club by the wonderful kai team, warmed everyone up afterwards.

Keen baiters, monitors and possum trappers gathered at the annual **Predator Control**

Hui in Pupuke Golf clubrooms on Wednesday, September 18, to hear restoration adviser Simon van den Berg talk about the future of predator control and trends in trapping. Predator Control (PC) Team leader Jo Broad presented bird survey data confirming an increase in tui but the puzzling flattening of fantail numbers. Possum control champion John Kinloch outlined trapping techniques. Though possums are well-controlled at present John needs more trappers.

November is 2024's fourth and final predator control pulse and we would love to hear from anyone keen to join Jo's PC Team and help with this life-giving work. Email Jo Broad on: jo_broad_nz@yahoo.com.

A HUGE THANK YOU

2024 has been a super-busy year, full of awards, achievements and an incredible amount of sheer hard work on the part of CPBS volunteers. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who lends nature a hand by helping CPBS. When passing CPBS volleys on your way through the park stop and say hello – we love to chat. **MERI KIRIHIMETE** everyone.

Contact Us

Chair: Richard Hursthouse 021 216 1296

Secretary: Jenny Chamberlain 021 057 6167

Treasurer: Max Thomson 479 1681

Committee: Liz Goodwin, Joe Greig, Victoria Morris, Jo Broad and Vivienne Walker.

Centennial Park Bush Society Inc.

Email: bushsoc@gmail.com

Find out more and **sign up to our mailing list** at

<https://campbellsbayurbansanctuary.org.nz/>

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Peter Buchanan at fungal foray

Photo: Richard Hursthouse

We acknowledge the support of:

THANK YOU!!

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Auckland Council Parks
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