

Restoration programme

Pat and Sue O'Brien, local farmers, were delighted to see 50 volunteers joining in with the community planting day on Saturday the 28th of June. Alongside the local community, people came from as far away as Napier and Gisborne to celebrate the first planting initiative of the Whangawehi Catchment Management Group. Rae Tenahu, secretary for the group noted "I was blown away by the number of people who turned up and the progress we have made in one day!". "I really enjoyed seeing all these young Tamariki who will lead this project in the future". 5000 trees have been established by an army of enthusiastic volunteers ranging from 2 to 70! The O'Briens and Grandy Lake Forest have retired 10 ha of riparian margins for conservation planting and will have established 40 000 native plants at the completion of the project.



School project

This programme aims at transferring local knowledge around Maturanga Maori themes in order to forge the next generations of Kaitiaki. Workshops are run by skilled local Kuia and Kaumatua who take a real pleasure in teaching their young Tamariki. Te Mahia students enjoyed the latest workshop on Rongoa and traditional use of native plants. Kathleen Mato, Rae Te Nahu, Edward Hammond and Jennifer Scothern shared their knowledge with a very interested audience. Students had the opportunity to hear from their Kuia and Kaumatua on how they used their precious native plants for medicinal and traditional purposes and how in the past, people relied heavily on these plants to survive.

Later on in August the students will be taking part in a weaving and carving workshop followed by a planting project along the Whangawehi river.



Water monitoring programme

Our community based water monitoring programme is well underway with a team of locals who monitor the Whangawehi river 5 times a year. The water monitoring team (which includes a local farmer) is also involved with the school programme (see newspaper article) and transfers the knowledge around fresh water ecosystems. In April 2014, the team organized an inter-Iwi workshop with a clear focus on better understanding the techniques involved in fish monitoring. This workshop was well attended by the



Whangawehi community and close neighbours from Ngati Pahauwera came to support this unique initiative and train their own field officers.

Cultural survey

Very early in the journey of our group, Tangata Whenua expressed a strong desire to have a cultural survey done in the lower reaches of the Whangawehi River in order to record and protect any sites of significance prior to the construction of fences and transfer the cultural knowledge to the younger generations.

A cultural survey was carried out and includes a physical assessment done by an Archaeologist Kevin Jones. A spiritual

assessment including a cultural report clearly describing the sites of significance was done by Mana Cracknell. These historical documents have given birth to a lot of forgotten history with recommendations on how to keep them alive and protect them.

Pest Control Strategy

The goat control strategy is making a significant impact on the goat population in the lower part of the Whangawehi catchment. To date 663 goats, 12 hares and 1 deer have been culled from the area surrounding the plantings. Stage 2 of the strategy is starting now and will involve a wider area around the initial controlled perimeter. Maintenance control will be carried out in the initial area while large scale mustering and ground control will be undertaken within the stage 2 area. This strategy is supported by Hawkes Bay Regional Council and DOC.

Branding Initiative

The Whangawehi Catchment Management Group invited in Mike Barton in May 2014 to talk to farmers interested in growing their business and being environmentally sustainable. Mahia Peninsular farmers, Pat and Sue O'Brien see some connections between what Mike Barton has done in Taupo and the significant conservation work undertaken on Mahia Peninsula to protect water quality. With restrictions on stocking rate, the Bartons had to find an innovative way to increase their profitability. They developed their own beef brand "Taupo Beef" which looks to extract a premium for beef produced under a catchment wide plan to protect water quality. Mike's story is passionate and could inspire other farmers to better link their conservation work with the marketing of their produce. The seminar is available on whangawehi.com

AGM

The WCMG held its first Annual General Meeting at Kaiuku Marae on the 2d of August 2014. This first gathering was a good opportunity for the community to celebrate its achievements and reflect on this year's activities.

Jamie Cox, Chairperson of the Incorporated Society, was proud of the progress made both at a financial and operational level and was looking forward to this coming year's achievements. He acknowledged the commitment and dedication of all the volunteers who have made this initiative an award winning project. His goals for 2014/2015 are based around the development of a strong governance structure with a succession plan further developed and the appointment of a community liaison officer whose role will be to engage more with the local community. The new committee members of the group have been appointed with Jamie Cox being reelected as Chairperson and Rae Te Nahu as Secretary. Pat O'Brien was elected as the new Deputy Chair while Leon Symes, Treasurer, indicated that he wanted to step down in the near future.

Awards



The WCMG won the Environment and Heritage award as well as the Supreme Award at the Trust Power Community Awards for the Wairoa District. The group competed in March 2014 at the finals in Invercargill where a short film was presented as part of the competition.

The WCMG had the privilege to be invited to compete for the finals of the Green

Ribbon Environmental Award in June 2014. This award was a good opportunity to raise the profile of the organization at national level and acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the Whangawehi community and volunteers since 2010.

Communication



The success of our organization has attracted several camera crews to the area which all help in raising the profile of our organization.

Darcel Rickard

and her team from Scottie Production are preparing for Maori TV (Matauranga Whenua series) a documentary on the Whangawehi Catchment Management Group. The film should be broadcast on Maori TV by the end of September.

Our blog created in May this year is gaining momentum and is now regularly visited by a large number of visitors and face book friends throughout the world. In August the group purchased a domain name to make the blog easier to access by visitors and search engines. Check it out: whangawehi.com



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