

Chairperson's report

Statement of service Performance six monthly report

30 July 2024 to December

The emphasis for this six month has been on planting in the new wetland and planting in the forest west side where we cleared weeds and willows and opened old channels and oxbows

The wetland was planted is a mosaic of low wet areas and slightly higher areas reflecting the topography. This will start become apparent over next two to three years

Approximately 70% of the wetland now has native plant coverage. It will take another two winters to complete this as some areas near the road by the pump house still needs infrastructure work related to drainage from across Awahuri Road.

The westside wetland forest redevelopment where willow eradication and channels relinked to the Makino were planted with the first wave of plants. There is a narrow strip left along the stream that needed to be left to stabilize stream banks. This will be cleared and planted through 2026.

Three small floods tested the construction and landscaping of the wetland and newly opened west side channels. All points flooded in the sequence we had hoped they would. The flood waters came up quickly and dropped down very quickly also as we hoped. This should prevent trees drowning in the future, One small area needs to be raise to slow water velocity hitting the side of the Corduroy Road. Overall, we believe this is a very successful restoration. The new westside loop board walk is completed giving the public a unique walk through a regenerating wetland forest.



A resident Kingfisher patiently watching for food

Statement of intent

Council's Expectations	Comment to Trust for preparation of their SOI 2024 - 2027
Maintain the forest / park, within the existing boundary, as an area of unspoilt nature (scenic reserve) for the benefit of the community and visitors	<p>KPI's describe the Trusts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pest control activity for plants (i.e. phragmites) and animals • native planting activity (enhancement or replaced planting)
<p>Actively pursue third-party funding opportunities for forest / park investment</p> <p>(to invest in the activities within the forest/park and development of the forest/park)</p>	KPI developed on an agreed minimum number of third-party funding applications lodged by the Trust per annum (on top of any Council based funding)
Plan to develop further walking and cycling tracks within the forest/park to connect to the "loop track concept" described in Council's Walking & Cycling Strategy	KPI developed to agree on a timeline for the Trust delivering a plan for new walking and cycling tracks in the forest/park that connect to Council's loop track development
Minimise future flooding impacts to the forest/park through appropriate design and planting	KPI developed that describes the Trust's flood protection activity vs Horizon's flood protection activity
Make the forest / park available for educational opportunities	KPI developed that describes the education activity delivered by the Trust vs the education activity delivered by Enviroschools, or other providers within the park/forest.

PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Expectation 1. Maintain the forest / park, within the existing boundary, as an area of unspoilt nature (scenic reserve) for the benefit of the community and visitors.

Description	Starting Point	Target / Output	Status
To continue the pest plant programme	2020	Zero density control of Old Man's Beard by 2027	In Progress & On Track
		Continued management 3 large vines identified and eradicated. Multiple small seedlings removed. We are seeing small seedlings in area along Kawakawa Rd fence line. There is significant infestations in the Henson block across the road. This area is not in the control of AFKPT.	
		Manage Bind weed, Jasmine and dock weed by 2027	In Progress & On Track
		West side 3.5 hectares weeded and cleared of all visible bind weed jasmine and dock for planting prep. One round of post planting care has taken place post planting. (Nov/Dec 2024)	
		Achieve control mechanism for Phragmites by 2028	In Progress At risk
		Reduced funding for R&D for year 2024-2025. Plot management continues but the investigations into chemical penetration into rhizomes has to be deferred until funding available. The significant plot being managed through cut and spray method has been abandoned after 7 spray cycles has shown this does not slow or limit growth in any way. This site will now be managed through the cut and inject methodology evolved. See Notes at end doc	
Number of traps vs kill catch animal pests	2013	Encourage buffer zone upstream to prevent new infestation.	In progress
		Three traps were lost in floods and one destroyed by vandalism.	
		Trapping Continues each week.	

Number of Native species planted	2024/25	<p>41 species, 30,000 plants by 30 June 2025</p> <p>Planted from July to December 2024 25,450 - 48 species planted</p> <p>Planted in Calander year 2024 29,383 -48 species</p> <p>2000 plants held by nursery not mature enough to plant by season end will be uploaded as soon as conditions are appropriate for planting.</p> <p>The new wetland development has now had it first planting. Approximately 70% of the wetland has now been planted.</p> <p>14,500 plants ordered for next financial year. Planting numbers will start to decline as the forest footprint is now almost replanted with Natives. Planting will start to move more toward enhancement as as new ecosystems are formed from the major restoration push we have now carried out.</p> <p>The planting push now moved more toward plant maintenance over the next few years.</p> <p>(Total plant planted in the planting season of 2024 Calander year was 29,383)</p>	<p>In progress on track</p> <p>On track</p> <p>In progress on track</p>
New plant survival rate	80%+	<p>80%+ over 2½ year period 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2026</p> <p>91.8% survival Dec 2024, If we get a dry summer the survival rate of new plant will drop.</p> <p>Lost an estimated 250 cabbage trees and flax plants to Pukekohe in wetland. (100 new plants planted to replace some of these)</p> <p>4 of the 19-swamp maire re- introduced into forest are likely to not survive. These are a difficult plant to establish and as we had no surviving swamp Maire we are guessing from other external sites as to the best place to plant them.</p>	On Track

		<p>Increased the numbers of Pokaka trees by 16 with seed collected from the original 3 trees. Took 4 years to get to planting size.</p> <p>We have now reintroduced all original large tree species from the 1928 list back into the forest and now focus will start to move to enrichment and balancing numbers. There are still significant sub canopy, shrubs, herbs and ferns missing that will have to be sourced over the next few years.</p>	In progress on track
Numbers of big trees lost	2023/24	<p>Nil per annum</p> <p>No big trees lost this financial year. Two are at risk and showing signs of deterioration. These may take many years to die. One is close to a walkway and will be reviewed 6mnthly for Health and safety issues.</p>	Watching brief



**New Boardwalk being tested in floods we need
railings for public to share this experience
Forest westside**



**New plantings in reconstructed spillway survived first flood
No plants washed out – Wetland site**

Expectation 2. Actively pursue third-party funding opportunities for forest / park investment

(to invest in the activities within the forest / park and development of the forest / park).

Description	Starting Point	Target / Output	Status
Maintain appropriate third party funding for the activities and development of the forest / park	2022/23 MDC \$23,000 + other \$139,476	<p>Relevant funding applications are lodged to maintain the funding level required</p> <p><u>Approved funding</u></p> <p>Horizons R&D Phragmites karka \$35k -(asked for \$65K)</p> <p>Horizons Makino Phragmites \$60k.</p> <p>Horizons \$9k wetland. Plant Care</p> <p>Trees That Count \$18,346</p> <p>Private donation \$10. k</p> <p>Gifting \$450</p> <p>Total \$ 132, 346</p> <p><u>Unsuccessful funding</u></p> <p>Manawatu District Council -education \$10k - \$4167 * see education</p> <p><u>Applications Pending</u></p> <p>Department of Conservation C \$1.2million. - Waiting outcome</p>	In progress On track
Measurement of 'In kind' support	<p>2022/23 estimated hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustee 1,100 • Stakeholders 200 	<p>Maintain relationships and measure the resulting significant 'in kind' support</p> <p>Trustees 490</p> <p>45</p>	In progress

Expectation 3. Plan to develop further walking and cycling tracks within the forest / park to connect to the “loop track concept” described in Council’s Walking & Cycling Strategy.

Description	Starting Point	Target / Output	Status
Boardwalk walking track	May 2024	West side Board walk. Completed by 20 October 2024	

		Completed Oct 2024. -But needs safely rails in three areas due to going over water.	Completed
Work with Council on a cycling track design	Not yet commenced	<p>Understand MDC's vision and work together on a cycling track design.</p> <p>Have received new proposed plan from Manawatu District Council Parks and Reserves team. The new loop cycling track will not go through the forest. It will run parallel to the forest from the Rata Street track and walkers can continue into the forest as usual. There may be a need to have a lockable bike rack installed at this junction. The Trust will assist in enhancement and blending this into the forest biodiversity. The Trust cannot progress this until MDC actions this project.</p>	Watching Brief

Expectation 4. Minimise future flooding impacts to the forest / park through appropriate design and planting.

Description	Starting Point	Target / Output	Status
Take opportunities to provide feedback to Council and Horizons concerning flood management activity. Maintain relationship with Horizons	<p>February 2024</p> <p>Infrastructure for wetland planting,</p> <p>Makino stream side re-modelling</p>	<p>Report on feedback provided to Council and Horizons</p> <p>Wetland infrastructure now completed. Small floods have tested it. One area needs minor changes to protect side of corduroy RD in big floods.</p> <p>70% of wetland now planted.</p> <p>Discussions for Makino stream removal of willows over next 10 years started. Cannot plan until Horizons halt on all work across region issues are resolved</p> <p><i>See other Additional notes below in other issues</i></p>	<p>In progress on Track</p> <p>In progress</p>

Expectation 5. Make the forest / park available for educational opportunities.

Description	Starting Point	Target / Output	Status
Maintain the Trust's children's education programme	2022/23 17 sessions, 913 students involved, 11 schools	<p>Maintain 80%+ of 2022 / 23 level of local school involvement</p> <p>Education programme Reviewed</p> <p>Not working well since death of contractor. Children's programme not getting volume of engagement from schools.</p> <p>Manawatu District Council reduced funding from \$10 k to nil next year. Believe we are same as enviro schools and this is duplication. Enviro Schools is a franchise and we have never used their model. Our target was mainly schools that were not envoi schools</p> <p>As the Trust has reduced the degraded areas and increased the forest restored areas we are having more and more difficulty in accommodating education activities off the board walks.</p> <p>To Close programme at end of Jan 2025.</p> <p>Education resources have been gifted to Enviro Schools programme. - Work books, books, posters, diorama's, bug kits etc The Trust has returned residual unused 2024- 2025 Education funds to Manawatu District Council. The Trust will start to work toward producing education materials on their website linked to the forest.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>New output</p>
Maintain the Trust's adult education programme	Adult education events occur	3 x adult related engagements / events pa (this may include university student visits)	On track

		Continued Massey university and hydrology flow events took place. Still planning the forest weed management programme with Landcare Trust .	
--	--	---	--

Other issues and Updates

Minimise future flooding impacts to the forest/park through appropriate design and planting	KPI developed that describes the Trust's flood protection activity vs Horizon's flood protection activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This forest floods naturally. If it stops flooding it is no longer a wetland/lowland forest. 2. The issues that damage the forest with flooding are about velocity causing shingle to be swept into forest and weed management from upstream infestations. 3. These issues are caused by stream structural straightening in the 1960-70s and plant types (willows) on the edges of the stream. 4. The Trust already manages the plantings of new plant types based on low and high ground, but we cannot without Horizons permission alter or change stream sides 5. The Trust is working with Horizons to explore the removal of willows and substitute with natives along the stream sides over the next 10 years. This is a complex issue that can only be done in incremental stages as the integrity of the stream channels needs to be retained. 6. The Trust discussing with Horizons around the appointment of Cameron Reid River engineer as an advisory Trustee to the Trust,
Health and safety	Manage and Reduce health and safety risks to contractors and public	<p>2 Workers stung by wasps. Nests destroyed</p> <p>The Trust is starting to review its Health and safety policy. Particularly in relation to contractors who are required to have their own health and safety policies' before they can work in the forest, This will also relates to a new policy on purchasing the Trust has started to work on. We heard anecdotally there was an incident with a dog fight and biting of a person. No formal or verifiable compliant was made.</p>
The Trust	<p>Trustee numbers</p> <p>Ten years of Trust functioning</p>	<p>The Trust very briefly had six Trustees.. Two newly appointed Trustees resigned within months of coming onto the Trust. One was for personal reasons and the other was their work role changed not allowing them to continue.</p> <p>Jill Darragh resigned in December after 10 years of service with the Trust Recruitment needs to start again in new year.</p> <p>The Trust celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Trust in November.</p>

Phragmites Karka

This weed is still expanding through the forest. Each time we get a flood more sites are appearing.

The R&D methods developed by the Trust with Horizons funding although effective are expensive and time consuming. The oddity of this plant not being a registered weed is still causing significant issues. What funding we do get is to be applied to R&D and this doesn't cover resources to manage all the forest each season. **See downloadable R&D report Trust website** bottom of page <https://awahuri-forest-kitchener-park.nz/phragmites>

It was four and a half years in December since the Trust started to investigate what this plant was. It is now four years since we had it identified by MPI. Through that Time there has been constant research on how to manage this plant. Along side this research and management activities we have made five separate submissions to Horizons and Ministry of Primary Industry to get this recognised as a weed. Once recognised the chances of attracting resources to manage this increase significantly Government and local Government entities then have to resource its management better.

In addition to the submissions there has also been numerous lobbying activities, media coverage and an education event to try and get some focus on this weed. These events and submissions have forced the Trust to work more widely than the forest footprint. We have been reasonably successful in getting awareness around this weed but the upshot is we the Trust have become out of necessity the lead in management of *Phragmites karka* across NZ. This is taking its toll on the Trust time resources and energy. Unfortunately, if the Trust stops doing this *Phragmites karka* will just continue to expand in the forest and continue to be reintroduced from the Makino stream in floods.

The Trust made a funding application to DOC for \$1.2 million over three years. This if successful will bring national attention and over the course of three years reduce the incidence in the Makino and the forest to become manageable.

The Trust has accepted the offer from Barry Scott to do a full scientific paper on *Phragmites karka* similar to the one he did for *Caulerpa*. This *Caulerpa* paper was submitted to government and was a key catalyst in getting \$10 Million Dollars to manage *Caulerpa* in the Hauraki gulf and Northland. It will take several months to develop this document. The Trust is providing information on their activities and key links to individuals and entities we have worked with during our journey on *Phragmites karka*. One of the entities he will approach is Manawatu District Council.

Barry Scott -taught Molecular Genetics and carried out research on Plant-Microbe symbiosis. A Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand/Te Apārangi and was a founding Board Member of the Environmental Risk Management Authority.



The Kauwhata team working on removing a Stand of *Phragmites karka*
December 2024



Streblus heterophyllus -turepo,,small-leaved milk tree in flower. Believed to be one of two remaining plants in the forest. We will attempt to collect seed and propagate Not common anymore.