

RIVER BASIN FLORA RESTORATION PROGRAMME

PINES ERADICATION AND THE TAUPAHI RESERVE TO TE AHO RESERVE WALKWAY RESTORATION



We are fortunate to have Dr Peter Williams as a member of the Advocates For The Tongariro River (AFTR). Peter is a well known expert in weed management who has recently retired from Landcare Research. We benefited greatly from his presence at an environmental workshop with DoC and AFTR on June 4. A strategic plan was developed for ongoing work to eradicate wilding pines and to restore the river margins with indigenous species on the DoC estate.

Peter says there is no question that the programme is most important in regard to the preservation and restoration of the native flora in the wider Tongariro basin. Other exotic weeds such as blackberry and scotch broom are obviously undesirable but they come and go with the bigger floods and other changes in growing conditions. Cost-effectively, these weeds are not worth pursuing to any great extent.

He passionately confirmed that the pines, if not eradicated, will only continue to displace all other significant native growth. The other weed tree that has attracted his concern on the river upstream of the main road bridge is willow, and he has submitted his observations to DoC for further consideration.

At the workshop, we were also very fortunate to hear an overview of restorative work currently being carried out in the Taupo Conservancy from DoC Field Officer, Lucy Roberts. The work of the Advocates fits well within this programme.

Peter Williams also attended an AFTR Committee meeting to discuss issues relating to the plan. After the meeting, he and some of the Committee members walked the track from Taupahi Reserve to Te Aho Reserve to discuss what was best for this area.

A local contractor was employed to clear the area of weeds and rubbish. On June 18 and 19, with the help of community workers, the area was replanted with 3,000 plants from Environment Waikato stopbank restoration. Five truckloads of mulch were delivered free by local contractors Kernohan's and community workers spread that over the area in the succeeding weeks.

AFTR very much appreciate the work done so willingly and quickly by community workers who are keen to assist in keeping the area weed-free until the plants are truly established. AFTR also greatly appreciate the most welcome assistance of Kernohan Contractors Ltd.

The area between the two reserves has been completely transformed, and comments from the public walking by have been very positive. We look forward to seeing this area fully established over the next five years.

Thanks go to Committee members John Toogood, Marja ter Haar and Eric Wilson for continuing to persevere with this work despite some rather discouraging and ill-informed criticisms from certain sections of the community at times. Our strategic direction has been reaffirmed, and we are re-energised to 'keep on keeping on'!



Environment team meeting with weeds specialist Dr Peter Williams. From left: Fiona Maguire and Lucy Roberts from DoC, John Toogood, Marja ter Haar, Peter Williams, Stuart Crosbie and Mark Cosgrove.

FISH QUALITY

Most anglers in mid-July were finding the fishing hard. The same anglers were much happier with the condition of fish being caught.

The fish are averaging 3lb, maybe a little under, but are good fighting fish, good shape, and in the main, have good orange-coloured flesh when opened up.

There has been a definite improvement in the fishery which is acknowledged in the latest *Target Taupo*.

If you are a full season licence holder and have not received the July 2010 edition of *Target Taupo*, then follow the advice at the bottom of your licence.

Email your name, address with postcode and licence number to targettaupo@xtra.co.nz or call (07) 384 7143.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As your incoming President, I'm both humbled and a little in awe as I step into Heather Macdonald's and Mark Cosgrove's shoes. Both have given outstanding service to the Advocates, and Heather's dedication was recognised at our recent AGM when she joined Mark in being made a Distinguished Member. Between them, they have led the Society since its inception. This has taken sustained levels of commitment in terms of time, effort, and tenacity, and the Society simply would not be in existence today without their dedication and wise stewardship. I applaud them.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD



From left, incoming President Stuart Crosbie Immediate Past President Heather Macdonald and Inaugural President Mark Cosgrove.

I see my role as President as one of harnessing our shared passion and collective skill set within the Committee through having good systems and disciplines as we set about implementing our strategy.

At the back of our Annual Reports, we have had a well articulated strategy for some time now, which we believe summarises what you, our members, want the Advocates to focus on. But are we doing the right things?

We really want to be sure and would therefore strongly encourage you to take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire enclosed with this newsletter.

We look forward to your ongoing support. Thank you.

Stuart Crosbie
President



PLAN TO BE AT OUR UPCOMING SEMINAR

Each year, the Advocates have held a seminar at Labour Weekend. We find many folk have other commitments over these long weekends and so we are experimenting with holding our next seminar on Saturday, 16 October – the weekend BEFORE Labour weekend.

Our speaker will be Bryce Johnson, CEO Fish and Game. Bryce has a wealth of experience in advocating for our freshwater fisheries and securing ongoing access to New Zealand's rivers and lakes. He understands the political, economic and social drivers that come into play, and his talk will provide valued insights into how these aspects pertain to the Tongariro River.

We look forward to seeing you at the Bridge Lodge, Turangi, at 2:00pm on Saturday 16 October.

THE TONGARIRO RIVER TRAIL UPDATE



The three day Tongariro River Trail (TRT) project continues to be driven by strong supportive community interest. Committee members Ross Baker and John Wheeler are devoting large amounts of time and energy in leading this initiative supported by many others on the Committee.

Following the Advocates AGM, in April, the Advocates formally introduced the project with a DVD followed by a PowerPoint presentation to the Turangi Community Board who gave it their full support. Taupo Mayor Rick Cooper was so impressed he asked the Advocates to present it to his full Council on 20 July. Taupo District Council staff are all enthusiastic about the concept and have been of great assistance. A formal application for funding assistance from a major principal sponsor is being prepared. The Corrections Department have been very supportive and offered the use of their roads and bridges and to build any new tracks needed where they pass through the Tongariro Prison Farm and forest. Genesis Energy have also given their full support for a tourist shelter at the hub at the Poutu Intake Dam. DoC have also been very cooperative, assisting with planning and access issues.

The basic 'tentative' TRT website - TongariroRiverTrail.co.nz - has been available for some months with more details such as images of the tracks, a route map, news articles, plus the DVD and PowerPoint presentations and other information. A logo has been designed and the Advocates' legal team are currently investigating the best form of management structure using a non-profit charitable trust representing all stakeholders.

The final route for day 1, south up the eastern side of the river,

has been decided. The track will commence on the western side of SH1 south of the road bridge. It will follow the millennium walk to the visitor centre before leading under SH1 through the subway, continuing east towards Taupahi Reserve where it will link with the existing walkway south to the swing bridge at the end of Koura Street. From there, it will cross the Tongariro River and follow the existing well known anglers' access walking and bike track up to the Duchess Pool lookout. Then it will link up with the Tongariro Prison Farm and continue across the Whitikau above the eastern side of the river through their forest roads to the Waipa Stream. From there, a new hiking/biking track will link with the 'hub' at the Poutu Intake Dam.

The return route for day 3 back down the western side of the river is all but confirmed with a couple of small details, such as the Poutu River crossing, yet to be decided. This day 3 will be completed at the same time as day 1 providing a full circuit to and from Poutu Intake. Day 2 is the loop south from Poutu Intake. The route down the east side to Tree Trunk Gorge on existing tracks is confirmed, but the return down the western side is still being finalised. Access issues still remain for day 2. Whilst the main route above has been widely circulated and approved, there are still minor decisions to be finalised and costed, such as the choice of footbridges or stepping stones on minor side stream tributaries.

The Advocates want to make sure that track design prevents those biking the track doing so at high speeds. In taking the lead to form the optimal TRT management structure, the Advocates also want to ensure the governing entity develops workable policies and protocols on shared usage whereby anglers, hikers and bikers can all enjoy using the tracks in a safe, harmonious and mutually beneficial manner.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please take 10 minutes to give us your feedback and be in to win a \$100 voucher.

We only have a mandate to 'speak out for the river' if we have the ongoing support of members. It's that simple!

We need to know how much you value what we do or whether you think we have lost our way to some extent. The enclosed questionnaire is the first time we have sought such formal feedback. Please take 10 minutes to complete and return in the reply paid envelope (or you can also complete it electronically if we have your email details).

Those who return their completed questionnaires by 13 August will go in the draw to win a dinner voucher. Thanks for making the effort, and good luck!

THE TONGARIRO NATIONAL TROUT CENTRE SOCIETY DONORS' BOARD

The Tongariro National Trout Centre Society is undergoing a major expansion of its visitor centre and museum, and its freshwater aquarium is nearly finished. One funding source supporting these projects is the Walkway Donors' Board. Conservation-minded people and organisations are invited to help finance these projects by buying a wall tile. The AFTR have contributed four tiles, and individual members may wish to add their financial support. Each tile costs \$125. Look up the Trout Centre at www.troutcentre.org.nz (then under News) or phone 07 386 8085 (10am - 2.30pm).

AGM REPORT

At the AGM Bob Appleton stepped down as a Committee member and John Wheeler was re-elected to the Committee. The Committee thanks Bob for his time with the Advocates from its origins through to 2010. Bob was our representative on the Fishing Advisory Committee. Bob lived most of his life in the central North Island and developed a wealth of experience through his long association with the Tongariro and Taupo fishery which he willingly made available to the Committee and others. We wish Bob and wife Shirley well for the future.



We are pleased to welcome back to the Committee John Wheeler. John was a surveyor and has vast experience of the Taupo area.

Ross Baker was our guest speaker and updated the proposed walking angling track that the Advocates are promoting.

Dave Cade spoke passionately about the need to keep the aquatic menaces out of this catchment given the threat of didymo, lagarosiphon, hornwort, hydrilla, alligator weed and other identified threats.

DIDYMO: COULD THIS BE THE LOWER TONGARIRO?

We were sent this photo and hoped it wasn't.



It is didymo deposited on the Hawea River banks after a flood. Awful. It's the reason so many make such an effort to keep didymo out of the North Island and non-affected areas in the South Island.

Dave Cade of DoC is doing an effective job in getting the message to anglers and other water users to value and protect what we have on this river and on the Taupo catchment.

Note the caption on Dave's truck. The message is not just didymo but all water weeds and the only answer at this time is CHECK, CLEAN, DRY. Check our website www.tongariroriver.org.nz for the latest DVD presentation from Biosecurity.

Remember the mantra, "When leaving a waterway, treat it as if it does have pest weeds. Treat all water entered as if it doesn't."

Apply "CHECK, CLEAN, DRY like putting on your seat belt."



MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Thank you for keeping our database accurate by providing your address and contact changes.

The inclusion of a list of members in the Annual Report had a very positive response. I will check with members who have not ticked the box allowing publication of their name.

A reminder that the Advocates are registered with the Charities Commission. Our number is CC11274. Your donation to the Advocates is tax deductible. A separate receipt for each donation has been written.

Receipts for membership and donations are sent with the next posting of the newsletter or Annual Report.

ADVOCATES WIN THE PRESTIGIOUS WEEDBUSTERS AWARD FOR THE WAIKATO REGION.

The award will be made at the next council meeting of Environment Waikato on 14 September. To know more about Weedbusters, go to www.weedbusters.org.nz.