

LAKE HĀWEA RECREATION RESERVE FORE SHORE WORKING GROUP (AKA Thursday Group) 2023 AGM REPORT

Tena Koutou katoa

HISTORY: The work of this volunteer group began from the 1980's with far sighted residents, dedicated to healing the land, with local plant knowledge, energy to remove waterfront noxious weed and exotic species. Our community is very indebted to all those involved with the hard work that has gone before. We continue with a love of restoration and ecosystem enhancement emphasising protecting indigenous locally sourced dryland shrubs, which attract and feed indigenous birds, insects, McCann's skinks, fungi, bacteria etc – and all the things we cannot see. We continue to see a notable increase in Tui and Perepere (bellbirds), piwakawaka, karearea, plus white faced herons, shags, and grebes on the lake that have ventured more into the township and its surrounds thanks to Backyard Trapping and the grebe people. The fragrant pimelia (native daphne) is currently flowering profusely in the dryland and turf communities along the track. Cave weta, red admiral butterflies, and thelemytra orchids are all signs of a healthy eco system. We learn much on the job.



Morning Tea



Esplanade beach Flooding



QLDC Policy Team Support

OPERATION: We operate as a co-operacy: ie with a co-ordinator (currently Gaye Robertson) assisted by others with plant knowledge, irrigation, herbicide and chainsaw, and planting expertise, plus members' use of own vehicles and trailers, tool sharpening, also supported by Te Kakano, Matukituki Alpines, and Lake Hāwea Green Waste. This shares expertise, distribution of volunteer hours. "Hidden" volunteers report anything untoward happening on the reserve on their daily walks, assist within their own time in consultation with us, irrigation, grassing and irrigation of the Scott's beach area for picnics and BBQs, and those who give us generous donations. QLDC and HCA are well supportive of the work plans we create, policy wise, and financially. Two on site planning sessions are carried out twice a year with the QLDC Reserves Officer and the co-ordinator. This informs the work plan. We are a group of very mixed backgrounds and mostly retired and love what we do.

CURRENT WORKPLANS: Over the past year we have managed to keep to our agreed work plan regardless of lower volunteer numbers with one and a half sweeps of the reserve have been completed up to now. Unfortunately, weather and cold over this winter produced most inclement weather on Thursdays resulting in cancellations of workdays. This resulted in postponing work over July, August and September, and are now in summer hours 9-12. The work continues to involve weeding, protecting, irrigating and planting, plus observing heartening signs of birdlife, insects/lizard and plant growth, orchids and collecting rubbish. We are now either replanting, or filling gaps made by removing large areas of weeds such as blackberry, ivy and lupin, planting stormwater drains (a Lake Hawea Guardians' initiative) that would otherwise filter down into the lake, with emphasis of

plants that have deep rooted systems and don't mind wet feet. We are mindful of growth over time and refrain from planting that may block neighbours' views or cause unnecessary work along the track ie flax and Te kouka. Recent heavy rains saw the storm water drains performing spectacularly with no damage to plantings, but with significant flooding on the fore shore. Meadowing is a process QLDC have adopted which means some areas will be left unmowed. This is to enhance habitat, reduce use of fossil fuels, plus reducing the production of methane **-cut grass produces methane.**



Weta Motel



Grebe Feet



Cold Water Dipping

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS: We do aim to walk or cycle if possible, and avoid parking on the reserve. We continue to check the many storm water drains and any area of dampness to assist sequestration and prevent pollutants entering the lake. Most of the rubbish collected is either disintegrating plastic, glass, metal bottle tops or paper, clothing, bags of dog poo, food wrapper rubbish. However, overall, compared to other areas rubbish is minimal.

FIRE: With an impending dry, hot, windy summer looming fire could be a risk. Already poorly covered fires on the fore shore have appeared.

DAMAGE: We have noticed some tampering of the No Camping sign on Esplanade beach. It was removed twice and now reinstated. There has also been tampering to reduce the height of reserve trees, shrubs. There is a significant fine for this as the Lake Hawea Recreation Reserve is a gazetted reserve and also comes under the Reserves Act. Theft of a fadge occurred from the beach foreshore before we were able to remove it. The Esplanade toilets also had graffiti which QLDC removed promptly. Dumping of garden rubbish in two places has been found. This smothers turf plants, does not form compost to feed plants.

HERBICIDE: Removal of weeds is with careful use of herbicide gel, spraying with the appropriate herbicide for the plant, and in optimal conditions to harm any indigenous flora and fauna. Weeds will ruin all the work gone on before by smothering of indigenous plants and car parks if not removed. Recent herbicide GroSafe training has been completed by a volunteer. Recently LINZ contractors have sprayed weeds below the Contact Energy fence which will be a great help to prevent seeds spreading onto the reserve. Due to further Flora Dora cliff face collapse we do not have volunteers work over the fence.

TRACK IMPROVEMENT: Recently the main Te Araroa trail has been widened for safety and resurfaced to make room for electric and other bikes as well as walkers and families with children.

THREATS: NOTE: garden escapees and predominant weeds eg pampas, catoneaster, gravillia, tree lucerne, tree lupin, silver birch, ivy, rowan, poplar, and aluminium plants predominate. The Commissioner for the Environment has stated that throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, garden escapees are doing great damage to our flora and fauna, and it's all of our responsibility to manage. Concerning is the continued escape of weeds/plants eg ivy and others from the boundaries of some properties which border the reserve. **Home owners be sure of your boundaries please.**

Future increase in population and visitors means increased multi use of the tracks. With proposed widening of the Te Araroa trail through the township reserve, we hope that removal of species planted by volunteers are not damaged, as well as some consideration is given to parents walking babies and children, older citizens with disabilities, those that just like the easy solitude of rambling, and that increased use of e-bikes does not threaten these activities. Much has changed with track use since the creation of the reserve and the Te Araroa trail.

REDUCTION IN GROUP MEMBERS: The volunteer team has halved, so, if anyone is recently retired with spare time, wants to get to know folk in an outdoor environment with fabulous morning tea views, friendship building and stimulation morning tea conversations **then we need you.** Also if you like doing your bit to restore habitats for future generations by planting, weeding and protecting, **we would love to hear from you via the co-ordinator.** There is a role for any level of fitness.

WASP NESTS: Thirty wasp nests were found along the foreshore this season and were dealt to, but there were still others we were unable to locate. Luckily none of us got stung.

SUCCESES: We are now continuing to see considerable regeneration of kanuka, broadleaf, orchids, pittosporum and coprosma species under the stands of kanuka. A focus on planting dryland species that produce berries supports food for insects, lizards and birds. Indigenous orchids mostly on the grassy banks are very obvious.

QLDC Policy Team joined us on a cold day for their team building plus were life savers for us to compete weeding the area below the Flora Dora terraces before we stopped for winter.

STATISTICS: A total of 30 locally sourced plants are in the ground from 28 workdays, 15 cancellations, and 283 hours (saved QLDC \$6,391 on minimum wage).

RELATIONSHIPS: We value our relationships with: community members who continue to support what we do and like the wild nature of the reserve. LINZ for spraying below the edge of the cliffs, Contact Energy on advice on cliff collapse, QLDC contractors for general maintenance of the track, lawns and equipment, the Reserves Officer and HCA with finance for equipment. It is great to see folk having fun on the reserve and in the lake - cold water fun dipping/swimming being popular.

HEARTFELT THANKS: To all of the above, and the volunteers who willingly give of their time and expertise, and who also provide friendship, on a very regular basis. This adds greatly in supporting me in my role of co-ordinator and the volunteer team. We have a most enjoyable learning experience.

Nga mihi

Gaye Robertson, Co-ordinator, 10.10.2023