



EAST TARANAKI ENVIRONMENT COLLECTIVE

Restoring Native Biodiversity. Protecting our Future. Together

Autumn Newsletter 2022



Here's the site of our new headquarters

Right now it's a bare paddock, but that land behind East Taranaki Environment Collective chair Chris French and New Plymouth District Councillor Marie Pearce will soon be the site of an exciting \$9 million development by ETEC in conjunction with NPDC and Pukerangiora hapū – a boon for Inglewood, the environment, and tourism.

Read all about the project | Page 2

East Taranaki Environment Collective

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From the General Manager

Time is flying as all the action happens

Hard to believe we're now in the fourth month of the year – time seems to be flying as management, staff and volunteers at East Taranaki Environment Collective progress a series of really exciting initiatives.

One is the New Plymouth District Council's purchase of a parcel of bare land adjacent to Joe Gibbs Reserve on Inglewood's southern outskirts, which has opened the way for a joint partnership between New Plymouth District Council, Pukerangiora hapū and ETEC. This partnership and site will allow the opportunity for a co-partnership development, and special new headquarters for the ETEC community. Details are in the article below.

Also exciting is the collaboration ETEC has signed with the Department of Conservation and Pukerangiora hapū to undertake

pest control at Everett Park, the highly important reserve on the banks of the Manganui River east of Inglewood. All the details of that project are on the opposite page.

And on the back page there's a touching story about how several of our special kiwis, part of our bird monitoring programme for a number of years, are now entering their retirement years. That's the poignant news; the better news is they've all been replaced by younger birds – and they've been given interesting names by pupils of various schools in the Inglewood area.

Overall, exciting times!

Nga Mihi



ETEC GENERAL MANAGER
REBECCA SOMERFIELD

Land purchase opens the way for exciting building project

A New Plymouth District Council decision to purchase of a large area of bare land on Inglewood's southern boundary is fantastic news for the East Taranaki Environment Collective.

That's because it opens the way for ETEC to progress plans to build a Native Bird Rehabilitation and Interpretive Centre in the town.

The Council has voted to purchase land behind the Joe Gibbs Reserve and running along the southern edge of the Kurapete Stream. This property will now be the site of the \$9 million centre, to be shared with the area's vets as well as the district council's zoo team, and which will be a mix of reception, hospital and aviary areas.

The new facility will also be used as an Interpretive Centre featuring a purpose-built interactive display room, education and workshop space for hands-on education, an events room, workshop, and office space.

Plans are also in place for the centre to feature a Kiwi Viewing House, which will combine with outdoor aviaries to create a full visitor experience. When fully operational, it is expected the centre will require up to 14 core staff plus a large number of volunteers.

ETEC chair Chris French says the council's decision to buy the land is fantastic news.

"The site provides the ideal balance of accessibility for the community, plus meet our technical needs. And of course it is at Inglewood, a town which has always heavily supported our activities," he said.

Mr French says ETEC management will now begin discussions with other members of the conservation sector, the veterinary science, and the Pukerangiora hapū of Te Atiawa iwi to ensure the proposed new centre will meet all needs.

"We are already developing early architectural concepts, and our aspiration is to make a start to the construction project in early 2023," he adds.

The new centre will create a stronghold for eco-tourism and bird rehabilitation in the western North Island, and will support very strong growth currently taking place in the conservation sector in Taranaki.

"It will provide an opportunity for New Plymouth District to become the centre for that," adds Chris French.

Inglewood councillor Marie Pearce, who played a major role in the NPDC decision to purchase the bare land, says the rehabilitation centre will have the potential to become a major visitor attraction for Inglewood.

Map below indicates the probable location of the ETEC's proposed Native Bird Rehabilitation and Interpretive Centre.



ETEC provides new protection for historic reserve

An historic Taranaki recreational and bush reserve is to enjoy a new lease on life thanks to a collaboration between East Taranaki Environment Collective, Department of Conservation, and Pukerangiora Hapū.

Everett Park Scenic Reserve, 8km east of Inglewood, is the largest reserve on the Taranaki ring plain outside of the region's national park, Te Papakura o Taranaki. It is culturally significant traditional site as a mahinga kai and kāinga for hapū and iwi.

Considered to be an outstanding remnant example of the podocarp forest that once dominated the Taranaki landscape, it was set aside by the Crown in 1889 and made a reserve in 1919.

Since then the 85ha reserve has been one of Taranaki's prime recreational assets, with generations of locals enjoying Everett Park for such activities as bush walking, picnicking, camping, and fishing and swimming in the Manganui River.

Thanks to the protection by the Crown 132 years ago, most of Everett Park has never been logged so is in its original natural state, but its forest suffers from browsing by possums, while native bird life is under continual threat from mustelids, rodents and feral cats.

To help rectify this the ETEC has entered into the collaboration with DOC and the Hapū to protect the reserve's ecosystem and biodiversity.

Baseline monitoring has already begun in the Everett Park bush, and once the necessary information has been gathered, ETEC will then get stuck into the necessary work to protect all the native species.

Pukerangiora chairman Anaru White says the hapū is delighted to be able to partner with ETEC in this conservation project.

Norfolk School's curious minds help ETEC

Curious Minds is a government-funded initiative that offers funding and support to community groups so they can participate in a wide range of research projects.

East Taranaki Environment Collective has used Curious Minds funding to involve local schools in projects that have ranged from studying the presence of long-tailed bats to confirming the environmental importance of wetlands. Each time, the children involved have benefitted greatly from the experience.

Latest Curious Minds project has involved children from Norfolk School help undertake baseline monitoring of the bush at Everett Park to gauge numbers of animal pests such as rats, possums and feral cats.

The children assisted in the placement of several lines of tracking tunnels and chew cards. ETEC staff and volunteers then used the results from this surveying to plan and implement a trapping programme.

Norfolk School principal Andrew Georgeson says the children enjoyed the project, which involved up to 30 of the school's senior students.

"And we really appreciated the fact that ETEC staff came to our school for several learning sessions. It's all proved to be highly valuable," he says.

"Everett Park forms part of a wider cultural landscape that is very important to our hapū," he says, adding that the reserve is adjacent to historic Pukerangiora Pā. "Anything we can do to help preserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area will be beneficial."

DOC New Plymouth operations manager Gareth Hopkins says the collaboration with ETEC and Pukerangiora is a positive move. "It is great to have greater community involvement in looking after Everett Park, which has high biodiversity values and is an important scenic reserve asset for Taranaki."

Up until now, the ETEC's field operations focus has been on 13,000ha of land further to the east between Okoki and Matau, where pest control operations are resulting in strong growth in numbers of kiwi. This conservation effort is proving so successful that the area is now the stronghold of the North Island western brown kiwi.

Although Everett Park Scenic Reserve is some distance away from ETEC's field operations further to the east – the reserve is located about halfway between Inglewood and the conservation estate- ETEC sees its inclusion into its operational strategy as a logical addition to its activities, says general manager Rebecca Somerfield.

"It is all very much in keeping with our desire to take a collaborative approach with other parties to protect and improve the ecosystem and biodiversity of the eastern part of Taranaki region," she says.



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BASELINE MONITORING WITH CHILDREN FROM NORFOLK SCHOOL

ETEC Conservation Manager Kat Strang says there's plenty of other work to be done as part of the Everett Park project.

"ETECC staff have also conducted five-minute bird counts to establish the amount of bird life in the bush, and on top of that we will be using other methods to check on numbers of reptiles and, hopefully, the presence of native bats."

Farewell to the veterans – and welcome to the newbies

It's farewell to our superstar kiwi – and a big welcome to their replacements.

For some years now eight kiwi within East Taranaki Environment Collective's protected area have had electronic transmitters attached to their legs so their movements and activities could be monitored by ETEC staff as part of our normal pest management activities.

But now it is time to release some of them from their duties. So it is retirement time for Baccy, Jim, Nahe, Redwood and Titoko.

"Although it is a bit sad to say farewell to these members of our kiwi family, we are happy that they are being released in the knowledge they are healthy and happy in their environment," says ETEC Conservation Manager Kat Strang. "And it is testament to the good work of our rangers, contractors and volunteers that these birds are doing well."

That's the slightly sad news. The better news is that six young replacement birds have already had their transmitters fitted and are happily carrying out their duties in territory in and around Matau which is owned by the Ngati Maru iwi.

All the birds have been named too, thanks to Ngati Maru offering the tamariki of Inglewood Community of Learning the opportunity to work together and come up with some suitable names.

Waitoriki and Ratapiko schools combined to name one bird Pakiki which translates to curious, while Waitoriki and Egmont Village schools named another Anxter because it is a bit of a prankster.

Pupils from Ratapiko also named three other birds Utus the Brutis, Koru Koru and Hoa-Nui, while Waitoriki was responsible for the name of the sixth kiwi, Hideini.

There's a cost involved in monitoring our birds – not the least for maintenance of the

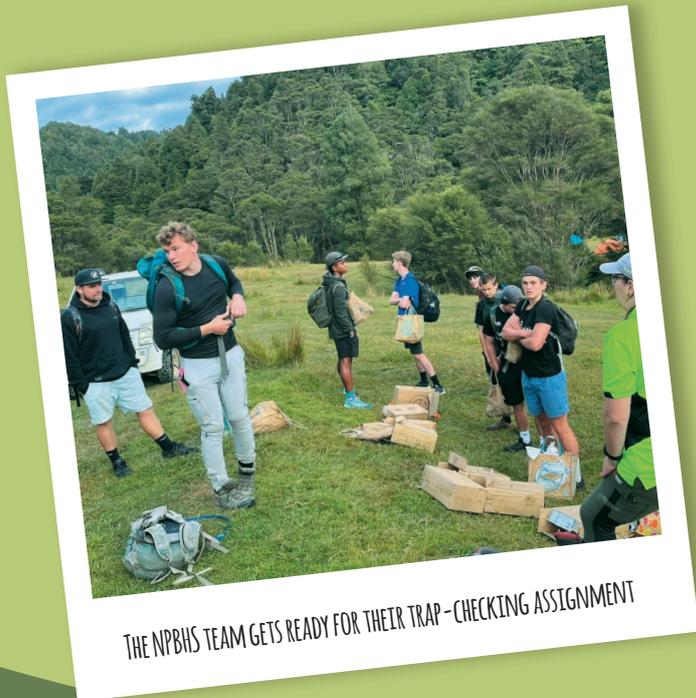
electronic transmitters – and that is why ETEC seeks sponsorship for each kiwi.

For those kiwi supporters affected by the change of monitored birds who have six months or more left on their sponsorship, we will move your sponsorship to one of our new kiwi and provide a fresh certificate.

If your sponsorship is about to expire and you would like to continue sponsoring one of our new kiwi, please contact us and we will provide a new sponsorship form.



ETE TRUSTEE AARON CHAMBERS POSES WITH ONE OF THE NEW BIRDS, KORU KORU



THE NPBHS TEAM GETS READY FOR THEIR TRAP-CHECKING ASSIGNMENT

Re-set nearly 1000 traps? No problem for NPBHS prefects

Thanks once again to New Plymouth Boys' High School's prefects and head students for 2022, who recently spent a few days on site, checking and re-setting our pest traps.

This year's group re-lured and re-gassed 312 Good Nature A12 and 667 of the A24 traps. The A12 target possums and the A24s target rats, and the gas and the lures will now last for about six months, helping keep predators at low numbers and protect East Taranaki Environment Collective's emerging population of kokako.

The re-gassing and re-luring took place in the Pouiatoa Conservation Area in rough eastern Taranaki country. And while the students were out there, they also cleared and marked various tracks.

This was the sixth time NPBHS has run this prefect programme at the beginning of each school term.

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