

Welcome Back! Nau mai hoki mai!

Welcome to the newest edition of the Styx Living Laboratory Trust's quarterly newsletter! Within this issue you'll learn about all the amazing things the Trust has been up to and how we plan to move forward. Panui koa!

Seaside at Sunset - AGM 2023

This year's AGM had another great turnout! We had multiple exciting guest speakers including Andrew Crossland, Dr. Jo Burzynska, Dr. Antony Shadbolt, Johnathan Ridden, and Dr. Gillian Lawson. This year we also handed out our first ever volunteer service awards. These awards went to some truly fantastic volunteers, and we can never thank them enough for all their hard work and dedication to the Trust. Later in the evening we had updates on Core Business projects and Project Kōtare and learned more about the huge amount of restoration progress and impact the Trust has had on the Pūharakekenui! We also officially welcomed two new Trustees Piper Pengelly and Johnathan Ridden. Their expertise will be invaluable to the Trust and we're proud to have them on our team. This really was an amazing year for the Trust and we were so thankful to share it with the local community. A special thank you to the Spencer Park Surf Lifesaving Club for providing us with such a beautiful venue to host the evening too!



Farewell to Bethany Baker

Jackie Howard

It is with a heavy heart that I inform you all of the departure of Conservation Projects Coordinator Bethany Baker. Her past 6 years with the Trust has led to some of the most important and ground breaking work we have ever done as a Trust. She was the driver behind securing funding for our Ka Pūtahi Rangatahi Mātauranga Education Programme, eDNA research, Project Peka Peka, all our master's students' projects from installing interpretation panels in reserves to conducting afforestation research, the Murchison Park Tree Canopy Project, Eco- River Adventures, and Project Kōtare just to mention a few. Bethany was an amazing colleague to have, and she is already so sorely missed. While Bethany will no longer be working for the Trust, you'll still see her at occasional events and volunteer days. Wishing you all the best in your future endeavours Bethany!



Introducing...

Creative Communicator Hannah Beehre



With a professional practice spanning twenty years Hannah has shown in galleries and festivals in New Zealand and around the world. Hannah gained a Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Canterbury in 2019 and her book 'Drawing in Flow' followed in 2021. She has been an Olivia Spencer Bower Trust Award Recipient and Artist in Residence at Scott Base, Antarctica. In 2016 she won the Parkin Prize for Drawing. Hannah's practice draws on science and spirituality, frequently dipping her toes into what Einstein referred to as 'the cosmic religious feeling'. Her proposed work with Pūharakekenui hopes to draw directly on the kinetic qualities of the currents to explore the nature of the river.

Her work with the Trust will be on exploring ways to co-author a series of works with Pūharakekenui. It is her hope not to anthropomorphise the river but to contemplate its particular spirit through observation and enquiry. As part of this process she intends to explore a variety of methods that might enable the river to make its own drawings. This would include designing and building simple technologies and tools to translate the kinetic energy of the river into mark-making, or drawing actions.

Education Officer Courtney Reid

Courtney, originally from Christchurch has a background in people and places, having studied ecology and psychology. She has a personal business as a mindset coach and has recently left the Parks Department at Christchurch City Council. In her spare time, she likes to hang out with her dog and partner, out in nature or travelling. She is very excited to be onboard with the team in this role, working directly with people educating them about the environment in such a special place. Courtney has taken over former Education Officer Dan Grima's position and the Trust is very excited to have her on board.



Welcome Hannah and Courtney to the Project Kōtare team! We can't wait to see all the amazing things you accomplish.



What's going on at the Styx

Update from the Trust

Summer is just around the corner and things are heating up in the Pūharakekenui.

Since I last reported on the things happening in the Trust's realm, we've held our AGM at Spencer Park Surf Lifesaving Club which was an excellent evening with a range of wonderful speakers as well as the opportunity to thank our longstanding supporters and volunteers. It also gave us a chance to welcome Piper Pengelly and Johnathon Ridden on to the Board as Trustees.

Times are changing in the funding space which have caused a restructure and reassessment of the Trust's core business - I'm thankful for the wider Trust's support during this time, as well as the extra roles that some staff have picked up - and everyone's patience as we shuffle, juggle and regroup! I'll share more about our plan to move forward in coming months.

In late October Antony Shadbolt and myself hosted a number of Christchurch City Councillors and Environment Canterbury Regional Councillors for discussion about the mahi that the Trust achieves as well as a wander through Te Waoku Kahikatea. We also were invited to feed back to the Ministry for the Environment's Secretariat about the future of our Freshwater Improvement Fund project (Project Kōtare) and avenues of support from Government.

I hope to see you enjoying our beautiful catchment soon!

Ngā mihi nui,
Chair Hannah Watkinson

Update from Anita

We are so close to finishing the planting season which the field team will be very happy about. Since our last update in July we've added another 25,000 plants to the Styx catchment, made possible by the great support from our community. Groups that have contributed to this total are Ouruhia School, Marshland School, St Andrews College, Bishopdale School, Christchurch Boys High School, staff from Coca-cola and the Student Volunteer Army. There are so many benefits that will come from all this tree planting, from providing wildlife habitat and corridors, shading and cooling waterways, reducing flooding by intercepting heavy rainfall and limiting growth of aquatic plants, to improving water quality to name just a few.



To break up the cold winter days we have been taking advantage of opportunities to meet other staff working on local conservation projects to share knowledge. We were hosted for an afternoon by Matthew Brosnahan who is the ranger at Otukaikino Reserve, where restoration work has been occurring for over 30 years. Walking through tunnels of huge trees gave us inspiration for what we will achieve when our own plants mature. We also attended a World Ranger Day event hosted by Waimakariri District Council which celebrates the international day by getting ranger staff from all organisations together to share the projects they are working on. A delicious breakfast was an added bonus.

We were successful with a funding application to ECAN's Waitaha Action to Impact Fund to take school children on a kayak adventure down the Pūharakekenui with KORE (Kiwi Outdoor Resilience Education). It was a unique chance for them to learn about the river and gain some kayaking skills and confidence along the way. And it was seriously fun!

If you would like to join our team in all this satisfying work we are currently advertising for two new field staff on Seek and NZ Conservation Jobs.



What's on Next?

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are looking for passionate, dedicated volunteers to join our regular field volunteers programme! We meet fortnightly on Wednesdays from 10am-12pm and the 4th Saturday of each month from 9am-12pm.

Work with our field team on native plantings, guarding, mulching, weeding, and track maintenance.

Contact: maddie@thestyx.nz



Community Bus Tours

Want to learn more about the Pūharakekenui/Styx river? Join us on a free bus tour of the Pūharakekenui! The tour will start at Smacks creek, stopping at several environmentally and culturally significant points of the river, and will end at the mouth of the river, Brooklands Lagoon. There will be some speakers along the way who will cover a range of topics all relating to the ecological values of the Pūharakekenui and how we can protect them. In addition, there will be catered sandwiches and nibbles provided and you are welcome to bring a packed lunch. There will be a small amount of walking around the sites so bring suitable footwear. Meet at Smacks Creek, Hussey Rd end, next to Redwood Aquatics (Parking on road) at 10am. Bus will return to Smacks Creek at 3pm. We have two last bus tour dates available Sunday November 12th and Sunday November 26th. RSVP asap to hana@thestyx.nz, spaces are limited!



Remember to keep an eye out for all our community events on our Facebook and Instagram pages. Remember we also have our monthly volunteering groups you can join:

1st Saturday of the month – Bird Monitoring

3rd Saturday of the month – Water Quality Monitoring

4th Saturday of the month – Field Volunteers

Letter from the Editor

Thank you for reading another edition of our quarterly newsletter! While we always have amazing projects to report on and events to share, we'd love to hear what you want to read in upcoming newsletters. If there is a special topic you'd like to learn more about or if you have an article you'd like to submit for publication please contact me at jackie@thestyx.nz. Our next publication will be in 3 months so there's plenty of time to submit some great ideas!

- Jackie Howard



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