

## Welcome Back! Nau mai hoki mai!

Happy New Year and 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!

## Summer in the Styx - February 2024!

What's that you say? Summer in the Styx is only a month away?! Indeed, it is! Come and join the Styx Living Laboratory Trust for our annual Summer in the Styx day at Te Waoku Kahikatea Reserve (303 Radcliffe Road) from 10am-2pm on Sunday the 25th of February. This is a **FREE**, family friendly event where we showcase all the amazing conservation work happening in and around the Pūharakekenui catchment. Last year we had over 400 people attend; enjoying activities including guided walks, scavenger hunts, kayaking, checking out eels, and of course enjoying some amazing kai! For more information please check out the event flyer below, or our event listing on Facebook, What's On Christchurch, and EventFinda. Let's make this year's event the biggest yet!



# SUMMER IN THE STYX

Join the Styx Living Laboratory Trust  
for a fun day of family-friendly  
festivities in Te Waoku Kahikatea  
Reserve

Stalls  
Kayaking  
Food  
Guided Walks  
Games and much more!

February 25 2024  
303 Radcliffe Road  
10am - 2pm

**FREE  
EVENT!**



PŪHARAKEKENUI

# What's going on at the Styx

## Update from Anita

This time of year, when we have such hot weather for days on end we start to worry about our new plants surviving the harsh conditions. Good species selection is essential, and we are very lucky to be able to draw on the experience of Dr. Antony Shadbolt and Gareth Harper who have over 60 years of combined, hard earned, knowledge in restoration projects. The funding from the Ministry of the Environment comes with commitments to meet certain targets, one of which is to exceed 75% of plant survival. This year I've just finished monitoring about 2000 of the plants that we've planted over the last two years and our plant survival rate is just over 86%. Ka pai!

Ideally, we'd be able to mulch dry sites prior to planting but we either don't have access to trees to mulch at site or shipping it in is outside our budget. It has been wonderful to partner with the arborist company Treotech who are providing mulch to two of our sites for minimal cost. This will make our plant survival even higher and reduce weed maintenance.



We have again said goodbye to a staff member with Hana Allan leaving us in January to start teacher training. We wish Hana all the best for her new career, and her students will have a great advocate for river conservation to learn from. With goodbyes also come welcomes to new staff and we have two additions to our field team.

Matt Culf and Aimee Blythe both joined us in December and have got straight into weed control and plant maintenance.

In November Professor Jon Harding and Dr. Don Jellyman led a freshwater fish survey of parts of the catchment using electric fishing and netting. A group of volunteers and Project Kōtare staff came along to help and learn from the experts. The purpose of the survey was to add to the knowledge of fish species numbers and distribution. It was amazing to see the numbers of fish and invertebrates caught in waterways, where nothing seems visible. It is a good reminder that this is all valuable habitat and by taking action such as stopping sediment from coming off banks, picking up litter, planting to create shade, we are taking steps to protect our taonga.



Our creative communicator programme is once again in full swing and we currently have THREE artists working with us. See the staff profile page for more information about them. The purpose of the role is to produce artwork to raise the profile of the Styx catchment, and the work that the Trust is doing. We are excited to see what they come up with. Keep an eye out for more details as one of the outputs from the programme is to have a public-facing project with the community such as workshops, an exhibition, performance etc.

## District Rotary 9999

One of the visions of the Styx Living Laboratory Trust is fostering new partnerships, which we've been able to push forward on since the start of Project Kōtare in 2021. Most recently we signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the South Island District Rotary 9999 and have been setting up some amazing projects with them (i.e business case development, stocktake, school education days, etc). While these projects are being designed and implemented, Rotary members have been joining the Trust for weekend field volunteer events and guided walks to learn more about what we do and why we do it! The most recent of these was Saturday January 27th, where 12 Rotary members joined Dr. Antony Shadbolt, Programme Manager Anita Spencer, and three of our Field Volunteers for three hours of focused mahi at Te Waoku Kahikatea Reserve. As mentioned previously, the Trust will be hosting our annual Summer in the Styx event at this reserve on February 25th, so all the work accomplished will make sure the reserve is in tip top shape for attendees!



# Rotary 9999 Continued...

District Rotary 9999 will also be at Summer in the Styx running a stall and lending a helping hand, so make sure to come by and have a chat with them. We're so excited for what's to come with our partnership and of course sharing it all with you! Partnerships like the one we have with District Rotary 9999 are what allow us to keep expanding our conservation, education, and outreach efforts in and around the Catchment and we're so grateful for their support.



## Introducing...

**Creative Communicator**  
**Dominic Grace**



Dominic, (Ngāti Maru, Ngāi Tahu) is a Christchurch local and has worked in a variety of industries including Parks, libraries and hospitality. He has an interest in material culture, traditional technology and mahinga kai- which led to him gaining a honors degree in Maori and Indigenous Studies, from the University of Canterbury in 2019. In his free time he enjoys gardening, fishing, mountain biking and gaming.

**Creative Communicator**  
**Khye Hitchcock**



Te mihi tuatahi ki te mana whenua o tēnei rohe, ki a Ngāi Tūāhuriri, me ngā tāngata o tēnei whenua. Tēnā koutou. Te mihi tuarua ki ngā kaimahi o Pūharakekenui Styx Living Laboratories Trust. Tēnā koutou. Ko wai au? No Ingarangi ōku tūpuna, ko te Tiriti o Waitangi tōku waka. I whānau mai au i Whanganui, heoi, kei Ōtautahi tōku kāinga ināianei. Ko Kahu tāku whaiāipo, ko Jamie tāku tama. He Tangata Tiriti ahau, he tangata irawhiti ahau. Ko Khye Hitchcock tōku ingoa.

Khye Hitchcock (they/them) is an organiser and creative, based in Ōtautahi Christchurch. Since 2015, Khye has been engaged in citymaking and creative community projects that seek to create a more equitable and engaging environment, both independently and with: The Green Lab; Te Pūtahi - Centre for Architecture and Citymaking; Toi Moroki Coca; and SCAPE Public Art. Khye also frequently works with LGBTQIA+ organisations and is currently Kaiwhakahaere Pakihi at Mana Tipua. Khye is interested in collaborative and experimental modes of creative practice which prioritise community and unsettle hegemonic systems. They have an MFA from University of Auckland; they write, draw, design, and facilitate. At Pūharakekenui, Khye will follow an established research methodology to engage with the catchment; what they find will guide the form of their creative outcomes.

**Field Staff Intermediate**  
**Aimee Blythe**



Aimee is one of our Field Staff Intermediates (Rangers) for the Pūharakekenui Freshwater Improvement Fund Project. She has been working in conservation for the last 2 years. In her free time she enjoys hanging with her dog Missy and her friends and family.

**Field Staff Intermediate**  
**Matt Culf**



Matt has lived within the catchment area since he was 15 years old with a brief 7 years in Wellington to complete his degree. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his partner and dogs. He volunteers every other weekend and on the opposite ones he enjoys working on motorbikes. He is currently undergoing training to become a dog trainer too. Hobbies include swimming, listening to music, video games, reading books, cooking, and training his own dogs.

# Community Education Highlights 2023



4th Saturday of the month – Field Volunteers

## Letter from the Editor

Thank you for reading another edition of our quarterly newsletter! This will be my last edition of editing the newsletter before heading off on maternity leave for six months. Not to worry though, the brilliant Courtney Reid will be taking over while I'm away and I'm sure she'll put out some fantastic newsletters. 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 Courtney at [courtney@thestyx.org.nz](mailto:courtney@thestyx.org.nz). Our next publication will be in 3 months so there's plenty of time to submit some great ideas!

- Jackie Howard



## Contact Us

Website: [thestyx.org.nz](http://thestyx.org.nz)

Email: [styxlbom@gmail.com](mailto:styxlbom@gmail.com)

Tel: 022 077 3997

## What's on Next?

Summer in the Styx – Sunday, February 25, 2024 at Te Waoku Kahikatea Reserve (303 Radcliffe Road), 10am-2pm...FREE! conservation focused day that's fun for everyone in the family.

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

