

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!

Community Mahi - Planting Season 2023!

We've had a very busy planting season thus far and we can't thank our amazing community volunteers and school groups enough for all the amazing mahi they've done! Thank you to Organic Kids, Casebrook Intermediate, Bishopdale School, Christchurch Boys' Highschool, Ouruhia Model School, Canterbury Home Educators, and the volunteers who came out to our Murchison Park, Englefield Reserve, and Volunteering Canterbury Community Planting Days.



Janet Stewart Connector Trail

Dan Grima

We are excited to announce the progress we are making on a connector track between Janet Stewart Reserve and the Styx River Esplanade Reserve. The new single track route is 700 meters long and joins two beautiful reserves. When complete the track will open access to a 4km, out and back, tramp along the Pūharakekenui and move us one step closer to the creation of a source to sea walkway.

The section we are working on was planted approximately 20 years ago, but has been left unmanaged. This led to an impassable tangled mess of invasive plants woven into a stand of stunning mature, native trees.

The first 2 events involved the local community and volunteers and resulted in hauling out nearly 10 big bags of trash, a TV, tires, a rug and numerous car parts. We have trimmed back trees, battled brambles and are beginning to cut a trail on a fairly steep bank to make the track accessible for the community to enjoy. On a grassy section of the track, artist Simon Rutherford is sampling the use of woven Harakeke panels to guide hikers while keeping the grass at bay.

With 80% of the track now cleared, we are nearly ready to move on to invasive plant management, planting and positioning trail markers.

Our next track building event will be on August 9th between 10-1pm. Aiming for a final session and soft launch of the route on

Saturday August 19th!



Update from Beth

What a quarter! Over 4000 trees planted in community plantings, a surprise tree drop to doorsteps around Murchison Park, an augmented reality project, water quality markers installed, an underwater video series, Matariki flag making workshops, a colouring book created, multiple submissions, refreshed education programmes, tours, research projects and much more.

This quarter has been extremely busy for our staff/volunteers with a number of projects on the go. MPI plantings at Styx Loop Conservation Reserve (dedicated to those that have served in the NZ Defence Force) and Pūharakekenui/Styx Esplanade Reserve (dedicated to all of our volunteers whose bright ideas, passion and efforts have kept us in operation for over 21 years) are well under way. Our education activities have also expanded with the addition of Dan Grima to the crew who is working with schools and creating viral educational content on our social media channels.

Make sure you check out our facebook/instagram channels to see cheeky tuna (eels), project updates,

events, and upcoming conservation week activities - including an art exhibition, photo competition, invertebrate monitoring and weaving activities.

Spotlight on a Project -

A project highlight this quarter was undoubtedly the Murchison Park Tree Canopy Project funded by the Sustainability Fund which saw 1040 trees surprise dropped to households around Murchison Park on the 8th of June to increase tree canopy, sequester carbon and create habitat for wildlife such as bush birds.

Residents around Murchison Park woke up to find a surprise tree on their doorstep as well as a gift certificate for a free tree from Trees for Canterbury(our project partner). Residents were encouraged to plant the trees in their backyard or bring their tree along to a planting session in Murchison Park where residents could also have feedback into future planting plans for the Park. If all trees were planted then tree canopy in the Murchison Park area could have increased by 4%. The fate of the trees is being investigated by third-year University of Canterbury Geography students to determine if tree drops such as this are a successful method to increase tree canopy and contribute to Christchurch City Council's greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.



What's going on at the Styx

Update from the Trust

It's been such an exciting time in the Pūharakekenui neck of the woods. The Styx Living Laboratory Trust has joined the CCC's Community Waterways Partnership, which is an exciting conduit to collaboration and sharing learning with other local river care groups in Waitaha Canterbury.

Planting season is in full swing and we've had some delightful spring-feeling days - as much as we need rainfall for our plant survival, spending the day in the field for our crew on a clear Christchurch stunner is definitely a perk of the job.

We had the privilege of showing staff from the Ministry for the Environment around the work sites that Project Kōtare had been working on. They're overwhelmingly happy with the progress of our project, which I have no doubt can be attributed to Anita and Gareth's leadership of our awesome team.

The next round of our Creative Communicator applications is now open. You can find all of the details on our website for this opportunity, which operates similarly to an artist in residence - allowing for a number of creatives to interpret the Styx catchment in new ways over the coming year.

To celebrate our 4 incredible artists that we had on site in 2022/2023, we are holding an art exhibition in the old information centre at the Botanic Gardens during Conservation Week. Keep your eyes on our Facebook page for information around the exhibition as well as an invitation to the special exhibition opening.

'E rere kau mai te awa nui mai te Kāhui Maunga ki Tangaroa, ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au.' The river flows from the mountain to the sea, I am the river, the river is me. The river gives to you and you give to the river by treating it with care and supporting our work to keep it healthy. Thank you!

Update from Anita

Project Kōtare has just finished year two of the five-year project funded by the Ministry for the Environment. When the Trust signed the Deed of Funding in 2021, we committed to meet various targets by the end of the project and I'm pleased to say we are right on track, and even exceeding some as the months speed by. I've just finished writing our annual report and in the last year we have planted over 55,000 plants, controlled 8.7 hectares of weeds, and are doing predator control over 95 hectares. The planting has occurred on the properties of nine landowners, as well as council reserves. The community has helped us by supporting planting days and other activities such as education days with schools.

Volunteers contributed 450 hours of their time in June alone which is phenomenal. If you would like to join our monthly weekend field volunteer team, or the fortnightly weekday field volunteer team then get in touch with Maddie Meier maddie@thestyx.nz.



One of the sites we have been restoring is where the Kā Pūtahi stream runs next to the Belfast Cemetery, by the motorway overpass. We have planted 4500 plants at this site in the last year. It now looks quite different from when we first started, and the team was battling a mass of tall thistles. Keep an eye out when you go past and see the site transform over time to become a native dominated wetland and forest.

You may also have noticed that we've been more active on Instagram and Facebook in the last few months. Dan Grima, who joined us in April has been posting regular updates on what the Trust is doing within the catchment and showing us some of the hidden treasures. His 'Underwater Wednesday' short videos are a must see. My favourite features an eel checking out the camera and helps to highlight the wonderful animals to be found in our waterways. They are one of the reasons we do the work we do. Find us at Styx Living Laboratory Trust (@styxlivinglab) • Instagram photos and videos.

Another new member to our team is Josh Overend who joined us in May as a field staff intermediate and has thrown himself into the work despite the current frosty mornings and seemingly endless mud. Just as we thought we had a full team again I sadly had to accept the resignation of Loren Pye who is leaving to travel overseas. Loren has been a real asset to the team, and her commitment to maintaining the trap line at Styx Mill Conservation Reserve through all the changing water levels has paid off with high rat catches and hopefully improved bird nesting survival. We wish Loren all the best with her travels.

What's on Next?

Photo Competition - Shades of the Pūharakekenui / Styx River

Got an eye for nature? The Styx Living Laboratory Trust invites aspiring and professional photographers to capture the natural beauty of the Pūharakekenui / Styx River!

Share a captivating image showcasing what you love about the Styx River catchment. This could be local wildlife, nature, natural springs, sunsets or recreation as seen through your lens. Not a photographer? Tag a friend who is!

Prize Bundle:

- 1: Guided Kayak trip for 6 on the Styx River with KORE
- 2: Two tickets to Willowbank Wildlife Reserve
- 3: A native tree
- 4: Styx branded cap

How to enter: Send your photograph, along with a brief description (max 250 words), your name and contact number through a message on either Facebook or Instagram to 'The Styx Living Laboratory Trust'.

Like our page and tag the friend you would bring with you to either @WillowbankWildlifeReserve or for a kayak down the Styx river with @KOREhire

Closing Date: Friday August 18th 2023

Select photographs will be displayed on our social media channels, the winner will be announced on August 19th, short listed submissions may be printed and put on display to the public on August 19th.

Eligibility: Your photograph must be taken somewhere in the Styx River water catchment. All entries must be taken in 2023. Maximum of 2 entries per photographer.

Our judge for the competition will be local artist and chairperson of the Styx Living Laboratory Trust, @hannahwatkinson

Need location inspiration? Try exploring these picture-perfect locations!

- 1: Styx Mill Conservation Reserve
- 2: Redwood Springs Park
- 3: Murchison Park
- 4: Te Waoku Kahikatea, (303 Radcliff Road)
- 5: Janet Stewart Reserve
- 6: Ouruhia Reserve
- 7: Te Waoku Kapuka Reserve (62P Guthries Road, Ouruhia)
- 8: Spencerville
- 9: Seafield Park
- 10: Styx River Mouth Conservation Reserve (20 harbour road)
- 11: Brooklands Lagoon

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

I hope you've enjoyed this latest edition of the newsletter! We've had so many amazing things happen since our last edition, and we're gearing up for even more great things in the next quarter.

If you have any ideas on what you'd like to see in the next edition of the newsletter or would like to submit an article for publication please contact me at jackie@thestyx.nz.

- Jackie Howard



Contact Us

Website: thestyx.org.nz

Email: styxllbom@gmail.com

Tel: 022 129 4913

