

## Welcome Back! Nau mai hoki mai!

Happy New Year and welcome back to 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 2023!

Summer in the Styx was an absolutely smashing day this year! The past couple of years we were unable to run Summer in the Styx due to Covid-19 restrictions, but we got it back up and running this year and we're so glad we did! Thank you to all our amazing stallholders, staff, volunteers, and of course community members who came out and made the day so special. Looking forward to Summer in the Styx next year already and we'd love to hear your feedback on the event to make next year even better.





# Project Kōtare Trap Library

Anita Spencer

The Pūharakekenui Styx Trap Library is now open for people living in the catchment area to borrow traps from. As we have started talking to landowners about restoration along the Pūharakekenui / Styx River, the issue of predators often comes up and people are keen to do their part to control them and support the goal of Predator Free 2050. We are aiming to promote pest animal control, protect biodiversity, connect people with their communities and the Trust, and reduce pest animal numbers.

**The trap library is open the last Thursday of every month (except December) from 9am to 12pm. If you would like to use it outside of these hours contact Anita (anita@thestyx.nz or 0220773997).**

The primary pests we are targeting are possums, stoats, ferrets, weasels and rats. All of the traps available have undergone rigorous testing and have passed the standards set by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. The trap library is being run as part of Project Kōtare which is funded by the Ministry for the Environment to restore the Pūharakekenui catchment by working with communities and businesses.

How the pest trap library will work:

- traps can be loaned for an initial 3 months, with a right to renew traps for a further 3 months.
- If after 6 months trap catches are still being recorded, proving the traps are being used, then the loan can be extended again.
- If after 3 or 6 months traps are not being used we ask people to return the traps clean and in good working order
- At the end of the loan traps can be purchased at a discount

A demonstration on how the trap works will be given, and information about how to safely trap for pests and bait recommendations and trapping tips will be provided.



# Forestry Interns

Emma Walters

I have been one of three Te Uru Rākau scholarship interns this summer working at Pūharakekenui|Styx Living Laboratory Trust. We have been involved in a variety of projects over the past 10-12 weeks such as running community planting events, predator trapping, pruning harakeke, weaving harakeke and Cabbage tree weed mats, planting, plant guarding, and mulching. Jiselle and Anaru have focused on getting the Trust's photo point monitoring up to date and creating a questionnaire for the Murchison Park tree canopy project; while my work has been centred around creating a project that will compare species present at Styx Mill Reserve with the species present in the historical forest of that area to use for my Honours dissertation. We have enjoyed the range of tasks and the friendly and welcoming staff throughout the summer!



*From left to right: Emma Walters, Jiselle Nolan, Anaru Walker*



# What's going on at the Styx

## Update from the Trust

We'd like to officially welcome two new Trustees Mike Henderson-Rauter and Mike Davidson.

Mike Henderson – Rauter is a lawyer who specialises in employment law. He supports clients by providing tailored advice and guidance on any employment query or dispute. With his background as police detective Mike has a unique set of skills in negotiation, investigation, critical thinking and problem solving. In 2022, Mike was awarded a New Zealand Police Commissioner's Bronze Merit Award for leadership, professionalism and commitment to duty for the role he held following the Christchurch Mosque Shootings, in particular, as an investigator and preparing the case for prosecution. As a lawyer, Mike is noted for helping clients achieve a resolution in an effective and timely manner. He has worked with a range of businesses providing pragmatic and commercial solutions across a broad spectrum of employment work. Outside of work Mike enjoys snowboarding, hiking, running with his husky and is passionate about the outdoors, football and travelling.



Welcome also to Mike Davidson, another new Trustee. Mike has a Bachelor of Applied Science in Environment. He was previously a

Christchurch City Councillor from 2016 - 2022 and a member of the Community Board (which has a large amount of the Pūharakekenui/ Styx River within its boundaries) from 2013 – 2022.



While we are welcoming new Trustees we are also saying goodbye to some Trustees who have given so much to the Trust. Thank you to Simon Rutherford, Arapata Reuben, and Hugh Thorpe for your many years of dedication to making the Trust the best it can be!

## Update from Anita

I'm sure I say every newsletter that the last few months have been busy, but seriously they were busy which is great. We were excited to welcome our two latest Creative Communicators, Bridget Allen and Jo Burzynska.

Bridget has been working with the Rongoa Māori Trust to weave weed mats from harakeke/flax and tī kōuka / cabbage tree leaves to trial laying around the new plants at the Rongoa site. While it takes a bit of time to make them, it could be a great biodegradable method of suppressing weeds. Lately Bridget has been completing a freshwater themed mural on the shed beside the field centre which has been fascinating to watch evolve.

Jo is a sound artist and multisensory explorer and has brought her skills to the Styx catchment. Jo has been out recording the sounds (above and below water) of the Styx, and also distilling some of the scents of the area such as kānuka.

The last few months of 2023 saw the field staff flat out finishing the last of the planting for the season and then cracking into maintenance around our existing sites in a race to keep on top of the rapid weed growth. From October to December the team planted a phenomenal 10,000 plants, mostly along riverside areas. This will have long term benefits to reduce erosion of riverbanks, increase shading which cools the water and reduces macrophyte growth, and to create habitat for native species. As summer sets in they are now focusing on weed control such as grey and crack willow, and beggar's tick.

Many of these planting sites have been on private land. Our community coordinator Jackie Howard meets with interested landowners to develop a project plan for their site and writes up an agreement to confirm the details. Jackie has also met with several groups of students to introduce them to our project and the work the Trust does, as well as coordinating restoration work with them. The most recent students came from America with Global Academic Ventures and were a big help; maintaining the harakeke at Janet Stewart Reserve, and putting combiguards on plants to increase survival rates of our plantings.



# Creative Communication and Education

## Bridget Allen



Bridget Allen is an environmental artist who lives in Christchurch. During her time as creative communicator, she has painted a large-scale mural of some of the endangered aqua life of the Pūharakekenui and created dry point etching postcards of the different ecological areas with the river catchment. The paper of the prints are dyed with inks made from plants within the catchment. The prints explore the relationship between introduced and indigenous plants. The endeavor of these works is to bring awareness to the ecology within the river catchment.

## Dr. Jo Burzynska



Dr. Jo Burzynska is a multisensory artist working across sonic, olfactory and edible art. As Creative Communicator, she is tuning into nonvisual natural and cultural elements of the catchment – from the sounds of life beneath the surface of its waterways, to the scents she is distilling from its plants with local rongoa practitioners. These interactions are

being used to create a sensory map of the Pūharakekenui, which will be incorporated as a layer in the current SLLT-Lincoln University mapping project.

## Students from Abroad

In December and January we were very fortunate to host two international student groups and introduce them to the amazing Pūharakekenui catchment. First we hosted Australian high school students from New Brighton College with their tour organisers Haka Tours. They spent two days going from “Source to Sea”; participating in conservation work, learning about the Kiwi Recovery Programme at Willowbank Wildlife Reserve, and spending a rainy afternoon with Aperahama Kipa from the Kahukura Rongoa Māori Trust learning to weave weed mats from Harakeke and Cabbage Tree leaves.

Then we hosted American students from the University of Wisconsin for a day learning how to manage Harakeke at Janet Stewart Reserve, exploring the Rongoa Māori Demonstration Site, and placing combi guards on kahikatea trees recently planted by the Field Staff along the Ka Pūtahi.



Thank you to Haka Tours and Global Academic Ventures for reaching out to us to host your groups. We had an amazing time with both groups and we learned so much about how the Trust might run eco-tours throughout the catchment in the future!



### Contact Us

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