

ROCKLANDS ROAD WEEDBUSTERS
AUTUMN (Feb) 2011 NEWSLETTER
FOR PROJECTS ONE, TWO AND THREE
Updated for new members in Project 3 – 1st May 2011

The summer has been a time of rest from weedbusting work – that is the actual on the ground work – but there has been a lot of activity with keeping the projects on track. Here is an update of the three projects and the various timeframes that they are aiming at, so that you can see what progress is happening around you. There have been a lot of individuals doing all kinds of work to aid the project along and this is very much appreciated. For those of you with neighbours without e-mail please pass this on to them – thanks.

PROJECT 1 – UPPER ROCKLANDS ROAD

1/ The funding has recently come through for the second phase of the first year. This is \$10,222. From this, we have purchased our own GPS machines, as borrowing the DOC ones was only available in the winter. They can be used for all future projects and be available for other Forest and Bird activities, when we don't require them.

2/ The weed team will be restarting very soon. The order depending on staff availability and weather will be:-

a/ Finishing off the large tomo on the Marco and Karen Pessione's land to begin with.

b/ A training morning in April with Philip Simpson – Botanist – in the mature native forest behind Marco and Karen's house. It is really important that all the team can differentiate the pest vines from the native "good" vines. This fenced off area has a large number of native vines and a big range of biodiversity. The team will go through with Philip and probably Nigel Mountfort from DOC to cut and paste pest vines and identify the good ones at their various stages of growth. If you have any possible "good" native vines that you want identified, you can talk to the weed team when they are near you next. We are expecting about two more people to join the weed team as two have left.

c/ The large reef reaching from the Marco and Karen Pessione's land to Mark and Josie Shelly's to Richard and Lenke Thorpe's will be started in April. Mark has been busy opening up access to the base of the reef rock slabs, which will make the work so much easier.

d/ Finish off Marco and Karen Pessione's bluff. An access track needs to be cut.

e/ Clean up Sheila Climpson's rocky bluff and check Leonard and Alice Trent's property. This will probably use up most of the current payment. However, we have negotiated to receive the next payment 3 months earlier (early May), as we do most of our work in the winter when the weed team is available. So the second sweep of the properties that were worked on last winter will follow in May to September. Any remaining money from that payment will be used to extend the boundaries of previous work done.

3/ **The report** to the Biodiversity fund went in to their Wellington office on time and was well received. The level of detailing was very helpful for them to see how the work is progressing. Overall the project is on track to achieve the initial knockdown on budget.

PROJECT 2 – West side of Rocklands Road including Bird's Road through to Rawhiti Cave and the escarpment beyond.

The preparation for the application for this funding is coming along nicely. It is a big project with 31 properties involved, with over 1800ha of land, on many diverse terrains.

The key points are:-

1/ The funding applications opens mid April, for 6 weeks – so we need to have all the reporting and details sorted by then.

2/ Our assessors Brian Alder and Hobie Mercer have been to all the properties. They have made a short report of the terrain and amount of work (including any specialist work required – like spraying or climbing) required to do the initial knockdown on each property.

3/ They estimate the hours required to achieve the initial first and second (carried over) years knockdown of pest vines as **3050 hours** at \$20ph, this comes to \$61,000. Together with the additional costs of chemicals, specialist spray and climbing work and incidental expenses, the

total application for the first year will be over \$60,000 – our maximum. We are hoping to be able to carry over the balance to the second year.

4/ The contributions in voluntary hours and paid contractors comes to close to that. So we are hoping that you have been doing some work, whether your voluntary efforts or by paid contractors, since you filled out the assessment sheet about November last year.

We are aware that some paid contractor work that has been done or is due to be done shortly. Please let us know the amounts that you have or will pay out. These contributions have made a big difference to the amount of work required on these properties and is much appreciated.

PLEASE SEND DETAILS OF ALL WORK DONE (or due to be done soon) SINCE YOU LAST REPORTED IT TO US BY THE END OF MARCH.

5/ Our main report is written and being modified as the final details of contributions etc come in.

The final details for the application involve:-

a/ Botanical report – I have been around the areas of mature bush and generally through the project territory this week with Philip Simpson. This is very important for the Wellington office to appreciate the importance of the land forms and flora here. We found several species that are rare or less common in this region. I hope to send out the report in due course.

b/ Recording photos of key pest vine infestation and GPS marking them for future visits as the work gets done.

c/ Requesting and collating the various letters of support from DOC, TDC, Forest and Bird and QEII trust.

d/ Putting the application documents together.

e/ Filling in the application on line. Last time it was 7 pages of questions to fill out!

A big big thank you to all of you. It is only by all your various efforts that this Project 2 can happen and get enough funding to achieve a good end result.

PROJECT 3 – Pohara

This is underway! There has been a large group of keen Weedbusters who have volunteered to help coordinate their neighbours and do the same that we have done in Projects 1 and 2.

1/ The area has been broken up in to 7 “pods” with one or two people in each. They are helping to contact neighbours and start activating pest vine control as well as collect information so that the initial assessments can be done. This time, because we don’t personally know most of the properties and how much is being done, we have very little idea of the extent of the problem. We hope to apply for funding at the end of this or early next year.

2/ TDC have been very helpful supplying maps to help locate all the owners and “see” the terrain that is often hidden from the roads.

3/ Climbing Asparagus is being reported as a pest vine that was not found in the 1 and 2 project areas. If you do find it outside project 3, as well as those inside it, please let us know the locations.

Well done everyone, a big thank you to the weed team that is working so hard in tough terrain.

Please do keep pulling those seedling pest vines!