

NEWSLETTER July 2010

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

KAIPUPU POINT MAINLAND ISLAND

SOCIETY INCORPORATED

THE MERCURE PICTON

MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS HOTEL

Sunday, 25th July, 2010 at 1pm

GUEST SPEAKER: *Mr Phil Bradfield (DoC)*
will give an illustrated talk on “Mainland Islands”

All welcome to stay for afternoon tea, followed by a complimentary boat trip around Kaipupu Point courtesy of Beachcomber Cruises

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OUR MISSION:

“To enrich the community through the restoration and guardianship of an indigenous Marlborough Sounds wildlife sanctuary, in which the natural ecosystems, native flora and fauna flourish in a predator-free environment that can be appreciated by all.”

KAIPUPU SANCTUARY REACHES OUT TO SCHOOLS

Students at Koromiko and Picton schools now have Kaipupu Point Wildlife Sanctuary as a new outdoor classroom. Students' lessons now feature practical activities in native plant propagation and bush restoration techniques at Kaipupu Point Wildlife Sanctuary. Maths and science lessons include learning about how native plants grow, the impacts of introduced pests on native plants and animals, and how this trend can be reversed to restore our native bush.

Field trips to the sanctuary have taught students how to identify the native plants naturally found there so they know what vegetation should be re-established. Seeds from manuka, karamu and flax have been collected from Kaipupu Point and sown by the children in their classrooms. Seedlings will be transferred to root trainers and, when ready, will be planted out at Kaipupu Point.



Koromiko pupils with their newly planted natives

This is all part of Kaipupu Sanctuary's local schools education programme, 'Making a Better Place'. Sanctuary volunteers have taken children on a nature trail that shows them the regenerating scrub and the older

bush still surviving there. This helps them better understand the roles native species play in various habitats. Many are amazed when they are told that the old bush once covered most of Marlborough, one girl described the experience as "Just cool".

Learning about the pests which damage our bush is a key part of the programme. At the moment stoats, possums, and rats are the main animal threats to Kaipupu, though everything from goats, deer, pigs and hedgehogs have contributed in the past to a gradual decline in the health of the bush.

After seeing the pest-proof fence on Kaipupu Point for themselves, the students built their own replicas. The real fence in the sanctuary is two metres high, built of stainless steel wire mesh, with a special hood and a "skirt" to prevent burrowing animals such as rabbits and rats from digging under it. The students models of the fence are made of wood, wire mesh and aluminium foil, but the building of these models brought home the message of how hard it is to keep pests and predators out of the sanctuary.

Students have also made tracking tunnels for the sanctuary.



Koromiko pupils with their tracking tunnels

These tracking tunnels are a clever monitoring device used for early detection of smaller pests such as rats, stoats and

hedgehogs. Any animals passing through the tunnel crosses an ink pad, and leaves it's tell-tale footprints on a piece of paper before exiting the tunnel. The students will place these tunnels in a grid system on Kaipupu.



Class field trip to Kaipupu Point Sanctuary

Weta are vulnerable to predation by rats. Students have put up weta motels, made from untreated timber, in their school grounds and will be able to compare what they find with the weta motels located inside the sanctuary.

Native geckos and skinks also flourish where predators like cats and rats have been excluded. Students have used a lizard hotel formed from Onduline (a corrugated roofing material) which creates living space for lizards. These lizard homes will be located at schools and Kaipupu Point to provide a comparison of lizards that live in the two habitats.

The take-home message for the students is that, free from browsing pests and kept clear of invasive weeds, the native bush will regenerate vigorously in the future, helped along by the native seedlings contributed by local schools.

With a thriving native bush, these students hope to turn back the clock and eventually hear a forest full of songs not heard in Picton in 100 years!

The schools programme is being developed as a partnership with local schools and has been made possible through the generous support of Bluebridge Cook Strait Ferry, and local Picton sponsors. Further sponsors are sought to enlarge and extend the programme to all local schools.



CRUISING AROUND KAIPUPU POINT

128 people boarded the Beachcomber boat for a Sunday cruise out from Picton Harbour around Kaipupu Point on May 23rd.



Beachcomber Cruises donated the use of the boat and a wonderful skipper. Robin Cox from DoC brought the sanctuary development to life with a running commentary during the cruise, and volunteers provided a delicious afternoon tea.

It was a chance for everyone on board to see the sanctuary area from the water, learn about a “mainland island”, and see how they could become part of a great community conservation effort right on their doorstep.

Robin explained that creating a “mainland island” like Kaipupu Point Sanctuary is a special kind of conservation management. It isn't on an island – it's isolating an ‘island’ of the mainland to protect and restore the habitat within it. In Kaipupu's case, the “island” is the 40 hectare headland, isolated by the predator proof fence which has been built across the isthmus, and the water.



As the boat cruised around the headland, Robin explained how so many of our native species are trying to hold on in a habitat that's changed hugely in the last couple of hundred years. By creating this “island”, we are aiming to give species a chance to thrive rather than just try to survive. He talked about pest control, and how the sanctuary will always be under threat of reinvasion by pests and predators - stoats and rats can swim a long way - and so the commitment to pest management inside the Sanctuary has to be forever.

Robin highlighted the accessibility of the sanctuary, and how it is close to where people live. Once the jetty and tracks in the sanctuary are in, visitors will be able to make the climb around and through the bush to the top of the island, where a lookout platform will give spectacular views of the Sounds.

Everyone agreed – a great afternoon out!



Viewing the Picton end of the fence from the Beachcomber boat

**Take a look at the website
for upcoming events:**

www.kaipupupoint.co.nz

For information contact:

info@kaipupupoint.co.nz

