

17 December, 2017

Annual Report for Year 2017

WAKATIPU
REFORESTATION TRUST



P O Box 478, Queenstown, New Zealand, 9348.

Another busy year has seen a doubling of the Nursery area, the building of a propagation shed), a seed and cutting raising area with mist irrigation and further shade house. This has been funded through the DOC Community Partnership Fund (CPF). Once again we are indebted to the local KPCA work group for chopping up trees and removing firewood after Delta had cut them down partly as a training exercise. Thankyou Delta and also Beaver Construction who supplied a large digger to remove stumps and level the site. The rest of the construction, fencing, plant containment frames, irrigation, potting mix bin etc has been carried out by volunteers with much of the work falling to Tom with help from Helen, Hans, Vernon, Greg, Neill and semi-retired builder Keith. The new propagation area is already proving a boon as is the new mist irrigation and shade area.

Completion of the main work was timely as the nursery was used by the Prime Minister, Bill English and Minister of Conservation, Maggie Barry to launch two policy statements for the National Party enabling Hon Maggie to cut the ribbon on the nursery extension and the ministers to each plant a tree in the future forest to be outside the nursery.

The urgent need to extend the nursery was due the work of Helen McPhail who this year has been diligently collecting and growing seed and cuttings. Growing our own from ecosourced plants will save some of the need to buy in root trainer plants.

Our hard working Conservation co-ordinator, Nita Smith, is presently on maternity leave after producing a lovely baby girl. Her place has been taken in the meantime by Jo Smith (not related) who has jumped into the breach and is carrying on extremely well considering the number of areas she has to catch up with on fewer hours. The 20 hour per week position is paid through the DoC Community Partnership Fund. Thank you Nita and Jo.

The Trust has met only twice this year as most of the action is carried out by the Management Group. Helen McPhail chairs the Management group that meets monthly. Thank you Helen for an excellent job. She has decided to step down at the end of the year to concentrate on the collecting and propagation work.

The Jean Malpas Community Nursery always looks tidy and well organised thanks to Barb Simpson with help from Helen and other helpers. Each Wednesday morning (and in summer, Weds evenings also), a group of volunteers pots plants or weeds, or cuts up carpet for weed mats and other jobs but mainly potting. More than 6000 plants were in the nursery over winter. These moved out rapidly during spring planting with 1000 planted in not ideal conditions at Whitechapel in September, the first Spring planting for 2017. Snow showers, cold, wet but almost sun kept the 28 who braved the conditions busy to keep warm. The BBQ lunch probably helped. It was a marvellous effort and demonstrates the quality of our volunteers. As the last left the site the snow really set in.

In 2015, 5551 plants were planted around the district. Last year this rose to 7507. This year we reached 9220 planted by volunteers and by supporting planting projects for the following

community and business groups: Glenorchy Community Association
Green Cabs AJ Hacket Bungy
Real Journeys - Walter Peak Queenstown Harvest Community Garden
Queenstown Rotary Club Remarkables Primary and Project Crimson
Arrowtown Pre-School ZipTrek Ecotours
Shotover Primary School

Volunteer hours are up on last years at about 3200 hours.

Many hours were put in by the Management Group and in particular by Nita to produce a strategy and this is now complete but will be reviewed annually. Ben Teele assisted by Bec and Neill has produced a booklet called "Growing Native Plants in the Wakatipu". It has proved popular and is now in its third issue with the initial cost being covered by a grant from Sky City Casino Community Fund. We ask for a \$10 donation for each booklet being the cost of two plants. Thank you Ben and Bec.

Sky City have given us a further grant this year to buy extra maintenance equipment, scrub bars and spray packs etc. We appreciate this confidence in what we are doing.

Much of our maintenance of planting sites is done by Tom McPhail with some help from others including Hans and Ben. It is a constant job, spraying grass and weeds, cutting rank growth with scrub bar and removing broom. Thank you all.

Finance is the realm of Peter Blanshard who not only makes sure that funds are available for our various activities but also keeps a keen eye on various documents that we receive or fill out and ensuring that we are keeping to our trust deed and not putting ourselves into a difficult situation with fund applications and other documents. The Government has set new requirements for Trusts and this means filling in a very large set of forms. Thank you Peter for your thoroughness and skill.

The Jean Malpas Conservation Trust (administered by Perpetual Trust) has agreed to continuing their significant annual grant for another five years. This year the Lesley Hutchins Environmental Trust agreed to also assist with funds for five years. We are most thankful to these two major funders as without this security of funding we would not be operating as well as we are at present. We put another application to the DOC Community Fund to start the Slope Hill riparian project involving willow removal fencing and planting beside a stream next to part of the Queenstown Trail. This is a major site that should occupy us for several years. We have been successful with this application but for only 40% of the amount applied for. Zip Trek has held a very successful locals day in September with a significant grant to our trust. With this money we have been able to buy a tipping, tandem trailer for carting plants, potting mix and mulch. Tom has built higher sides enabling larger loads.

We are assisting the Shotover Primary School with a wetland project; are providing plants to schools paid for by the Honda Fund and also Trees For Schools Project. Project Crimson assisted with one planting involving the Remarkables Primary School. Most of our planting is carried out on DoC and QLDC land at this stage and we continue to have a good relationship with both organisations.

Another new project that we are involved in together with Wilding Conifer Group (WCG) and supervised by Scion (Rotorua) is the Wakatipu Beech seeding project. Trial plots have been set up under standing dead Douglas fir to see if beech and other native plants can grow from seed aerially distributed into these sprayed areas. The plots have been hand seeded at this stage. Nita has taken on the secretarial work and the group have been fortunate to have Jon White head the seeding work.

It has been another incredible period of development. I thank all Trust members, the management group, our major funders and all our wonderful volunteers.

Neill Simpson QSM
Chairman
Wakatipu Reforestation Trust

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