



## Working Bees for the next few weeks

As I write this, a couple of contractors are clearing away the undergrowth around the various planting nodes; I understand that later on they will be spraying a herbicide around the plants.

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October:** Weeding and mulching on the north side, drive down Te Moana Road to the beach then turn left. Meet

in the second car park at the end of Tutere Street, Waikanae.

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October:** Help with the Westpac group clearing the plantings at site 15, meet at the same place.

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October:** this working bee has been cancelled due to spraying of weeds

**Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October:** Help with the NZ Post group. Details of where, to be advised shortly.

## Corporate head office groups get their hands dirty:

Last year, a group of Westpac head office staff came out and helped us with a morning of weeding clearing and general work. They must have found the day a great way to escape into the open air because they are joining us again this year. (Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October). Word about our project must have got around, for two other

corporations have expressed an interest in our activities and have asked to get involved. Opus International came out on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September and New Zealand Post is due out on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October. It would be helpful if you could help on these days. I'm sure we can find plenty to do.

## Monitoring pest animals



Photos of > Interested group listening to Eric Stone > Eric shows the workings of the ink pad > Ready to go > A tunnel in place

The April and August newsletter introduced the subject of monitoring pest animals. Plans are now underway to begin a rodent and mustelid tracking programme in the reserve using tracking tunnels. These tunnels will contain tracking cards which put ink on the feet of any intruders and record their footprints. They will be baited with peanut butter to attract rodents, and in a separate monitor, dried meat to attract mustelids. The 60mm holes at the ends of the tunnels prevent entry by larger animals such as possums and cats, which can be monitored by

using other methods. Animals whose tracks might be recorded include: stoats, ferrets, weasels, rats, mice, skinks, geckos, hedgehogs, wetas and other insects to name a few. The frequency of the various animal tracks in the tunnels will be recorded and compared with results from other reserves. If the numbers of pest animals such as rats and stoats justify it, pest control options will be discussed. The monitoring will start in the next couple of months. All this produces hard facts rather than opinions. Funding organisations don't like opinions.

*Eric Stone*

## Waikanae Estuary Pindone Operation for 2009

### Reason for Operation:

Rabbits often browse on native plantings. For the last few years they have been targeted in the estuary with the poison Pindone on an 'as needed' basis. In the past the damage has mainly been to pingao, but in July this year it was noted that they were broadening their diet and eating down new plantings of cabbage trees, toitoi, and other species. On this basis a Pindone hand drop was planned to be carried out in August.



*This badly chewed plant may grow to be a Cabbage tree*

### Description of Pindone poison:

Pindone is a first generation anticoagulant which was developed as a pesticide in the 1940's and initially evaluated as an alternative to Pyrethrums because it exhibited insecticidal properties. Pindone has been used worldwide to control rodents, though its use for the control of rats and mice has decreased since the introduction of 'Talon'. It is currently registered in NZ for rabbit, rat and possum control.

### Method of Operation:

The Pindone coated carrot baits are placed in little green heaps around the reserve where rabbit sign is found or plants have been browsed. To be effective the poison needs a couple of fine days and nights after being applied. Dogs should be kept out of the reserve. Tests have shown nil persistence in soils after carrot bait operations.

### Effectiveness:

The use of Pindone for rabbit control has a good record of success from around the country, and the hand laying of carrot baits has worked very well in the estuary to date.

In previous years two applications have been needed in some heavily infested areas, but this was not necessary this year, and it was noted that overall rabbit numbers were definitely down on previous years. While Doc doesn't expect to eradicate rabbits from the area, they hope to keep numbers at or below current levels to protect new plantings in the future.

*Eric Stone*

## Planning for the Future:

Good planning is key to any successful restoration project and the Waikanae Estuary Care Group is no exception to this rule. A group of key people representing both the Care Group and supporting agencies meet regularly to discuss future planting sites, site preparation required for each new site, spray releasing of spring weeds, control of pest plants and animals and what specific plants are required to grow on for each site.

Key to all of these discussions is funding and who can offer what support for each step of the project. Waikanae Estuary Care Group is most fortunate to have strong relationships and support from agencies such as

Department of Conservation, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Kapiti Coast District Council and Ministry for the Environment. These strong relationships and support makes achieving our goals all that much easier.



Photo taken by Kerry Penny (GW) at a recent site visit to the north side of the river to discuss planting sites for 2010 and 2011.

*From left: Deb Finn, Eric Stone (DoC), Mike Urlich (GW) Graeme Cook, Rob Cross (KCDC)*