

Attendance: John Beech MTSC FMC, Ian Patterson NZDA Manawatu, Janet Wilson RWP PNTMC, Dan Elderkamp CHB F&B, Sue Moore DOC, Tumau Hoggart DOC, Carl Baker DOC, Shaun Ruddle DOC.

1. Welcome & introductions

2. Apologies: John Montgomerie HTC, Julia Mackie HTC, Pete Meredith, Morgan Marshall

3. Minutes from previous meetings & actions arising

- a. **Action DOC:** Shaun will contact the NZFWDC club in an attempt to re-invigorate a community lead project.
- b. **Action DOC:** Status of stewardship land around the Ruahine Ranges to be established.

4. Huts and Shelters – work undertaken and planned

a. DOC managed

i. Completed

- Rangiwahia Hut paint is complete. This included the roof, exterior and interior. Tracks were cut around the hut, firewood filled up, front door repaired etc. There are 3 x fadges of wood located beside the shed. Please use these first.
- Sunrise and Longview huts had firewood delivered.
- Iron Gate Hut. Detailed plans completed and consent granted. Tentative start date of 29th April has been indicated by the NZ Army. Plans are currently underway for regenerated beech to be cut back around the hut and track windfalls cut on the way out.
- Hut tasks for Kelly night and Pourangaki during load test of the swing bridge. Pourangaki swing bridge requires a new anchor. Due to be replaced in March/April.

ii. Planned next 3-4 Months

- Longview Hut paint (tentative).
- Sunrise Hut paint (tentative).
- Iron Gate Hut new build.

b. Community managed

i. Completed

- Toka Bivvy work is no longer going ahead. Interest has been received by another volunteer. Due to have a meeting in Feb/March about this and progress further.
- Kylie Bivvy Re-pile Task. This has been adopted by Andrew Mercer. Due to be completed in the first weekend of March.

- John Beech put posts up on the forum regarding Poutaki. The tracks overgrown but only loppers are needed. Hut needs rat bait. One window sill starting to rot. The Hut will require some work soon.
- Gold Creek was visited by John. Rat-baited and John dug cleared vegetation around the hut. Ceiling lining is starting to collapse. This has potential for a BC Trust task. Gold Creek track is in good condition. **Action** : Photo needed from John regarding the Gold Creek Toilet. Alice Nash Heritage Lodge had new rollers installed on the sliding door.
- Iron Bark needs a tidy. Nettle is growing through verandah and around meat safe.
- Hut Door constantly left open at Mid Pohangina Hut. Janet has a plan for a wood burner for mid Pohangina. Need to talk to MDC re fireplace consent and BC Trust for finance.
- Steve Bailey visited Kelly knight and completed some maintenance tasks.
- Otukota is looking quite dire and requires some attention asap.
- Mike has markers and signs to cut Biodiversity line Top Gorge to the Main track Rocky Knob. This will need to be completed within the next 6 months.

5. Tracks and roads

b. DOC managed

i. Completed

- Track Cutting plan is progressing. Tracks cut so far:
 - i. Ngamoko road end to Leon Kinvig hut
 - ii. Longview hut to Leon Kinvig hutNext:
 - Kawhatau to Colenso highpoint
 - Kawhatau to Crow Hut
 - Crow Hut to Rogotea Highpoint.
- Kashmir Road works complete. Awaiting feedback from contractor on the final portion near the end. This will require an extensive culvert installed.
- Alice Nash Track Slip. Has been completed with water tables re-established and install of new culverts to assist directing water. The Bridge to river portion is being tidied up also. This is yet to occur. The works will require a revisit once settled due to the nature of the mud at the site.
- Rangiwahia Track. Bench has been cut and alt route posted. The traffic decimated the alt route quite quickly. Due to this, the track has been re-benched and a DOC Engineer has been plotted to visit the site to provide options for future work.
- Iron Gate hut to Oroua Carpark track will be cut when the Beech Trees are trimmed at the hut site.
- No mans road is awaiting feedback on the funding bid.
- Access track to Kawhatau has been plotted for March. This is to ensure the track is properly marked and cut.

- ii. Planned next 3-4 Months,
 - Complete the track cutting contract.
 - Complete Kashmir Road and Alice Nash Track.
 - Maintain front country track vegetation. These have been growing very quickly.
 - Visit with NZDF to Barlow and Parks Peak to fix the Doors and Leaking Chimney.
 - Preparing for weather events that cause track and infrastructure issues.

c. Community managed

- Nil.

6. Access

- a. Mokai Te Matea station have requested that access permission is obtained prior to moving through the station. This is obtained through calling Jasmine Corpe on 06 3880091. DOC is currently reviewing the situation and are yet to make an official reply. Janet was granted access through private land to complete a trap line and acknowledged the landowner, as this saved a lot of walking/flying.
- b. Walking access reps from western eastern and councils and FMC will have discussions about access which were generated at the National Conference.

7. Biodiversity

- c. Old Man's Beard – survey across the western edge of the Forest Park found some scattered small patches which have been controlled. DOC staff in helicopter when asset inspector being flown into Northern Ruahine huts noticed a patch of OMB approx. half the size of a tennis court, subsequently found another 2 of similar size all within the forest park. All were treated with herbicide this month. Request for users to contact DOC if they find OMB within the Forest Park boundaries.
- d. Wilding conifers control will occur by end of March 19, as per previous years the aerial work will target wilding conifers in the tussock lands.
- e. Some ground-based chainsaw work on the trees around Kashmir Road is planned.
- f. Goat control – southern Ruahine 2252 ha covered. Northern Ruahine 1901 ha covered by contractors.
- g. Possible Northern Ruahine pest control operation
Weather conditions over the last two summers (a very cold summer in 2016/2017 followed by a much warmer summer 2017/2018) led scientists to believe there was very likely to be a major beech mast event throughout the country this summer 2018/2019. The reports that local DOC staff have received from trappers and volunteers checking stoat lines in the Northern Ruahine Forest Park, and what local DOC staff have seen ourselves agree with this. The beech mast will provide additional food for native species, but the seed is also likely to provide abundant food for rats who are expected to rapidly increase in numbers this year fuelling an increase in stoat populations.

Although we are aware that spring 2019 is likely to be a time of high predation risk for native species in the Northern Ruahine Forest Park, we do not know at this stage whether there will be resources available to carry out aerial pest control this year. The mast is predicted to occur throughout the country, and DOC are prioritising resources for pest control to areas at highest risk - such as South Island forests containing critically endangered birds e.g. mohua and orange-fronted kakariki. However if resources are available, DOC would want to protect the native animals and birds in the Northern Ruahine by running a Battle for our Birds 1080 operation in spring 2019.

- h. The whoio monitoring using trained dogs is also still ongoing - this year's is happening this week.
- i. Rodent monitoring has been ongoing roughly every 3 months since the operation (and a team went in last week – no results yet). Here's the most recent rodent monitoring results:

j. Date tracking tunnel papers put out	k. Rat tracking index	l. Mouse tracking index
m. 8 June 2017 (pre pest control operation)	n. 11%	o. 3%
p. 7 December 2017 (3 weeks post-operation)	q. 0%	r. 0.6%
s. 27 January 2018	t. 0%	u. 0.6%
v. 7 May 2018	w. 1%	x. 16%
y. 27 August 2018	z. 3%	aa. 23%
bb. 6 November 2018	cc. 15%	dd. 38%

j. Janet has reported Rowan trees growing around the old rifle range on the way to Alice Nash Hut. Has been some control in the past (John Terry). Further work may be needed.

- a. Community
 - i. Community trapping groups into action at the moment. Still looking for people including/especially for people to do the Pohangina.
 - ii. Whoio feathers needed for DNA testing . Collect in a paper envelope only and hold by the stem.
 - iii. Te Potae (DOC co-ordinated) – two checks in the last two months;
 - iv. Kimbolton School going to Alice Nash with Janet March 15th.
 - v. May combine Toyota Kiwi Guardian events with walks that Janet or other people run at Alice Nash.

8. Other Items

9. Rubbish at Alice Nash Rifle range. Graeme (Janet's Husband) will fill a fadge with this rubbish so it can be flown out when the Iron Gate job is done. See DOC staff for a spare fadge.
10. Rowans growing in the rifle range area. A lot of seedlings and larger trees need attention before they spread into forest.
11. **Staff change** Tumau new Supervisor Rec Nobby Supervisor Bio . C band position available.

12. **Next meeting date:** 17th June 2019 Dannevirke venue tbc.