



Piako

Catchment Forum

What's Happening in the Piako Catchment... January 2021

Happy New Year!!

Here at the Piako Catchment Forum we are looking forward to a productive year of community conservation.

As it is summer, please remember to conserve water!



Both Hauraki and Matamata Piako Districts are at Level 1 - Conserve Water

Native Seed — What to collect now...

Beilschmiedia tawa - Tawa

Tawa trees grow in a wide range of forest types and are predominantly found in mature forests, coping well under shade. They are slow to establish and produce only small amounts of fruit in the form of a large purple drupe. Collect the fruit off the ground or lower branches.



Propagation: The seeds have only a very light seed coat and don't store well. Press well into a bed of seed raising mix but do not cover. Shoots will appear in a month or two depending on the temperature.

Also other native seed out there to collect right now:

Mangeo, Mingimingi, Kiekie, Kareao, turutu, makomako, turepo, matai, tanekaha, rimu, mountain flax, Kahikatea and toetoe.

(Information thanks to the Department of Conservation and nzpcn.org.nz)

Kahikatea Forest Health Assessment Training Day

Where: Hawes Bush, Waharoa
When: Saturday 13th February 2021

As part of the connecting the Waitoa project, we are assessing the health of kahikatea forest fragments using the Kahikatea Green Wheel assessment tool developed by Waikato Regional Council. This tool is designed to provide landowners with a baseline for the health of their forests and support the development of management plans to improve health ratings. This is really helpful for landowners in applying for funding either individually or as a collective.

To encourage community and landowner involvement in conducting the green wheel assessments, Norm Mason is planning to run a training day at Hawes Bush in Waharoa for interested community members. He also hopes to develop a schedule for completing assessments in the Waitoa this summer.

Norm has a PhD in Botany so this is a chance for anyone with an interest in native plants to learn how to identify the species that are most common in our local forests. It's also a great opportunity to spend time in some of the few precious forest fragments left on the Hauraki Plains and contribute to their ongoing protection.

If you're interested, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Norm.

Contact: Norm Mason
E: masonn@landcareresearch.co.nz
Ph: 021 153 5031

For more information about the Piako Catchment Forum have a look at:

www.piakocatchment.co.nz

www.facebook.com/PiakoCatchmentForum/

www.instagram.com/piakocatchmentforum/

Or email:

piakocatchment@gmail.com

Motumaoho School—a PCF and Enviroschools journey

PCF volunteers Te Aroha Drummond and Ruairi Kelly recently met with staff of Motumaoho School, located between Morrinsville and Hamilton.

The Enviroschools programme has been developed for 20 years and now has over 1400 schools and Early Childhood centres, supported by their local district and regional councils. The programme uses an 'Action Learning Cycle' to help structure and support action-based learning.

Motumaoho have been 'Identifying the current situation', taking stock of what is important to students and community -which was to use the whole school as a learning environment. Students wanted to know about the health of the stream at the bottom of the 'wild' gully, so working with Ruairi they assessed the health using equipment and educational resources from Waikato regional Council's programme 'Rivers-and-us'. Whilst doing a habitat assessment they discovered that there had been previous planting, that Waikato Regional Council has supported, but more could be done.

Next they asked Ruairi to help identify the native species in the gully and help identify the invasive species. Working with the PCF for the past two years, Ruairi knew there were community members who were in a much better position to help.

First the common nasties Tradescantia, Japanese Honeysuckle and Privet were identified. The next step of the Enviroschools Action learning Cycle is 'Explore Alternatives', so the students could investigate and balance the options of the Tradescantia being sprayed, pulled up or introducing a bio agent of beetles. It was clear that this was to be a long-term project and so a phased mixed approach was discussed, with students, parents & community focussing on the upper section before working down the slope to the stream edge.



may be an opportunity to see if the large trees in the area are home to bats, meaning the school could be kaitiaki for them and develop predator traps to help them.

Ruairi also suggested that the school could link up with other PCF activities - such as the Morrinsville River Walk, local organisations - like Weedbusters or schools that have undertaken gully restoration.

Next step is to bring all the ideas together with the students and develop a plan and only then.... to take action!

(Photos care of Ruairi Kelly—WRC Environmental Education Facilitator)

Social housing for bats!

After recent publicity around the rediscovery of endangered long-tailed bats in Morrinsville, volunteers at the local MenzShed were keen to find a way to give them a helping hand. Bill Mace decided that he could apply his handyman skills to some surplus timber he had lying around to build bat roosting boxes.

In heavily deforested areas, such as the Hauraki Plains, bats may struggle to find suitable roost sites. Also, possums and rats often compete with bats for the few roost sites that are available. Providing artificial roost sites is a key component in increasing bat numbers in areas with little remaining forest. The Morrinsville MenzShed is providing an admirable example in acting promptly to solve this local housing crisis!

This is a great example of what can be achieved when volunteer groups within the community support each other. It should serve as good motivation for people doing great things in the community to share their stories. You never know who might be out there looking for a way to contribute.



Bill Mace, Morrinsville's resident bat box builder with two of his creations.



The MenzShed is currently fundraising for a bigger shed, having reached capacity in their present location. They are keen for opportunities to apply their handy skills in raising funds.

You can contact Bill at wajvmace@gmail.com if you have a job that might be suitable for them.

(Photos care of Norm Mason and the Department of Conservation)