

megaphone

THE FACTS & ISSUES

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"Actions speak louder than words..." (anonymous)



EDITORIAL

It's time to step aside and let someone else help promote the good work we are all doing. My final task as Moehau Environment Group coordinator is a very pleasurable one:

to welcome Jonty Rutherford on board as the new coordinator. He brings a fresh perspective, new ideas, and has a long history with our area stretching back to his childhood (see story below).

Pete Buddle first approached me in 1998 about setting up a conservation group. At the time he was out knocking off magpies on the farm and dealing to possums on his own place. I was a stoat trapping contractor in the DOC Kiwi Sanctuary, and trying to reduce possums on the north end of Waikawau Bay. Pete set up all the main formal structures for the group (MEG), and together with Kathi Parr, Sue Cannon, Rebecca Ronald, and Yuri Forbes, supported by Eddie Murphy of DOC and Paddy Stewart we held our inaugural meeting in Colville in late 1999.

By 2000 we were a fully incorporated society with thirty or so members of mostly local folks, and had begun carrying out possum control over 200ha of lands at Waikawau Bay.

Today we have a membership of 110 and have projects covering 10,500ha.

These include:

- Kiwi Protection Area- 8,500ha of stoat traps
- Possum control areas- totaling 2000ha approx
- Rodent control projects:
 - one of 350ha of forest lands
 - one of 60ha of saltmarsh and wetlands
- Restoration planting projects of 5ha

We also run a Summer Holiday Programme over three weeks with some 20-plus activities for all ages and have short educational outreach programmes throughout the year.

We also manage some 50-60 volunteers from overseas each year and work with the Bay of Plenty Polytech Environmental Management Studies unit.

From small beginnings we have grown up a bit! We are confident that Jonty will help promote our conservation projects and engage and encourage our local community to take part.

Good Luck, Jonty and above all have fun!

Wayne Todd



Jonty on the left being welcomed by Wayne Todd

"HELLO" FROM MEG'S NEW COORDINATOR

Firstly thank you to Lettecia Williams and Wayne Todd for the warm welcome I've received, and the professional way they are helping me to get started in this exciting and challenging role. I have huge admiration for MEG's achievements, outlined above by Wayne, and I am really looking forward to playing a part in maintaining and building on them. So, who is Jonty Rutherford?

I grew up in the northern Coromandel, living at Stony Bay, Colville and Coromandel Town. When I left school I worked for The Department of Lands & Surveys at Fletcher's Bay as a farm hand before moving to Auckland to study. For most of the last 20 years I have worked in the advertising and television industries. I have always maintained close links to the peninsular, spending as much time as I can with my wife and daughters at our conservation block at Waitete Bay.

The upper Coromandel is the place that I have always called home, a place I love. From Kennedy Bay to Port Jackson I have many friends so I am looking forward to renewing old friendships and making many new ones. This won't be hard as the response I've received when I tell people I am working for MEG is overwhelmingly positive!

I am looking forward to meeting you all – Cheers

Jonty Rutherford

PS: feel free to get in touch

Mob: 021-410040

Email: jonty@meg.org.nz

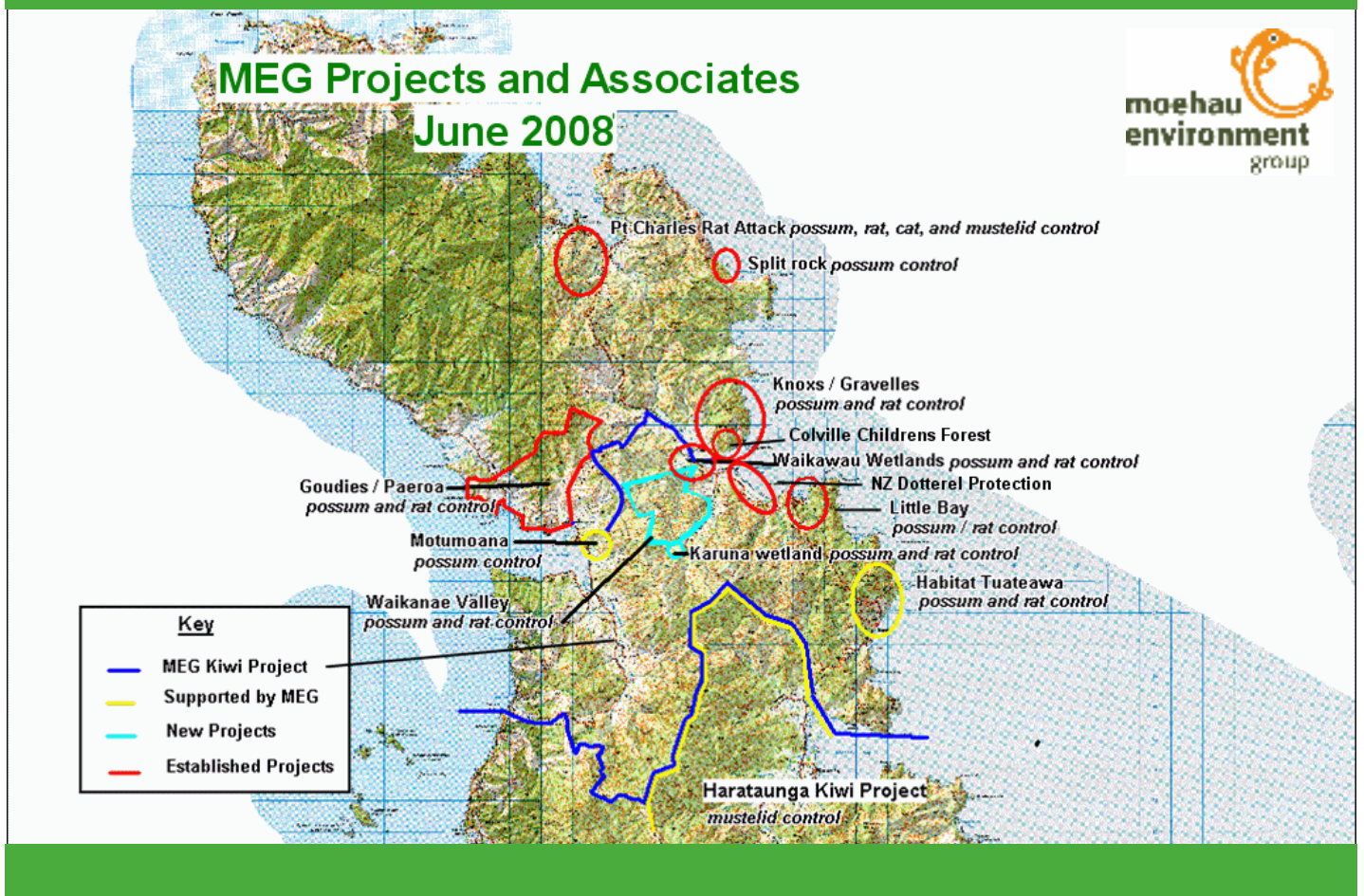
E.W. Honda Tree Fund gives 800 trees

Thanks to the Environment Waikato Honda Tree Fund, Moehau Environment Group will once again this year be doing restoration work at the Waikawau Bay estuary and wetlands. There will also be more trees for the Children's Forest planting and a wetland valley restoration started last spring. This will bring the total areas of plantings to approximately 5ha. Plants include Kahikateas, Carex, Cabbage trees, Flax, Five Fingers, Kowhai and Karo. Some will eventually provide habitat for the Pateke (brown teal), while others will provide nectar, fruit and seeds for all sorts of native creatures big and small.

Photo on the right: Kathi and Rewi about to unload 776 trees from car and trailer! There were 24 which wouldn't fit in!



Current MEG Projects and Associates



PORT CHARLES RAT ATTACK

Working Towards Translocation of North Island Robins.

With the Port Charles Community, the Rat Attack is in its 4th year. 350 hectares of land continues to be trapped for rats in Port Charles. The catch rate of rats has been high throughout the summer and autumn months. Most recent animal tracking indexing showed:

6.7% Rats
66.7% Mice
50% Weta

This demonstrates a significant increase in Weta tracking (previously 23%). Prior to the commencement of the project there was no tracking of Weta and the rats tracked at a whopping 73%.

Wasps continue to be a major hurdle and discomfort for the trappers. Numerous nests have been killed as they have been found. Trappers carry out this task as part of their day's work. Wasps compete with food with the birds.

We will be looking to monitor bird nests this coming spring to gauge the fledgling rate, especially of smaller birds such as fantails and silver eyes.

Anyone interested in volunteering some time for this activity please contact Lettecia on 07 8666626.

THE DOWNS AND UPS OF IT ALL



Global Volunteers January 08

Two groups of Global Volunteers Network students have been and gone and what a great bunch they were. Moehau Environment Group had the first group helping with the rodent monitoring in the Wetlands Project at Waikawau Bay.

This involves putting inked papers into baited tunnels and seeing what sort of footprints we get. It doesn't give numbers of any thing but does indicate presence or absence.

Rodent presence was up on three months ago, which was a bit of a downer considering how much trapping has been done. But there was an increased presence of skink prints and insects, mostly weta. While the project is relatively new, it is hard at this stage to read anything into the results, but we were concerned that the rodent numbers had crept up so much. There are now 150 bait stations and 200 rat traps covering the 60ha area. It isn't easy country to work, with very dense reeds, sedges, tangle fern, Harakeke, Raupo and manuka. A perfect environment for the wee rodents to hide in! Even if it is wet down below.



Fernbird monitor team -2008 - BOP Politech students and tutor Paddy Stewart

A couple of months later we had the Bay of Plenty Environmental Management Studies students helping out with the Fern Bird monitoring. This is carried out around April and October each year, by polytech students. This was the fifth listen/watch carried out since we started in June 2006. Twice a day, for three days the students went out to listen and identify territories and to give a more accurate picture of actual numbers.

It was a great surprise to find there has been at least a three-fold increase on early 2006 numbers, which is such wonderful news. This includes fernbirds seen and heard in new areas where previously there were none. Now we just have to keep them pesky critters away, and get smarter with our trapping programmes.

VOLUNTEERS . . . our backbone!

Without the support of landowners and the willing help of volunteers from all walks of life and every corner of the globe, we would not be able to maintain the pest control and ecosystem restoration projects to the standard we now do.

These people help clear tracks, maintain traps, plant trees, identify species, and put in bait stations.

They get scratched and muddy, fall in creeks, bitten by insects, get hot and bothered with the big climbs, and still they come back for more.

There have been 78 year olds and 10 year olds; people from China, Brazil, Mexico, and Scotland; overseas students doing medicine, engineering, or ecology; nurses, teachers and even quantum physicists!

It is so heartening to have so many positive people with us!



West Auckland Tramping Club-December 07

NEW YORK TO PORT CHARLES...

World Environment Day '08 draws volunteers from all corners of the globe to New Zealand

A big thank you to the TDCD and DOC for providing plants and also to Banrock Station Wines for funding earth works at the new Gordon Caldwell Reserve wetland at Port Charles. With their support our latest group from the Global Volunteer Network enjoyed a sparkling winters day planting at the reserve to mark World Environment Day.



World Environment Day June '08 planting action

meg events

August 2008: Maungatautari Ecological Island field trip - Date to be confirmed.

Please get in touch with Jonty if you are interested to come along for this exciting trip. This will be a full day event with a Strongman's bus chartered from Coromandel Town.

The Maungatautari Ecological Island is an internationally significant restoration project. This 3,400 hectare forested, extinct volcano stands majestically on the landscape in the Waikato basin, between Cambridge, Te Awamutu and Putaruru, in the central North Island of New Zealand. www.maungatrust.org

Stop Press!



We just received the good news from Wayne Todd, of a successful funding application to World Wildlife Fund to carry out a comprehensive base line survey of flora and fauna in the Waikawau Bay wetlands and estuary and also to create a series of field guides and to prepare a detailed restoration plan.

We want you!

Volunteering for MEG is not just about hard labour in the bush. We also need help to grow our membership and to get face to face with people in your neighbourhood. There are trees to plant and bird counts to be done. You could host a barbeque or other social event to reward our local and international volunteers for their help in our district. Getting actively involved with MEG is rewarding and a great way to make new friends.

Please call Jonty today for a chat - 021 410040



MEG thanks BNZ Save the Kiwi and Fortress Fasteners for their ongoing support.

MEG WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

MEG members receive our newsletter, priority bookings on our summer programme of events and access to our mapping software, to produce personalized maps and aerial photos of your property. MEG can also provide resources and support for weed, animal pest control and planting schemes that can enhance wildlife diversity at your place.

For more information please contact our membership coordinator Tina Morgan at (07) 866 6720 or email your membership enquiry to: t.morgan@colville.org.nz or just post the form below to us with your subscription.



Kotuku now back in residence at Waikawau estuary

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions remain at \$10 per person, \$20 per family and \$50 for company membership.

However, the Committee has decided that in future, all subscriptions will fall due on January 1st each year. This will save a lot of work.

If a subscription has been paid during 2007, the next subscription will not be due until January 1st 2009.

Subscriptions not yet paid for 2007 will be accepted, and once paid, will fall due again on January 1st 2009.

Donations will, of course, be willingly accepted at any time!

JOIN MEG AND SUPPORT OUR PROJECTS

Membership application

Name: _____
Address: _____

Ph: _____
E: _____

I am interested in helping with MEG's projects: YES NO

Annual Membership fees:
Single: \$10.00 Family: \$20.00 Corporate: \$50.00

I would like to donate a further: \$ _____

Payable to: The Membership Coordinator
Moehau Environment Group, Sandy Bay RD 4, Coromandel.

For further information: Jonty Rutherford, MEG Coordinator,
CA Colville PDC, Coromandel. Ph: 021-410040
E: jonty@meg.org.nz W: www.meg.org.nz

WE THANK YOU!