



Newsletter No. 1 May 2007

The winter of 2006 will be remembered for the most dramatic snowfalls for years. The Trust had to cancel our traditional mid-winter dinner due to access problems.. Will winter 2007 be as exciting? Soon we will know.

Greetings from the Co-Chairs of the Canterbury Environmental Trust. This letter is long overdue, and one which has been made possible by modern ICT. We appreciate your support over the last few years, and hope that this newsletter will encourage you to continue to support the Centre.

We have several recent developments at the Environmental Centre at Craigieburn to share with you, as well as some future, very exciting possibilities. The Craigieburn area has huge potential as a living environmental resource for educators, their students, and recreationalists, which we believe is still largely untapped. It is our hope that we can assist groups to develop this.

Bob Leonard, Maree Goldring



The access road continues to be an issue as it is difficult to maintain without machinery. It belongs to DoC, but is used by ski field traffic as well. Discussions with the ski field and DoC are underway to try to resolve this problem, particularly as the busy ski season is fast approaching.

If you are at the Centre during heavy rainfalls, putting on a parka and taking a shovel with you along the road to clear culverts is very helpful.

Recently most of the old platform bunks have been replaced with conventional single bunks and mattresses. This has meant that people can enjoy a night less likely to be disturbed by restless neighbours.

A huge night store heater with a fan has been installed. This is working well. At last the endless headache for overworked Trustees—keeping up with the enormous firewood consumption—is over. *All groups are advised to bring their own firewood if they want to have the log fire burning as well as the night store.*

Earlier this year, an additional septic tank was installed to cope with the heavy usage. The area around both tanks has been landscaped to protect and enhance the area. *We would appreciate it if you could ensure all members of your group stay off the 'hills', and out of the area beyond.*

The septic tank is lowered into its hole.



Did you know that:

Over the past four years, members of the Trust have seen kakariki and a kaka close to the Centre. These birds have not been recorded in the Eastern side of the Craigieburn range before.

If you do see them, please let us know.

Caretaking:

Caretaking of the Centre is a challenge for trustees, most of whom live and work in the city. It is hoped that in 2007 a more consistent approach to caretaking and maintenance of the Centre will be possible, as members of the Trust may be more available. Already work has begun on painting and maintaining the buildings and environment to a higher standard

Bookings:

The booking system has changed since the Christchurch Environment Centre has closed. Marlene McLaren, 03 343 5532 or marls.mclaren@xtra.co.nz, is now employed by the Trust as booking officer. A web site is under development where bookings can be viewed on-line at www.enved.org.nz

Coast to the High Country

This programme, ably run by Andrew Hamer, excited and inspired children and teachers. The partnership of WWF-NZ, Department of Conservation, Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, College of Education, and ourselves, provided support both financially and educationally. Difficulties securing a funder for the teacher salary have resulted in the programme going into recess.

Mistletoe—There is an incredible amount of mistletoe around the centre and along the nature trail, even some tiny plants just getting under way. Take time to do a plant count, or see who can find the smallest plant. Spot the difference between those that grow on the trunks of trees, and on the branches.

Kiwi Recovery Programme—Exciting Times

One of the most exciting events in our history occurred late 2006. The Trust signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the New Zealand Conservation Trust, from Willowbank Wildlife Park, which runs a kiwi recovery programme there. We are working together to prepare and support a Great Spotted Kiwi recovery programme in the area near the Centre, and also near Castle Hill Village. The first steps will be predator control, invertebrate counts and bird surveys. The potential for environmental education experiences for students, particularly once the young kiwi are growing up in their enclosures prior to release, is huge.

Any school or other group who would like to assist with this programme in any way in the future as part of their Environmental Centre experience is encouraged to contact Ray or Maree Goldring, Christchurch 03 3380 535, or 03 318 9189, for information on how this can be done

St. Andrew's Wonder-kids



Trustees:

Co-chairs: Bob Leonard and Maree Goldring

Treasurer: Andrew Hamer

Secretary: Ruth Millar

Bert McConnell

Barry Law

Ray Goldring

Shona Lamoureaux

Alan Palmer

Ross Meder

George Jardine

Kees Doornenbal

NZCT members:

Janet Hellyer

Jeremy Maguire

The Goldrings also act as part-time Caretakers and are often at Castle Hill Village to assist if there are problems for groups.

Booking Officer: Marlene McLaren, 03 343 5532 or marls.mclaren@xtra.co.nz

Trapping

This huge project to enhance the overall forest health has begun. Traps have been laid during May on all tracks and most roads in the Eastern Craigieburn Range Forest. They are marked with blue numbered stock eartags on nearby trees. If you are in the area, and see a tag, find the trap and check visually if there is anything in it. If so, **do not** try to remove it, or undo the lid. Please just let Ray Goldring know, recording the number and location of the trap. The first stoat caught was within 48 hours of the traps being laid along the bottom Broken River Ski-field road.

Thanks to the huge team who laid out the traps on the tracks—St. Andrew's College, Forest and Bird, NZ Conservation Trust, and our own trust members. Also thanks to Blacks Fasteners for trap bolts, Zeegold for eggs (Bait), and Allflex for the tags—all donated.

Charges: To make the use of the facility more affordable to smaller groups we have adjusted prices as follows:

\$8/night/person school and youth groups

\$10/night/person tertiary groups

\$15/night/person other adult groups

Minimum charges

\$120/night—Korimako Lodge \$50/night—Kea Cottage

\$170/night entire facility