



Shakespear Open Sanctuary Society Inc

Newsletter No 12

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Shakespear Open Sanctuary Society

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Breaking News from SOSSI.

Thank You Very, Very, Very, Very Much! \$400,000 Target Reached

As we all know, SOSSI was established to provide physical, material and financial support toward the establishment of a pest free Open Sanctuary at Shakespear Regional Park, in partnership with the ARC. Over the years we have done all of the above, but our core focus has been on raising the community share of funds of approximately \$400,000 toward the fence. Prior to 2009, donations and the fencepost appeal raised over \$45,000 but we always knew the bulk of our fundraising would have to come from large grant agencies, and this year has been our year.

In February, we were granted \$200,000 from the Ministry for the Environment toward earthworks and labour costs, an event that was instrumental in getting the ARC to reverse an earlier recommendation to defer construction by two years.

Now in November, the SOSSI committee is pleased to announce that the Lottery Environment and Heritage committee from the NZ Lottery Grants Board has granted us a further \$157,000 for pest proof fence materials.

This is fantastic news and has taken us past our \$400,000 target and a heartfelt thanks to these agencies from SOSSI. That said, as is the nature of such large undertakings, costs have risen from the 2006 project estimate prior to finalisation of design and route therefore we will continue our fundraising efforts to see the job through. We require the extra money in order to complete the automatic opening gate.

F Mckenzie.

Recent Events in Shakespear Regional Park and Sossi.

- **31st October**, Silverdale Primary School **Gala day**
- **15th November**, Red Beach School Gala Day
- **22nd November** Exhibition of Works of Jeff Thomson at the Shakespear Woolshed
- **29th November**. Stanmore Bay School Gala day

Upcoming Events

- **Late Jan 2010** Commencement of construction of predator proof fence.
- **May 16th 2010** Planting day.
- **May 24th - June 11th 2010**. Park closure for pest control: - closed for the first of the two weekends during this period, but open over Queen's Birthday weekend (5th - 7th June):

Note. If you have still not paid for 2009, we would be grateful to receive asap. You can pay on line at www.sossi.org.nz: or send us your cheque. Single \$10.00, Family \$20.00. Contact Raewyn French on 094242066 or raefrench@xtra.co.nz if unsure about your membership.

Regional Parks Management Review

The Regional Parks network cared for by Auckland Regional Council is managed in accordance with the Regional Parks Management Plan. This document is currently under review, and a draft plan has been released for public submissions.

The plan covers 23 regional parks and sets out how the council intends to manage these over the next ten years, with a view to the future beyond. The draft plan covers aspects such as the role and purpose of regional parks and sets general policies for: management of natural settings; key relationships; sustainable management; infrastructure; and how recreation and other activities will be provided for.

Each park has a section reflecting the specific management focus for the next ten years. For Shakespear this includes: establishing an open sanctuary by constructing a predator-proof fence and managing the sanctuary in a way that integrates recreation, conservation and farming; protecting and enhancing biodiversity values; enhancing the camping opportunities on the park; implementing and demonstrating sustainable farming practices; and establishing and maintaining relationships with adjoining landowners and volunteer groups to assist in the development of the open sanctuary.

The draft plan, frequently asked questions and submission forms can be viewed at www.arc.govt.nz/parks - closing date for submissions 23 December 2009

From the Chairman

Thank you Heather,

Heather Bell is a foundation member of SOSSI and has been a member of the management committee since we were formed in 2003. For most of this period Heather has kept the books and maintained the membership list. A charitable organisation like SOSSI comes under a great deal of scrutiny when applying for grants these days. The granting agency wants assurance that the applicant is a well run organisation and can be trusted to use the funds granted for the purpose for which they are intended. Heather has played a significant role in building our credibility during the formative years making sure that the donations and grants we receive are used and accounted for as intended. This year we have been successful in being awarded grants which with other fund raising totals \$400,000. Heather has made a great contribution to our credibility as an effective and well run organisation. On behalf of the management committee and the members thanks Heather - we appreciate all the work you have done for SOSSI. You love Shakespear and I know you will continue being a supporter of the Sanctuary and helping out as a volunteer.

Keeping the Accounts

Rae French, who is a qualified and experienced accountant has taken over our accounts from Heather Bell and joined the management committee. There has been a big increase in the size and number of financial transactions we are handling and we all appreciate having Rae take on this role. Heather has done a very accurate and comprehensive job over the last few years handling the accounts and welcomes Rae's involvement now that the sums have got larger. Heather will now have more time for her other voluntary work.

Membership Database.

Keeping the membership database up to date has become a task worthy of more attention as our numbers have grown. We appreciate Les Presling for volunteering to take over this role.

The Jeff Thomson exhibition in the old woolshed at Shakespear was a great success. Visitors to Shakespear park on Sunday could be forgiven for thinking that they had entered an African wildlife sanctuary. Proudly standing guard outside the old woolshed was a full sized ostrich. A steady stream of people attended during the afternoon. Jeff exhibited a range of his amazing original work and was happy to talk to people about it. When you meet Jeff and see his work it becomes obvious why he is such a popular artist. Eight of the limited edition pieces that are being sold by SOSSI to raise funds for the sanctuary were sold. Thanks to Murray Silverstone who took the opportunity when it arose and organized the event at short notice. The limited edition artwork is still for sale and can be viewed on our website www.sossi.org.nz. \$50.00 of each sale goes towards the sanctuary.



Jeff Thomson with a sculpture at the woolshed

Community Service Aids Sossi Fence Post Appeal

Community Service for the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award has produced a \$60 donation to the Sossi Fence Post appeal. Vincent Criglington, David Gillard-Allen and Harley Prosser, all pupils of Wentworth College at Gulf Harbour have raised the money from a 2 hour busking stint outside Orewa's New World Supermarket. The boys all play the guitar, and clearly must produce a good sound as it does not seem to have taken them long to gain the money.



David, Harley & Vincent with their guitars

The 'Duke of Edinburgh' award scheme is an optional but encouraged activity at Wentworth College. The award scheme was first launched in 1956 and is now found in over 126 countries, and challenges young people aged 14 to 25 to set and achieve personal goals and to learn about themselves and their community.

It is a 3 level program with 4 sections which are

- Service – giving help in the local community.
- Skills – covering almost any non physical hobby, skill or interest.
- Expeditions – training for, practicing, planning and completing a journey on foot, horseback or by boat or cycle
- Physical recreation – sport, dance, fitness.

Our three heroes' undertook their first 'practice tramp and overnight camp' in Shakespear Regional Park and have since gone on to tramp to the Pinnacles, and undertake an overnight tramp in the Waitakere ranges.

Open Sanctuary Coordinator Update

Shakespear Open Sanctuary is one step closer to becoming a reality with SOSSI being awarded a major grant from Lotteries Environment and Heritage bringing SOSSI's Fence Post Appeal to over \$400,000. Thank you all, what a fantastic achievement!

With the support of SOSSI, the Auckland Regional Council now has the funds in hand to enter into a fencing agreement. The project went to tender in October and we have been negotiating and ensuring we have all the funds to commit since. We aim to have a contract signed before Christmas, allowing construction to begin in the New Year. This is a little behind our original schedule, but there is ample time and dry conditions to achieve fence construction as intended. Due to the many different sources of funds from the council, the community and grants, and the rules relating to how and when these can be spent, we will build the pest proof fence over the 2009/10 and 2010/11 financial years.

We are however still short of all the funds required to construct the automated vehicle gates, planned for construction in the 2010/11 year. These gates are essential to enable park visitors free access to the open sanctuary while keeping pest animals out. Obviously a fence with a gap in it (literally) big enough to drive a bus through won't meet our pest exclusion standards. So now is the time to spread the word and get all your friends and family behind us to close this last gap. Donations to the Fence Post Appeal, purchase of Jeff Thomson artwork and memberships alongside further grant applications will all help to close this gap.

Conservation activity at the park continues with the help of busy volunteers and Rangers. Reptile management and monitoring continues, and it's always exciting to hear of the discovery of a previously unknown pocket of skinks here and there. The nursery really looks the part now as it fills up with growing plants. It's great to see the full cycle of revegetation being undertaken on the park, from locally collected seed sown and grown by volunteers, which will in turn be planted by our ever popular planting days.

Pest plant management is an area we hope to extend our efforts. As we remove pests that eat plants, and pests that eat birds, and gain more birds that eat fruit, we have to be mindful that we don't allow weeds to spread across the park and adjoining lands and islands as these birds move to and fro spreading their 'goodwill'.

I hope you can take the time to get out to the park this summer to relax and enjoy. Whether you be picnicking on the beach, strolling the hills, or enjoying the shade of the forest I hope you can look forward with excitement to what we are about to achieve together.

Matt Maitland

I can be contacted at matt.maitland@arc.govt.nz or 09 426 1200

Results of OSNZ Bird survey in Shakespear Regional Park

Ten members of the Ornithological society of New Zealand led by Michael Taylor recently undertook a survey of the birds to be found at Shakespear Regional Park. A previous survey was undertaken in 2007 and a similar method was used on both occasions. The park was divided into six different areas and two people assigned to each area where during about 2 hours they endeavored to locate, identify and count all birds in that area. Then the all the birds from these areas were added together to come up with a total for the park. The 2009 survey didn't attempt to count all birds, but instead selected 'indicator birds' in order to compare with the previous 2007 survey.

Fewer Blackbirds, Song Thrushes and Skylarks - possibly due to counting after their morning song period, but increased numbers of Grey Warblers, Kingfishers and Pigeons, were counted which bodes well for the future of the park as a sanctuary. Six more species were found this time, notably Reef Heron, Kakariki and Brown Teal - a pair with one duckling surviving.

The annotated list (numbers in brackets are from 2007 survey): Blackbird 28 (63), Black Swan, Brown Teal 3, Bellbird 3 (3), Californian Quail, Caspian Tern, Chaffinch, Fantail, Godwit 32, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Grey Warbler 49 (42), Black-backed Gull, Red-billed Gull, Harrier 1 (4), Reef Heron, White-faced Heron, House Sparrow, Kakariki 2, Kingfisher 27 (16), Magpie, Mallard, Myna, NZ Dotterel 6 (1), NZ Pigeon 22 (13), Pied Oystercatcher 1, Variable Oystercatcher 11 (16), Paradise Shelduck, Peacock, Pheasant, Pied Stilt 16 (20), Pukeko, Rosella 40 (69), Shining Cuckoo 8 (1), Silvereye, Skylark 12 (19), Song Thrush 24 (44), Little Shag, Pied Shag, Shoveller, Spotless Crake, Spur-winged Plover 26 (34), Starling, Tui 40 (59), Turkey, Welcome Swallow, Yellowhammer 8 (28)
A total of 47 species.

It was felt likely the present Tui figure of 40 was a considerable underestimate as many were airborne while OSNZ members were taking their lunch. In 2007 533 Pukeko were tallied and Pukeko remains the most abundant bird in the park.

Of birds present before, only the Feral Pigeons were absent. Following the survey, three members stayed behind with a calling tape and were rewarded by the clear response of a Spotless Crake in the marshy area beyond the gully where Park Ranger Steve had indicated we should search.

The OSNZ intends to perform further surveys in future which will be particularly interesting once the fence is in place and pests have been eradicated.

Rita M Wilkes

Rita Wilkes came to New Zealand in 1992 with her husband Tony, following their daughter and her family now living in Nelson, and son and his family now living in Stanmore bay.

Wanting to learn about the flora and fauna of New Zealand, they both became members of Forest & Bird and Rita was a member of the HBC branch committee for seven years, during which time she co-ordinated the monthly potting up programme at the Wenderholm nursery until recently. Unfortunately she was widowed in 1996 and later moved from Manly to Army Bay. She joined SOSSI in 2006 and has been the minute secretary since.

Her interest in crafts, including quilting, card making, painting etc has proved a bonus for fund raising towards the costs of building the predator proof fence at Shakespear Regional Park.



Recent Activities of the Tuesday Volunteers. – From Graeme Mackie

Shakespear Regional Park volunteers mostly work in the park on Tuesdays. From 9.00 am until 12.30 pm. They meet at the park office at Te Haruhi Bay and help with the general maintenance and other projects around the park. Volunteers can arrange with the ranger at this time to return other days and times for other volunteering opportunities.

Recent jobs have included maintenance and up grading in Waterfall Gully. This has been weeded and raked clear of leaves. The replacement of a 5 metre bridge was a significant achievement as was the realigning of the track leading to it. This included inserting lining timber to hold the metal in place.

Another big task has been the removal of flax from the causeway creating the lake adjacent to Waterfall gully in preparation for the construction of the predator proof fence. Over 3 days one half of the group tackled the digging out of the flax bushes while the others trimmed the flax for replanting. The replanting of nearly 500 flax plants occurred in conservation gully's known locally as between 'way in and annies" and 'Fig tree'.

Releasing the recently planted trees and shrubs in the Okoromai 'wetland' has been an important follow up to the planting which occurred in May this year.

Many scotch thistles, some as high as 2 metres have been controlled recently.

Notes from the nursery – from Rae French

We have achieved our aims for this growing year. At the moment we have in excess of 2000 plants in a holding pattern for the summer. Some of these plants have been propagated by the Botanic gardens for us and some we have propagated from seed from the park. My thanks to the volunteers who stood for hours potting on seedlings. The biggest portion of plants we have at the moment are destined for the Moko sites and so will be invaluable in the retaining and expanding of these skinks populations.



Removing flax from path of fence



Learning about potting plants at new nursery

Merry Christmas to all our supporters from the Sossi committee. We look forward to another successful year in 2010 with the building of the fence and further fund raising to complete the gates.

Remember if you are still looking for that elusive Christmas present we have the following :

- Saddleback Bird Call Cards at a reduced price of \$8.00.
- Handmade Paper packs of envelopes (6per pack) at \$2.00 per pack
- Sossi T- shirts in the following sizes Y; S; M; L; XL. \$25.00 each.

And don't forget the **outstanding limited edition sculptures of Jeff Thomson** at \$ 150.00 with \$50.00 going to Sossi to complete the gates for the fence. www.sossi.org.nz/jeff-thomson.html