



## ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

### 1. Introduction

The Shakespeare Open Sanctuary Society (SOSSI) was incorporated in 2003 to assist the Auckland Regional Authority (now Auckland Council) with the establishment and operation of the Shakespeare Open Sanctuary. The Society works under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council, which manages the sanctuary jointly with the Society and other stakeholders.

The Society has approximately 120 members and is administered by an elected committee which meets monthly. It is funded by subscriptions and donations, and is registered as a charity with the Charities Commission.

This report summaries the activities and achievements of the Society over the year ending March 2014. They are reported below under the headings of the sections of our long-term plan.

### 2. Re-vegetation

Re-vegetation of the park is carried out according to a long-term plan prepared by the Council which aims to improve biodiversity habitats and values, mostly by re-planting areas retired from farming. SOSSI's chief contribution is currently the operation of the on-site nursery, very ably operated by Margaret Chappell and her team. This year they have successfully grown many plants from seed and cuttings, as well as potting up seedlings supplied by the Botanical Gardens. This year some 19,000 plants will be ready for planting, almost twice the number of last year.

Alison Wesley has been working on a 'photopoints' project, which will record photographs taken at specific points so that regrowth over time can be monitored and recorded on our website.

### 3. Pest management.

The pest-proof fence is working well at keeping animal pests out of the sanctuary. SOSSI is responsible for monitoring the fence, with Alison Wesley managing the fence-checker team. SOSSI members also contribute to the on-going task of checking trap lines throughout the sanctuary.

SOSSI has begun running a monthly advertisement in Hibiscus Matters which encourages the local community to remove pest weeds from the Peninsula, and so inhibit their spread to the Sanctuary (and to Tiritiri Matangi). This project is sponsored by Auckland Council Biodiversity and Hibiscus Matters. SOSSI is also running a 'weedbuster team' within the sanctuary (also led by Alison Wesley).

### 4. Development of Amenities

Roger Land and his team of volunteers have completed an outstanding job of upgrading the Waterfall Gully Track, generally making it more accessible and weatherproof. They are now tackling the other main tracks in the park.

### 5. Build capacity of SOSSI

This year the Committee set itself the task of doubling the membership. While we did not achieve this we did at least think through how to achieve it, and as a result re-worked most of our promotional material and key messages, as follows;

- Our website has been completely rebuilt, with more emphasis on the ecosystems and wildlife in the sanctuary. Behind the scenes the website now also manages our membership database and email system.
- We have prepared a portable display system for use at public events, upgraded our park noticeboards and obtained a grant to upgrade and reprint the SOSSI brochure.



- Our facebook page is updated regularly, and appears to connect with a wider range of people than the website.

We have recently started the 'Sunday at Shakespeare' program, partly to provide a week-end opportunity for volunteers and partly to allow SOSSI members to meet each other. So far this has been very successful and the Committee is considering widening it to public participation.

## **6. Education and promotion**

Most the items above also fall under this category. In addition we replaced the stuffed pest animals used in displays and talks, and are working on a display cabinet for them in the Old Woolshed. Ginnie Quartel is also leading a team preparing a 'Shakespeare Junior Ranger' program to be used by children visiting the sanctuary. We also posted a comprehensive and week-long display in the Whangaparaoa Library.

In addition SOSSI continued its usual offerings of guided walks and talks, and Allan Parker organised a very busy schedule of school visits.

## **7. Species monitoring and relocation**

While it is disappointing not to be able to re-locate the little spotted kiwi to the sanctuary this year, the discovery of seabird burrows spread along the cliffs of the eastern coastline is very heartening. SOSSI has been working with Council staff on a program to attract seabirds and we're pleased to report good progress at this point. A plan to attract native butterflies is also under way but is more tentative at this stage.

Dave Craddock continues his long-term monitoring of skinks and geckos and Jan Velvin again led a dedicated team monitoring dotterels, resulting in the exciting discovery of a flocking site within the sanctuary.

## **Acknowledgments**

I am pleased to say that SOSSI continues to enjoy an excellent relationship with Council staff and I thank them on SOSSI's behalf for their support of the sanctuary.

I'd also like to thank the many supporters who have donated time or funding, particularly the regular volunteers on whom the sanctuary depends.

Lastly I would like to thank the very dedicated members of the SOSSI committee for their support and contributions.

Peter Jackson (Chair)