

Greetings Friends of Rotokare Trust

Hi folks, it's time I put pen to paper for my chairman's report

It seems like only very recently that we were flying to get the newsletter out, and it's time again already. Doesn't time fly! Well in the last newsletter we were finishing off the last fence jobs. I can now report that we are expecting the new double road gates to arrive from Xcluder Fence Company in the coming month (more information on how these will operate in the following pages). Early winter brought some very heavy rainfall periods to the region - a real test of the stability of the fence and its platform. We were pleased to find that the extra effort put in to getting construction right over summer paid off, and there has been very little damage. A few areas of ground did move, but with guidance from the Taranaki Regional Council and some volunteer effort we have stabilised these.



Of course our recent exciting news was Prime Minister Helen Clark's visit to Rotokare in which she announced the success of a recent grant application we made to the Significant Community Based Projects Fund. We were extremely pleased that our hard work in this application paid off and that we gained financial support from central government to compliment that of our huge regional support.



In late June a group of us travelled to Central House Movers in Bulls to finalise the choice of caretakers house - a fully renovated three bedroom 1930's house has been chosen to compliment the era of the gifted education building and surroundings. On the way home we called in to Bushy Park at Wanganui (also a fenced sanctuary) - what a neat place - our highlight was seeing saddleback. Thank you to Alan Anderson and the Bushy Park Trust for their warm hospitality.

With buildings and visitor development at Rotokare the Trust has realised the importance of ensuring that this fits with the surrounding landscape. Fortunately we have the skills of landscape architect Richard Bain to help plan an attractive and user-friendly layout for all future planned development. If you would like to have input to these plans please give us a call - we would be most happy to receive your comments.

In July Trust members walked the fence line with Roger MacGibbon (Xcluder) and Jo Ritchie (Natural Logic Consultants) to carry out a final inspection. I'm pleased to say that all current work is officially signed off to Jo's satisfaction - thank you.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has helped with these, and other stages along the way, to make this the most exciting and sustainable reserve in our province.

Thank you - Joe

Conservation Week - fieldtrip to Rotokare

Conservation Week celebrations this year focused on outdoor recreation and the range of things New Zealanders can do to get out and enjoy their beautiful country. As part of this Rotokare hosted conservation week on Sunday the 12th of August. Despite heavy rainfall the previous evening and that morning, 40 keen people turned up for a tour of the reserve - guided by members of the Rotokare Trust. The event kicked off with the Trust giving a talk about what was happening at Rotokare, the sanctuary project, and future goals. We then walked around the lake edge track in guided groups, and returned to the start for a bbq lunch. All in all a fantastic day, and great to see young and old all getting out there.



One of the groups ready to walk the track.



Quick stop to check out these massive roots.

buttress tree

Entrance gates - what to expect

As Joe mentioned, the new predator-proof entrance gates will be installed by Xcluder in the coming month. These have been designed for driver ease of use and, like the fence, to stop all mammalian pests entering the reserve. Essentially this is set up as a cage and double gate system where by you enter the first gate and once this has closed you are able to pass through the second gate (the same principle as a pedestrian gate you enter at a zoo aviary). Below is an Xcluder diagram of how the gate system will operate:

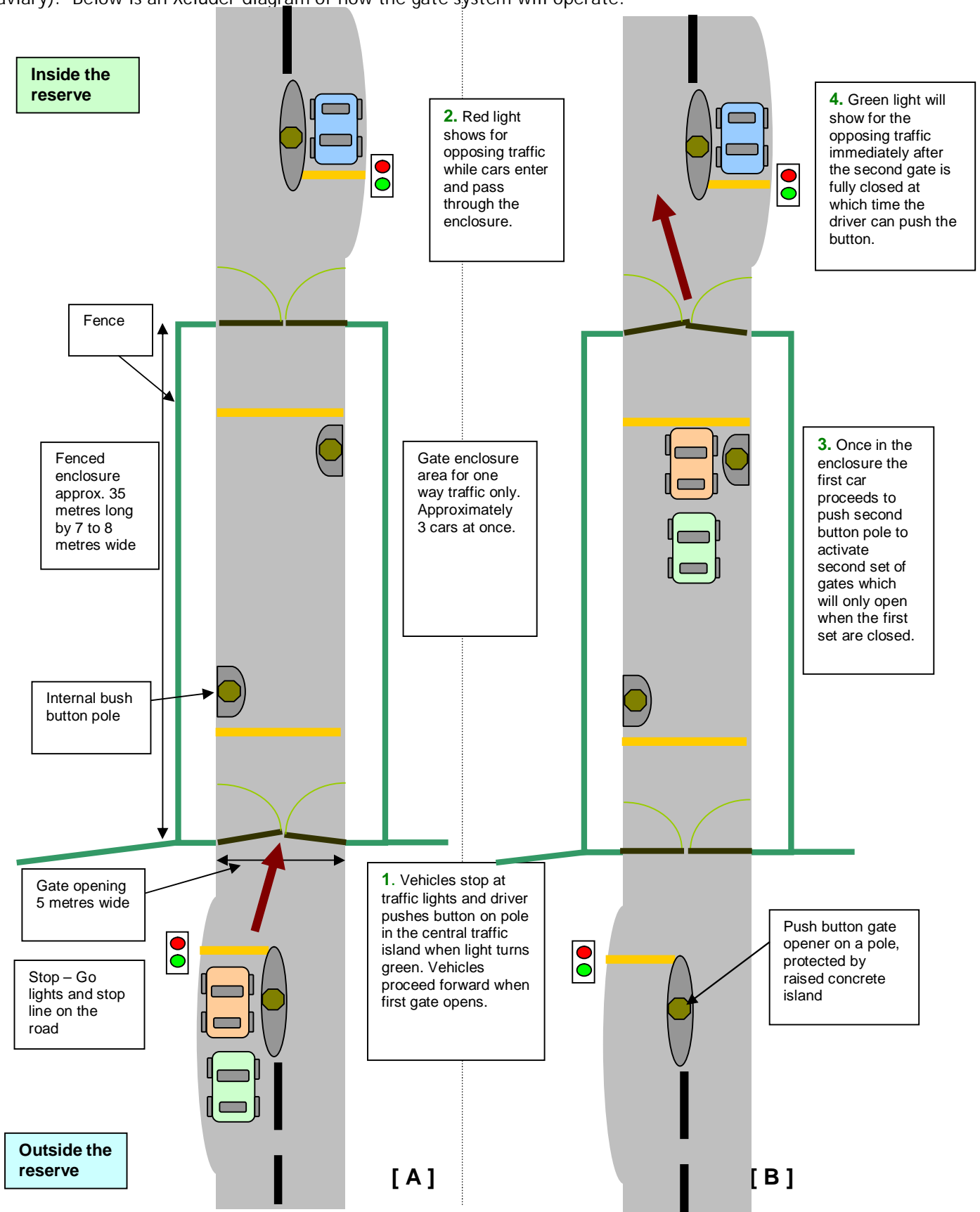


Figure 1: Proposed automated gate design for the entrance to Rotokare. The diagram on the left [A] shows two cars approaching from outside the reserve with one attempting to leave the reserve; [B] shows the first two cars progressing through the gate enclosure.

Sponsors

We would like to thank (monitoring and



for recently donating over 1,000 tags for numbering fence posts identification).

We have been overwhelmed with the amount of sponsorship and support from not only local businesses and the community but from nation wide. Unfortunately we are unable to do justice to everyone in the newsletter so will be dedicating a page of the upcoming website to thank them. Sponsors have got behind a fantastic project and it would be good to see us return the support.

Pest Eradication

Time is approaching the need to begin detailed planning for our main pest eradication project (planned for mid 2008). A technical advisory group has now been formed to help the Trust with procedures and operation management. This, so far, includes representatives from the Trust, Taranaki Regional Council, Department of Conservation, and independent experts. We hope to bring information to you on this in our next newsletter.

Art Auction

On the 25th of May we were invited to help Eltham Village Art Gallery celebrate their first birthday through a fundraising celebrity art auction. A huge thank you must go out to all the people who so very kindly donated their work for the cause - over 60 pieces! A range of art came from local budding artists, politicians, local and national celebrities, and very well known artists - Michael Smither, Joyce Young, the three mayors, Chester Borrowes (who also talked Nick Smith, John Key, and Bill English in to showing their talents too), and Sue Morton, just to name a few. It was a fantastic night as auctioneers Graeme Payne and McDonalds Real Estate kept the crowd alive and crying with laughter. The Mill Liquorsave Stratford, Eltham Four Square, and Mainland provided wine and cheese for the evening. Over \$30,000.00 was raised for The Village Gallery and Rotokare Trust.

What is it like to be a Rotokare volunteer?



I have been involved with Lake Rotokare for most of my life, being born and raised on the Rotokare Road. Now I am pleased to be really involved. I started by assisting with cutting predator monitor lines through the bush, then trap lines and installing traps at fifty metre intervals. I have also assisted with THE FENCE - covering the bottom skirt with topsoil. For the past year I have been baiting and clearing traps and recording kills on one line of eighty traps every 2- 3 weeks. The majority of kills have been rats, over 300 and some mice. We are now working trap lines around the lake edge to determine the presence and identity of rat species - Norway or ship rats, plus any other predators. I used to enjoy peanut butter sandwiches, not now. Peanut butter is the bait used in the traps. I enjoy discussing our project with members of the public when I meet them as they're walking round the lake. I've also been involved with organised groups such as those who came during Conservation week. All comment on the improvement of the bush and bird life at the reserve.

Winn Kerr

Up for a challenge?

We are about to start work to cut tracks for a 50 x 50 metre pest monitoring system through the reserve in preparation for the pest eradication beginning mid 2008. Yes that's right - only a mere 40km's of marking and cutting to do! It's a scary thought when you consider all the supplejack and the not-so-flat terrain! Whilst we have a pretty amazing bunch of regular volunteers we would definitely appreciate a hand with this challenge. We can't promise it will be the easiest volunteer job you will ever do - but we can promise a really good workout(!), plenty of laughs, and smoko. Ah, and not to mention the thought of this work is playing a very important role in trying to eradicate every last pest from within the reserve. We plan to make a start in the coming weeks and will ramp up the activity towards and throughout the summer. For now, for those out there who are up to the challenge we would love to see you....

10.30am Sunday 30th September
10.30am Sunday 28th October
10.30am Sunday 25th November

The National Bank rural team took a day out to help the Trust bring traps in for servicing. And who thought they only wore suits!! Cheers for your help guys. (L to R): Nick Lawn, Rob Simcic, Sharon Walker, Stephanie Phillips, Rebecca Rowe, Chris Monk. Front: Vicki Scott, Charlotte Nell, Chris Harvey.



Mushrooms and the like



Photo: *Ramariopsis pulchella* (Barry Hartley) substrat.

Fungi come in all shapes, sizes and colours. They are an essential part of life on earth with many other forms of life dependent on them. They used to be included in the plant kingdom but they are now recognized as being quite different and so are classified in their own Kingdom of Fungi.

What we see is not the main part of the fungus. This is the usually white strands we see in the soil or in rotting wood. The part we recognize is the fruiting body and this may be the conventional mushroom shape we gather in the fields, it may be a cluster of upright 'stems' we call club or coral fungi or it may be the bracket we see on tree trunks, or it may be a sheet across the

Fungi colours often rival our native flowers with vivid blue, shiny black, bright yellow, orange and even green. The prime time for finding a wide number of species in the bush in Taranaki is May to June though you'll find some all the year round. In New Zealand about 6000 species have been recorded so far with several thousand yet to be listed so many you find may not even have names!

An unusual one was found at Rotokare by Gavin and Julie Johnston this season. Commonly known as the Stinkhorn Fungus (*Aseroe rubra*) it grows in the ground with a conspicuous tentacled fruitbody. In the midst of these tentacles is a slimy substance smelling like rotting meat. This attracts flies which disperse the spores.

Barry Hartley



Photo: *Aseroe rubra* (Gavin Johnson)

~ Membership ~

It is your wonderful support that helps to keep this project moving - an annual membership donation of \$30 will go towards producing our newsletter, friends events, and the trapping programme. You can still sponsor a section of fence - \$112.50 per metre or \$28.00 per post - a great idea if you are looking for a gift with a difference!

As our treasurer Mike is very busy, I have been coerced by my daughter Kara, into looking after all donations and memberships. A few changes have been made as to how we now follow up on donations and Friends of the Lake memberships. With any new membership you will receive a letter thanking you for your support and if you sponsor a section of fence/post/trapbox or give a donation you will receive a certificate in addition. All donations or memberships will receive a receipt unless stipulated. We apologise for any delays in receiving your receipts. If you have any further suggestions to any improvements to this or if you have any queries please contact me on 06 7648756 or at prankerdcjan@xtra.co.nz

It is great to see so many people and not only from within Taranaki, who are so supportive of this venture. It is great to hear all the positive comments from out in the community about how the lake and surrounding bush is looking. Any contribution or offer of help, whether physical (track lines/BBQ/cups of tea/administration) or financial is very much appreciated.

Beverley

Thank you to the following for their contribution and help with the recent progress celebrations & Prime Minister's visit to which this would not have been possible:

Maata CWI - catering
Taranaki Regional Council - PM transport
Union Yamaha - PM transport
Woodsy's Garden Centre, Hawera - display plants
Ruth Stewart - photography
Rotokare committee and volunteers



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