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TUHOE TUAWHENUA TRUST

Ruatahuna

Private Bag RO 3001

Rotorua

Ph/Fax 07 3663 166

[brenda.tahi@xtra.co.nz](mailto:brenda.tahi@xtra.co.nz)

Tena koutou

E! Ko Matariki ...Kua kai harore, kua ngahoro nga hua o te ngahere, kua momona te manu, te poaka puihi me te paihamu hoki...ka rawe nga kai o te takurua

Such a mild winter, still waiting for a decent frost! We 're busy at the moment with a number of projects but just updating you on a few that come into focus at this time....

### **Land Capability Assessment**

We have been fortunate to be assisted by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council who got Norm Ngapo, a consultant, to complete this work. The report is an interesting one and covers the whole of the Tuawhenua region (about 12,000 ha) including the Ruatahuna Farm. The assessment involved recording rock type, soils, slope, erosion and vegetation, and mapping them using a system based on Class 1 (high quality land) to Class 8 (severely limited land). This is then used to assess the land's potential for sustained production.



*Tahae and Simon Stokes of BOP Regional Council talk 'land capability' for the Tuawhenua*



*Norm Ngapo, our consultant, reporting in style...  
naana taana mahi!*

It is no surprise that over 80% of the Tuawhenua lands outside of the Farm are Class 7 land which has 'moderate to severe limitations for pasture or forestry land use (although it can be farmed in conjunction with better country if carefully managed)'. Whilst there is some 'severely limited' Class 8 land there is also some easier Class 6 country and interestingly some pockets of good soils on river flats and terraces.

As Norm pointed out for us, we already know some of these things but the report and mapping puts this knowledge within a sound framework for assessing potential land use options. We discussed with Norm and Simon Stokes of BOP Regional Council how the old people have long known about the best places to grow their gardens and fruit trees - these places are sure to have the best soils and capability for land uses.

This report and the maps now provide a base of information from which we can now progress our planning for land uses and development across the Tuawhenua. Options under consideration include carbon and natural indigenous forestry, and of course as we have reported before, beekeeping!

*The report and maps are available for viewing at the TTT office so come and have a look if you are at all interested.*

The Bay of Plenty Regional Council has been immensely helpful in this project and remains as a partner to work with us on the next stages of our planning regarding pests, weeds and environmental issues.

## **Pig Survey for TB**

Tuberculosis (TB) is a ghastly disease that is disastrous for cattle and dairy farmers if it gets into an area, and affects the health and quality of our wild game so we sure don't want it here. It can be spread by carriers like pigs, so surveying them is a good way to check if the disease is around.

We are now underway for a survey for TB incidence in pigs in the Tuawhenua region. This is a good opportunity for hunters to earn some extra dollars as we'll pay \$80 a head. The details on the survey area and head removal are posted on the noticeboard at the shop or ring the TTT office for any information.

## **Matauranga o Te Tuawhenua**

As trustees for the Tuawhenua lands we believe we have a major responsibility to protect and restore special flora and fauna, and to collect and apply the matauranga o nga tipuna regarding these flora and fauna. We are about to embark on a project that seeks to gather the matauranga regarding flora/fauna of the Tuawhenua region and produce this in various forms so it can be readily used by whanau, hapu and places like Te Wharekura o Huiarau.

This project will contribute to a better understanding for us all of the ecology and history of the Tuawhenua, so we can all enjoy and look after it. The project will roll out over the next six months and we intend to complete it by Xmas.

## **I hē ra a “Did you know...?”!!!!!!**

Did you pick the mistake in the last newsletter? Our writer put that the taahu of Te Whai-a-te-motu is made of tawa (not sure where that came from!!) but our Chair James Doherty was told by his mother Te Kahui that it is from a rimu. Tamati Kruger considers that it may be a kahikatea, given its properties:

*E kiia ana he pai rawa atu te Kahikatea hai Taahūhū, nōtemea, he māmā ki te tārai, ki te hāpai ki runga e ngā pou taahu ō mua ō muri. He rākau tino roa hoki, torotika ana te hanga, hāngai ana mō te Taahu ko te hē, ēhara i te rākau pakeke maro pēnei i te Tōtara, Matai, Rātā rānei, nā reira he tere ki te pirau. (Imeera T Kruger to B Tahi, 24/6/11)*

Whatever the case, the taahu comes from a single tree and it was brought from Te Tahora.... we quote from Pou Temara’s writings on the matter:

*Ko ngā rakau hanga i te whare he mea tiki i Te Tahora, e toru kiromita te tawhiti atu i Mātātua. Ko te kōrero a Hikawera (1970; kōrero-a-waha) na te karakia, ka rere mai ngā rakau rā i te takiwā. Ki taku titiro, he kōrero whakatau tēnei i te māmā o ngā mahi i runga i to rātau whakawhirinaki ki Te Mea Ngaro, i runga hoki i te kotahi o ngā whakāro. Ko te kōrero tika ia, na te werawera me te pakaua i tae mai ai ngā rākau ra, a, na te kau i tō mai i Te Tahora ka tae mai ki Mātātua. Ahakoa a rātau mahi a te Ringatū, i mahia ano e rātau ngā mea tino Māori hei whakamāmā i ngā mahi; te haka te ngeri, te karakia Māori... Kaore i roa e hangaia ana te whare, ka tu te tahū me ngā paetara. Ko te mahi nui ko te tiki i ngā perana me ngā toetoe. Ko ngā perana he kahikatea; ko ēnei hoki te rākau māmā ki te wawāhi. Ka oti te wawāhi, kua haere atu ngā kaiwaha kua wahaina ki Te Whai-a-te-motu. He mahi taumaha engari na ngā mahi whakataetae i waenganui i ngā hapū ka māmā ngā mahi. (Te Ahua o Te Kupu Whakaari, Māori Studies Department, Victoria University, Wellington, 1991, Ch 7)*

## **Natural Forestry & Economic Development**

Just shows how we need to understand our ngahere and the resources we get from it...

The attachment to this newsletter brings into focus the restoration of our ngahere and how it might be put together with economic development for the marua of Ruatahuna. ‘In Focus’ has been designed as an information or discussion paper for you to keep for further reference, rather than toss as you might with a periodic newsletter. Hope it works for you...

*A, kati...*

*Na nga Kaitiaki o Te Tuawhenua*

## Do you know this about feral cats....?

### *When they first came here...*

Cats were first brought to New Zealand in ships by early European explorers around 1770. Ships that were infested with rats carried cats, which were used for pest control. Feral cats had become established in the North Island by the 1830's.



When rabbits became a major problem for South Island farmers, they fetched cats from cities to release on rabbit infested farmland. Feral cats are now widely distributed throughout all three main islands of New Zealand.

### *What they live on...*

Feral cats usually eat small mammals - young rabbits, rats, rodents, hares and possums, and of course birds. Feral cats commonly eat California quail, starling, yellowhammer, silvereye, fantail and kereru. They can be destructive to bird populations, for example, cats were known to have wiped out kakapo in Stewart Island. They are also known to eat lizards and insects.

### *Where they are...*

The obvious signs of feral cats are their scats (hamuti). Domestic cats usually bury their scats, but feral cats often deposit theirs on tracks or clumps of grass where they can be seen.

### *How they live...*

Cats are often considered to be solitary animals, but their social organisation is complex. Groups of cats usually comprise of several related adult females,

their young of both sexes and an adult male whose range includes other groups of females. Young females usually remain in the group and breed there, or leave to establish a new colony elsewhere, they rarely, if ever, join another group. Young males are either driven out or leave from the group at 1-3 years old, as they reach sexual maturity.

### *How they breed up...*

Cats may produce two, sometimes three litters per year with litter sizes between 1-10 kittens (the average size is approximately 4). So they can build their population once they are established.

### *How they impact in the wild...*

Cats have both harmful and beneficial effects on native fauna. In general, feral cats can be shown to wipe out species in island situations. However it can also be shown that cats reduce the population of other pests such as rabbits and rats.

### *How to catch them...*

The best way to catch feral cats is with a Timms Possum Kill Trap, adapted and baited for catching cats. Soft jaw leg-hold traps can also be very successful, as of course is the old lead bullet.

### *Here at home in the Tuawhenua...*

Our line of traps for possum research in May caught 4 feral cats – two on the same day!!! They're vicious things to kill so take care if you come across one. Jim and Taawi reckon they had adapted to their existence in the wild – with big paws and stocky build – the ultimate killing machine.

***This incidence is a sign that feral cats are growing in number in our ngahere and they will be savaging our birdlife. If you have cats at home then it's a good thing to keep them at home and under control. Don't dump them at Tarapounamu, or at Te Waiiti like we know some people have!!!***

Thanks...

Thanks to Environment Bay of Plenty for their information sheet on feral cats, copies of which are available at our notice board at the shop.