

A quarterly update to the community at large.

December 2019

From Chris Hawkes, our Chair

We recently hosted an evening for local business supporters of the Sanctuary, updating them on our current situation, our immediate plans and acknowledging the importance of their contributions to reaching our common community conservation goals.

In my address, reference was made to the importance of *all* volunteers, whether at the coal face in the Sanctuary, behind the scenes or in governance. Simply put, without our volunteers the Sanctuary could not be where it is today: on the threshold of meeting its primary objective of providing a safe haven for reintroduced native species and enabling established native birds, reptiles and insects to flourish.

The fact that we have been able to overcome the many challenges thrown our way speaks highly to the skills and determination of everyone, not least our donors and sponsors.

Unfortunately the Sanctuary seems to be one of the region's best kept secrets and Trustees and staff are working hard to spread the word further so more people can enjoy what we are creating.



On behalf of the Trustees and staff I extend to you a 'well done and thank you' and a kind wish to you and yours for a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Chris Hawkes
Trust Chair

Overview from Chief Executive Ru Collin

Our current projects include:

- Revenue generation and investment proposal development/distribution.
- Species introductions, planning protocols and requirements.
- Communications – getting our message out: visit us/support us
- Enhancing the visitor experience: better signage, information and maps and a completed Lower Valley Loop Track.

Construction

With generous grants from Lion Foundation, Charis and Fields Pond we have finally been able to get on with construction of a bridge across the front dam so our accessible loop track becomes a genuine loop without rock-hopping!

The bridge and passing bay were fabricated by the bridge contractor Scott Construction (despite the name on the crane!) from steel off-site, then transported to site and lifted into place last week.

Our volunteer teams are also involved in the following: constructing a wheelchair access ramp; fitting a safety rail to part of the dam crest; and landscaping the approach to the bridge. If all goes to plan the Founders' Bridge will be completed before Christmas then we'll only be waiting for Council sign-off and we can use it.



The Dun Mountain slip site was completed some months ago; with generous assistance from Hydra Seeding you can see the grass now covering the site. Thank you to our staff, Trustees, volunteers and Edridge Contracting for helping with this project.

Emergency Fence Repairs

We now have two 11m and one 5m long sections of temporary fence, including the necessary straps and waratah's to allow speedy installation in the event of major fence damage.



Terms We Use

The reader may be interested in clarification of some of the terminology we use - especially around biosecurity of the Sanctuary. See below for a summary of a breach vs an incursion, pests vs predators and more:

Biosecurity – a term to explain the intention of keeping the sanctuary pest free and therefore a site for native wildlife to survive and thrive. The Sanctuary applies the DOC-approved biosecurity plan to monitor, detect and remove pests as and when required.

Breach: any lapse in biosecurity that could have let pests in. Most breaches are caused by adverse events such as rock-fall or trees and branches falling across the fence, gates left open or pests riding

on a vehicle. We are on constant alert for breaches with a 24/7 electronic monitoring system that alerts staff when sensors are triggered on the fence line. We have fence monitoring and repair teams constantly tending to, maintaining and improving the integrity of the Sanctuary's fence.

Pest: any animal that is doing something to damage the native ecosystem. These include mammalian pests such as rodents, mustelids, possums and feral cats as well as some insects such as the German or paper wasps.

Pest Monitoring: we use a range of methods to monitor pests within the Sanctuary ranging from video cameras to tracking cards. Most of our pest monitoring devices are monitoring tunnels, which record footprints left behind on ink pads as animals walk through them. These tracking cards are regularly checked, maintained and replaced by a large volunteer team, and are placed in the sanctuary in a manner guided by our biosecurity system and processes. Pest monitoring by way of Sanctuary-wide surveys last approximately 5 weeks and are carried out at least 3 times per year. Monitoring around the inside of the fence is continuous. Due to current environmental factors, including hungry pests outside the Sanctuary trying to get in, we had Sanctuary-wide monitoring running continuously from late September to Christmas this year.

Detection: Any sign of a pest within the sanctuary is a detection. This could be a footprint on a monitoring card, a scat, fur, a dead animal in a trap or even the sighting of a pest. Once a detection has been made an incursion response is initiated.

Incursion: when a pest is positively detected in the sanctuary. We apply additional resources to eliminate the threat as soon as possible. The response varies depending on the species identified. The topography where the detection is made can have an influence on options taken and time spent in response. The Sanctuary is located on steep terrain, some of it very tough to access on foot. Over the years, volunteers have cut around 135km of service tracks to allow access all over the Sanctuary.

Pest free – Initially the Sanctuary's goal was to be pest free. We had 12 species of mammal in the sanctuary all of which were removed. However as has happened at all other fenced sanctuaries we were unable to keep the mice out, so we are now pest free with the exception of mice. This is unfortunate as mice will have a negative effect on the ecosystem eating insects, fruits and seeds that would have been food for our native species. The presence of mice will not stop any of the planned bird reintroductions.

Biodiversity - Describes the variety of plants and animals. By excluding pests we are allowing native species to thrive increasing the Sanctuary's biodiversity.

Biosecurity Update

We are on constant alert for breaches. We have a sophisticated detection system in place that helps monitor the Sanctuary for unwanted pests, and at present detection surveillance is across the sanctuary. On rare occasions when we do get incursions, they are dealt with on a species-based, evidence-based protocol. We are aiming for pest-free status, with the exception of mice.

During regular monitoring a rat was detected in July on the valley floor. An incursion response was put in place and Sanctuary-wide monitoring was started which detected more rats and a weasel. Sadly these detections meant we were not able to proceed with reintroducing rowi kiwi for the time being. At the time of writing, only one rat detection has been made since mid-November and we will stand down the special response teams before Christmas if no more detections are made.

The number of pests detected on the outside of the fence in recent weeks has been extraordinarily high while inside the fence our native flora and fauna is thriving which gives us great encouragement. This supports that the fence is invaluable despite the pest detections.

Species Introduction

Our focus is now on bringing tīeke (saddleback) and kākārīki (orange-fronted parakeet) back to the Sanctuary. A face-to-face meeting with Iwi to discuss the kākārīki is scheduled for 16 December and, if this goes well, we will be clear to reintroduce this rarest of NZ's native parakeets.



Transition of Members to Supporters

Following a re-focus of our activity earlier in the year, we changed our terminology from Members to Supporters to more accurately reflect what this valuable group does for us.

The Sanctuary Supporter's class is an annual subscription and has been taken up by 190 individuals or families in the last couple of months. We hope to expand this considerably over the coming years. (This is separate to one-off donations for specific activities or purchasing fenceposts).

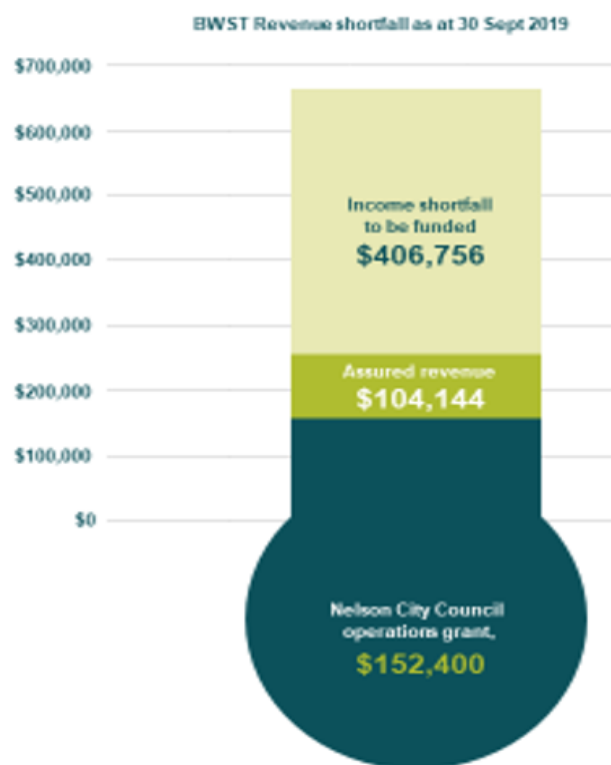
As a sign of our appreciation for past support, we have also distributed more than 1500 Supporter's cards valid until July 2020 (the annual roll-over) and are seeing positive reengagement of these past supporters, both domestically and internationally, through additional contact and the website being live again.

Charging the Public

Following careful deliberation, the decision has been made to begin charging public entry fees. This will be applied when the sanctuary is commercially ready which will be around the time the new bridge is officially opened, early next year. Our pricing model will be tiered with Nelson Tasman residents being charged approx half the rate of national and international visitors.

Charging is necessary to assist with the cost of running the Sanctuary.

- The development of the fully accessible Lower Valley Loop Track has been \$503,000 over three years. We consider this vital to ensure the Sanctuary is available to everyone to enjoy even with limited mobility.
- Biosecurity threats that need immediate response occur in no predictable pattern. One example is the Dun Mountain slip which cost us \$200,000 to remediate over last two years (this is not including the very generous support of contractors and suppliers) involving approximately 2000 volunteer hours.
- The annual costs of managing the Sanctuary at a minimal level of service, including supplying the resources for appropriate biosecurity are shown in the diagram.



Wasp Wipe-out

The Sanctuary will be running its third wasp wipe-out early in the new year. This involves putting Vespex out in 1,000 bait stations across the Sanctuary and then collecting up what is left one week

later. Last year it was very effective with one informal survey showing that it reduced wasp numbers by 97%. This is great for the sanctuary ecosystem and also for the well-being of volunteers working on the tracks.

If you're interested in helping out, please contact murray.neill@brooksanctuary.org.nz to get your name on the list.

Our Visitor Experience

Until Christmas day the Sanctuary public hours will be 10am-4pm, and from boxing day to 9 February, these will be extended to seven days a week 9am-5pm all week – and until 8pm each Wednesday - so visitors might immerse themselves in the evening birdsong.

Sanctuary signage is currently being refreshed to include additional health and safety notices, better wayfinding pointers, flora and fauna identification and more information along the main track about points of interest.

Digital Promotion

Our website went live last month after being down for some time while we secured funding. If you haven't already had a look, check it out at www.brooksanctuary.org.nz. We welcome your feedback.

Instagram is reactivated and looking amazing due to the extraordinary talent and generosity of photographer (and Sanctuary fan) Andy MacDonald. And our facebook page is more active now, keeping our friends updated on what's happening in the Sanctuary. Please follow us when you have the chance. You can link to Instagram and to our facebook page via our website.

Print Promotion

The Sanctuary features in three publications this summer, each with large circulations to locals and/or visitors: the Summer Events Guide (produced by Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council – 50,000 circ); the official Nelson Tasman Visitor Guide (by Nelson Regional Development Agency – NRDA – 50,000 circ); Experience Nelson Tasman – Excite version (The Visual Guides). We are very appreciative of the support of these organisations and publications.

We are also delighted to have recently become a partner with the NRDA.

Volunteer Introduction Booklet

An introduction booklet for volunteers has been developed to provide them with a general overview of the sanctuary as well as information on the various volunteering components.

The Trust would like to acknowledge the input of our health and safety committee, staff, volunteers Sabrina Marshall, Hans Wiskerke and Barb Beckett, and to the Fx Printroom at NMIT.

Copies for all volunteers are available at the Visitor Center.

Kay's Walking Away

Kay Chapman, a long-time volunteer and BBC member of the sanctuary via her business Chapman Employment Relations, is embarking on a Big Adventure and has named the sanctuary as the cause.

In mid-October Kay donned her tramping boots and sets off from Cape Reinga to walk the entire length of New Zealand on the Te Araroa Track. It's a distance on some 3,000 kms and Kay expects to take around five months to complete it. At time of publishing, Kay had just reached Taumarauni!



Kay has set up a Give a Little page for people to make donations to, with the named benefactor as the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary. We really value this opportunity of getting more profile for the sanctuary and potentially some additional funds.



If you want to support Kay (and us) or know someone who might like to support this great combo, forward them this link <https://givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/a-wildlife-sanctuary-close-to-nelson-city-centre>. Plus check out her blog on her website – it's really interesting reading and the photos brilliant – www.kayontheta.nz or her facebook page 'Kay Chapman' and post her some words of support.

Sponsor Profile - Somerset Retirement Villages

In this segment we offer a chance for our valued sponsors to showcase their organisations:

At Somerset, our retirement villages are designed to make sure you get the best out of your retirement. You can continue to live the life you choose, with the added peace of mind of living in a warm and friendly community.



At 1 Hill Street North, Richmond, we are developing our newest village in Nelson Tasman, Somerset Richmond Ranges. Its central location in a tranquil Hill Street setting offers beautiful views of the ranges. The first of our brand-new homes are available now and selling fast. We currently have three stunning new show homes available to view. We're open 7 days so call in anytime.

Thank you Somerset for your ongoing support of the Sanctuary!

Sanctuary in the Cathedral

Nelson Cathedral's Festival of Christmas Trees is running until the end of January and once again we have the Sanctuary represented in this delightful display. Thanks to volunteers Jane Stevens and Claire Williams our tree is decorated with about 100 birds plus a few reptiles and butterflies and a sprinkling of glittery bits and pieces. We would like to thank the Cathedral for the opportunity to take part in this popular festival, enjoyed by hundreds of local people and visitors every year.

New Year's Day walk

Join us for a stroll around the new Lower Valley Loop track with an exit across the new bridge (if open) on New Year's Day. If interested, contact Dave at caroldavid@slingshot.co.nz

And so we farewell to 2019. We encourage you to think about:

- **Volunteering** with us – either individually or in a group – there are 10 different task groups!
(www.brooksanctuary.org.nz/get-involved/become-a-volunteer)
- **Gifting** a fencepost to someone for Christmas – a legacy gift
(www.brooksanctuary.org.nz/get-involved/sponsor-a-fencepost)
- **Visiting** us to enjoy this beautiful place

We have tried to keep the detail light in this newsletter. If you would like further information on anything – particularly how to get involved and the options of volunteering tasks - please contact us or have a look at our website.

Thank you for your underlying support of this significant community project.
Have a great Christmas and New Year holiday and let's have an outstanding 2020!



Ru Collin
Chief Executive