
Connect the Dots Update July 2020

The Forest Bridge Trust <clare@theforestbridgetrust.org.nz>
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Eastern Connectivity Project Update



It's been a year since we held our community hui at Matakana Primary School to share the findings of the research we'd carried out in 2018 to establish the *Eastern Connectivity Project*. You've received this email because either you attended that hui or you've been involved with the research, or you're connected to The Forest Bridge Trust in some way.

The objectives of the research were to find out:

- what types of birds are likely to move between Tawharanui and Mount Tamahunga;
- what sort of ecological areas exist between these two points and what's needed to restore habitat gaps;
- what sustainability gaps are there in the ecosystems;
- the existing level of landowner and community engagement in ecological connectivity.

Recommendations for a monitoring programme, practical actions and targeted priority areas for action also came out of the research.

An encouraging level of interest, support and enthusiasm for the Project was shown at the hui, which inspired us to move forward. We began planning: from feedback and engagement expressed by local landowners in each of our proposed hubs, we committed to establishing seven hubs, which we've named

1. Matakana East
2. Matakana River
3. Tamahunga South
4. Whangateau
5. Takatu Peninsular
6. Omaha
7. Tāwharanui halo.

We were fortunate to receive funding from Auckland Council for the Project which has enabled us to employ a Project Co-ordinator and cover some of the cost of rolling out the Project for two years.

Then Covid-19 arrived!

Now, with that set-back behind us, we're ready to kick off!

Next Steps - monitoring and pest control workshops

At the end of the Project's two year timeline we need to know how effective our efforts have been, so we'll be carrying out baseline monitoring in the first three hubs over the coming months. Thankfully we have a conservation biologist to lead this work. The monitoring involves exploring the hub, observing and recording birdlife, vegetation, etc. We need lots of eyes and ears to help with this, so if you're interested in being a monitoring volunteer, contact Virginia at virginia@theforestbridgetrust.org.nz

Also in the next few months, we'll be running pest control workshops for landowners in each hub. These workshops are free and each landowner will receive a Timms trap (for possums) and a DOC200 (for mustelids) to put on their property. In the workshop, you'll learn about pest behaviour; best baits to

use; best place to put traps; how to safely and effectively use the two traps. The workshops are also great for bringing neighbours together and creating a community with a common cause – protecting your beautiful area!

If you'd like to know more about what's going to happen in your area, please contact:

Marguerite Vanderkolk

Project Coordinator

marguerite@theforestbridgetrust.org.nz

027 528 4658.

And if you haven't yet downloaded the research findings that were presented you can still do so [here](#)

Ngā mihi,

The Forest Bridge Trust team.

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