

A network of volunteers prepared to help maintain  
the historic and indigenous natural features of the reserve and adjoining slopes  
Website: <http://www.waiwhetu.org>

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**Hayward  
Scenic  
Reserve**



## **Newsletter No 4**

**Social Activities:** The BBQ held at John and Kathleen McKenzie's home on 8 April was a great success, enabling several new members to get to know Rosie Doole and Robert Ashe, as well as many of the volunteers in our group. We were treated to a dramatic lightning display when a thunderstorm arrived late in the evening. I envisage arranging another BBQ get-together in the spring when milder weather prevails.

**Steps at Tyndall Creek Crossing:** The steps referred to in Newsletter 3 were duly installed by HCC's contractor, Excell, and are much appreciated by visitors walking this section of the Hayward Track.

**Working Party:** On the morning of Saturday 15 April eight volunteers met at the Tyndall Creek crossing to redirect the course of the creek through the huge mound of silt and rotten rock debris brought down by the February 2004 storm and deposited just below the present crossing. That storm and subsequent high flows caused on-going severe scouring out of sections of the historic Hayward Track alongside the true right bank of the creek. To rectify this, a more direct course was excavated, its sides being reinforced by the placement of rocks gathered from the huge pile of flood debris. Inspection shows that this new course has effectively coped with the high flow from the recent heavy rains. The working party also remedied the damage to the Hayward Track by gathering rocks and finer material, filling in and building up the scoured out sections. The junction of the Hayward and Homestead Loop tracks was altered to make better use of the modified topography resulting from a February 2004 storm slip. Windfall tree debris was removed from the creek bed between the present crossing and the waterfall, and heavy rocks were placed in the undermined base of the high true left bank of this section of the creek to help prevent its collapse. Amazingly, all this was accomplished by lunchtime, thanks to the dedication of and hard work done by everyone involved.

**Weed Mapping:** Making full use of the historic track network coupled with some old fashioned bush and scrub bashing, Robert Ashe has identified the areas between the Mawson and Te Whiti firebreaks where there are nasty weed infestations. He has also been through the Mawson catchment, Griffins Ridge and Leightons Gully areas and is well aware of the massive snakefeather problem now existing in some places there. His good work will help determine where best to direct the resources available during the next weed spraying season.

**Pest Plant Control:** HCC has provided me with a supply of *Vigilant* herbicide gel packed in applicator bottles. This is ideal for dabbing on the stumps of woody weeds (e.g. mature banana passionfruit vines, blackberry, boneseed, wattle, gorse, young wilding pines) to prevent regrowth when cut off close to the ground. Most has already been issued to volunteers coping with pest plants in their adopted track areas, but I have a further 2 bottles still available for allocation.

Winter/early spring is a good time for undertaking some forms of pest plant control work. With the moist ground now soft, many weeds can be more easily pulled or levered out roots and all, and either carried out for disposal or securely draped in a tree branch to dry out and die. This applies particularly to young snakefeather, young banana passionfruit vines, small boneseed plants, gorse seedlings, and the seedlings of wilding pines and the 3 species of wattle. I am happy to assist should anyone want guidance in how to recognise any of these pest plants.

**Track Signs:** Thanks to the initiative and hard work of Annette Beattie and Phil Cowley, many of the tracks in the reserve now have signs giving the track name and in some cases where the track leads to. The signs are easy to read, with black printed lettering on white rectangular rigid plastic sheet off-cuts.

**Public Access to/from Tyndall St:** HCC's land ownership records show there is a legal public right-of-way (R.O.W.) to the reserve between No's 31 and 33 Tyndall St. Some years ago the original owner of No 33 encroached by erecting his street fence across the R.O.W. and placing a garden shed further back on it. Soon after, when this encroachment was investigated by HCC officers, they concluded that the instability and extreme steepness of a section of the land traversed by this R.O.W. rendered it quite unsuitable for public use. The encroachment was therefor allowed to stand. Recently, with several of our volunteers being resident in Tyndall St and Hayward Tce, it was decided we should again examine the feasibility of using this R.O.W. to give them more convenient access to the reserve. A new member of our group, George Scott, an active tramp and owner of the Whites Line property on the north east boundary of the R.O.W., thoroughly explored the terrain. While happy to have allowed a modest encroachment across his boundary if this enabled a practical access route to be put in place, he found even this was not feasible. Although legal public access from Tyndall St must remain in the "too hard basket", John & Irene Rutter, who are both strong supporters of our group, are happy to facilitate its work in the reserve by allowing volunteers direct access through their property by prior arrangement.

**Homestead Loop Track:** Property boundary maps obtained when looking into the Tyndall St R.O.W. matter revealed that parts of the Homestead Loop Track at the bottom of Tyndall Ridge actually cross over the boundary of George Scott's Whites Line property. Given the historic nature of this track, George is happy to allow this relatively minor encroachment. His next-door neighbour, Greg Gilmour, is also happy to allow the public to continue using the track curving north-eastwards (see map) from the Homestead Loop to the main Haywards Track, much of which is actually on his property.

#### **Other Track Information:**

*Ngapunga Track:* Martin Gribble, another new member of our group, has access to sample quantities of aggregate submitted for testing. Rather than see these dumped after testing, he intends to carry up and spread this material on the slippery clay parts of the Ngapunga Track.

*Rewa Rewa Track:* Thanks to a sustained effort by Pam Mayston and her network of friends, a great deal of the encroaching vegetation along this popular track has been well cut back and access to/from the Te Whiti firebreak improved. Much *Vigilant* has been used!

*Mawson Ridge Track:* Greg Young has done sterling work on improving the access to and along much of this previously hard to find track.

*Leightons Gully Track:* Another new member, Murray McGregor, has been working hard here on what I believe was an old historic horse trail. He has placed easy to follow markers in places at the upper end where the track narrows and users could be confused by following no-exit grid-line trails made by pest control contractors. He has also cleared a lot of unwanted vegetation growing on the lower half from which there is a link out on to the Wainuiomata Hill Road.

*Griffins Ridge Track:* The upper section of this track, from the Mawson Catchment Track junction up to the firebreak below the telecommunication masts, is open and fairly straightforward to follow. However, the section below the junction is currently impassable due to a combination of massive snakefeather infestation, storm damage and general vegetation growth. A complete re-cut and marking is now needed, and a new link to the Mawson St exit created entirely on public land.

**Bellbirds:** Sightings of lone birds have been reported ranging between Cleary St in the north to Mawson St in the south. I fear they are lonely males, and that future breeding in our reserve may depend upon pairs choosing to migrate here from areas (e.g. MIRO's intensive pest controlled area in EHRP) where females have not been wiped out by predation. Bellbirds are strictly monogamous.

I welcome any suggestions and comments concerning our reserve.

Russ McStay

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