

Annual Review 2015



The Forest
Bridge Trust
'protect, enhance, connect'

Who we are

The Forest Bridge Trust (TFBT) is a farmer-initiated environment trust that supports outstanding land stewardship across the narrowest part of the tail of Maui's fish (the North Island) – from west to east as a bridge of green from the Kaipara to the Pacific Coast.

The Trust's mission is to support farmers and other land owners in the ongoing restoration of their native forests and wildlife, and to protect their rivers, streams and wetlands, all within a productive, profitable and sustainable farming landscape. This is done for the benefit of the wider Auckland and New Zealand communities.

Vision of The Forest Bridge Trust

A connected landscape on productive land with healthy forest and flourishing indigenous wildlife from the Kaipara Harbour to the Pacific coast.

Mission of The Forest Bridge Trust

Through practical landowner-centred support, to protect, enhance and connect existing forest remnants and wetlands by enabling fencing, planting, weed management and pest control.

Contact details

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Foreword

2015 Summary

This was the first full year of operation for The Forest Bridge Trust and we accomplished all of our important goals and set the stage for future growth and development.

What have we done so far:

- Established **The Forest Bridge Trust** as a legal entity with charitable trust donor status.
- Developed a strategic plan.
- Held a priority setting workshop with selected local farmers from the Hoteo Catchment and ecology experts to share knowledge.
- With the assistance of local farmers identified four mature native bush blocks for fencing and protection.
- Explored and established working partnership with organisations aligned to our vision and goals.
- Launched the CatchIT Schools programme in which students at four local schools were trained in pest control and given traps to deploy in their local communities.
- Began collaboration with the University of Auckland to develop and deploy software to capture and analyse CatchIT data for further study in CatchIT schools.
- Secured funding for the CatchIT programme and for bush block fencing from Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment Unlocking Curious Minds Fund, the Rodney Local Board and the Regional Environmental and Natural Heritage Funds.
- Developed community awareness through several new media articles and a media video featuring local farmers Scott and Philippa Innes.
- Arranged a “Walk Through” of Scott Innes’s bush block for Conservation week.
- Established TFBT web site (www.theforestbridgetrust.org.nz) to provide people a place to go to ask questions about the trapping and other Trust activities and to document our activities and achievements.
- Formalised operations and developed policies and procedures.

What we want to do in 2016

Community Focus Areas

- Our CatchIT Schools program has been a great success; we want to expand and consolidate the programme into four new schools this year.
- We will hold trapping workshops in the communities where the CatchIT School programme was held last year, to launch CatchIT Communities.
- We will continue our partnership with the University of Auckland to deploy the cloud-based data capture, reporting and analysis portion of the programme.
- Continue to seek and receive funding to support the programme.

Landowner Initiatives

- We are on track to have two identified areas fenced and predator controlled using the funding we have received.
- We will report back to those farmers/landowners that attended our inaugural meeting at Wellsford.
- Continue to seek new funding sources for fencing and bush protection.

Trust Operations

- Continue to build partnerships in the community to raise the awareness of TFBT's activities
- Continue to formalise our operating procedures and policies.
- We will maintain our values and not lose sight of our vision.

I would like to thank all the **Trustees and the members of the steering committee** for their valuable efforts and wonderful commitment in making **The Forest Bridge Trust** a reality operating in the community.

I would also like to thank the **Auckland Council** for their wonderful support from the beginning and believing in our dream.

Special thanks must go to **Annette Lees** for her valuable guidance and patience in helping us with our strategic plan.

Also special thanks must go to **Barry Hopkins** for the very generous work he has done to set up the Trust at his own cost and to supply legal advice.

Signed

Kevin Adshead, Chair

Strategic Focus Areas: Achievements in 2015

This section described 2015 Trust activities in more detail and includes planned activities for 2016. The Trust has two strategic focus areas: community initiatives, target areas and capability enhancement.

• **Community Initiatives**

Purpose

Community initiatives are designed to:

- Create broad community support, understanding and interest in the overall programme
- Develop projects that have high ecological impact across a landscape scale that many local residents and a diversity of the community can engage with.
- Advance the vision, principles and practices of The Forest Bridge Trust through advocacy, communication and capacity development.

Outcomes for 2015

- A priority setting workshop was held, with selected local farmers from the Hotoe catchment and ecology experts, to share knowledge. With the assistance of a consultant ecologist we drew together a way to prioritise our work.
- We focused on establishing our primary school-centred initiative, **Catch-IT Schools**. We engaged the services of a very experienced **Environmental Educator, Liz Maire**, to put together the program to establish pest control in our schools and their communities. This has been developed in collaboration with **Rachel Fewster, Assistant Professor at the University of Auckland**. The pilot project was run in three schools – Tauhoa, Tomarata and Kaipara Flats Schools in Term 3, 2015.
- The trust hosted a Thank You morning tea for everyone who had supported the pilot project.
- Members of the trust attended **Agricultural Days** at the three schools to spread the trapping message further into the community.
- Our thanks to the Auckland Council and many others who supported this work.
- A report on this project was sent to the Auckland Council.

Focus for 2016

- In collaboration with **Rachel Fewster, Assistant Professor at the University of Auckland** we applied to the **Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment Unlocking Curious Minds Fund**. Although we were unsuccessful in the first round, we have very recently been informed that our

application was successful. The main thrust of this work is in giving children much greater access to the STEM subjects so the emphasis for these funds is on the development of the technology around pest trapping.

- Members of the trust are working closely with DOC and their online trapping program. A map of the Forest Bridge Trust area has been developed. Members of the trust have attended a DOC workshop to learn about the new phone application, **Walk the Line**, for efficient and accurate download of trapping catches. Rachel and her team will develop the analysis tools for the trapping data.
- We will support our environmental educator to take the CatchIT programme into four new schools in 2016. There will be on-going support in the new communities as well with advice and trapping workshops as needed.

• **Landowner Initiatives**

Purpose

Landowner initiatives are designed to:

- Link sites with other forests and wetlands to build a bridge of enhanced natural habitat across the catchment.
- Protect specific high value habitats on private land based on rigorous ecological assessment
- Support individual farmers and landowners to make decisions and implement changes to enhance natural habitat on their land.

Outcomes for 2015

- Funding is a critical first step. The Trust focused this year's initiatives primarily on a "significant natural area" (SNA) of native bush that required fencing, being **Scott and Philippa Innes** Bush on the Hoteo River
- Identified other strategic areas for fencing being on the property of **Tony and Krista Rodgers** linking their piece of remnant bush to Atuanui. We also provided pest control advice and support by providing of 4 DOC 200 traps and 2 cat traps.
- **Scott and Philippa Innes** were approached and decided to front a video and give media coverage explaining their situation
- Members of the trust communicated and then met with **Jon Hampson**, Coordinator and **David Mules**, Programme Manager, of **Reconnecting Northland** to explain our strategy and accepted their probable commitment of **\$10,000** to our first fencing project.
- Applied to both the **Regional Environmental and Natural Heritage Fund** to assist with funding for fencing these bush remnants.
- Met with the **CEO and Chairman of Queen Elizabeth II National Trust** to discuss collaboration in terms of covenant documents and changes to that

document to protect all funders if the farmers gains financially from the contribution to his fencing by subdividing his property.

- Arranged a “Walk Through” of the bush block with **local QEII representative Chris Floyd**, and **local botany specialists Maureen Young, Gordon Perry and John Lambert** to establish the guided walking route for an **Open Day at this site on November 8 for Conservation Week**.
- Met with and showed **Craig Pratt, Auckland Council** the site for assessment for RENH fund

Focus for 2016

- We will report back to those farmers/landowners who attended our inaugural meeting at Wellsford and with their help look at prioritising the next areas of native bush to seek funding for according to the strategic plan.

Governance and Operations: Achievements in 2015

Governance and Operations in 2015 had four main components: establishing the Trust itself; the voluntary work of the trustees; communication and promotion of the Trust; and partnerships and funders.

The Forest Bridge Trust was set up and registered on 24th November 2014.

The appointment of Trustees was by invitation and they are:-

- Kevin Adshead (Chair),
- Gill Adshead,
- Thomas Stazyk,
- Chris Roberts,
- Shona Myers.
- Liz Maire.(awaiting registration)

The focus of the trust for 2016

- Growing at the right pace so our capacity is not outstripped by opportunity
Our role is:-
 - ❖ - to be useful to farmers,
 - ❖ - to be well -informed,
 - ❖ - to be action-oriented,
 - ❖ - to be practical.

- To put systems in place e.g., delegation and spreading the load so we don't burn out.
- Employing/ finding a person to look after the day to day enquiries and keeping the web site and any social media efforts up to date.
- Looking for opportunities for future partnerships.

1. Work of the trustees

The trustees, together with the working group, have been developing a strategic plan to be the guiding document for who we are and what we do.

This plan has been guided and put together with the help of Annette Lees and Shona Myers with the grateful financial assistance of the Auckland Council

Focus for 2016

1. To complete the Strategic Plan. The final portion of our strategic plan (i.e., Capacity and delivery, Policies and procedures, Management/strategy implementation and Implementation policies) needs to be finalized.
2. Secure the services of an auditor and get audited accounts.

2. Communication and promotion

The FBT website is helping to raise the profile of the trusts work and together with an active face-book page, we are hoping to inform and display what we are achieving.

Focus for 2016

- Communication strategy to establish our key messages and for marketing.
- Engage a person to maintain our communication networks.
- Ensure consistent, professional, accurate and positive communications to all stakeholders and the community.

3. Partnerships and funders

Consultation with the Hoteo farmers will enable us to identify projects and we will identify and seek specific funding requirements for these projects.

We will seek funding to provide trapping equipment for our CatchIT Communities programme which will be promoted in our CatchIT Schools communities this year.

We will also seek funding for administrative support (e.g., accounts, funding applications, web site maintenance, and communications) in order to free up the trustees to work with the community and landowners.

Operations Report

for

The Forest Bridge Trust

For the period – April 1, 2015 to
December 31, 2015

Opening Bank Balance		\$ 0.00
INCOME		
Other Income	7,658.45	
Subscriptions	120.00	
Donations	2,290.00	
Grants	5,357.30	
EXPENDITURE		
Administration	(510.00)	
Interest	(2.67)	
Pest Control	(8,095.04)	
Contractors	(4,600.00)	
OTHER		
GST		
Net GST	707.81	
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Closing Bank Balance		<hr/> \$ 2,925.85 <hr/>