

Annual Review 2019



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.

Our Vision

A connected landscape with healthy forest and flourishing indigenous wildlife from the Kaipara Harbour to the Pacific Coast.

Our Mission

Through practical landowner-centred support, enable the protection, enhancement and connection of forest remnants and wetlands.

Contact details

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FOREWORD

2019 Summary

2019 was a very busy year for the Trust. We accomplished many important goals (exceeding expectations in some areas) and set the stage for future development and growth.

See the following page for an overview of our achievements.

What we want to do in 2020

- 15 kilometres riparian and bush margin protected from stock
- Support for 8 existing hubs is maintained and halos of protection around them are grown
- 3 new hubs and 1 new network are supported – gradually shifting from the engage to enable phase
- 3 schools are engaged in trapping through the CatchIT schools programme
- One to one pest control support is provided for 5 strategically important landowners
- A monitoring programme will be further developed to measure progress with fencing, weed and pest control and volunteer effort.
- Stage two of the Eastern Connectivity Project will be undertaken

I would like to thank all the Trustees, contractors, advisors and volunteers for their valuable efforts and wonderful commitment and dedication in making The Forest Bridge Trust a reality operating in the community.

Thanks also go to:

Auckland Council
Auckland University
CUEhaven
Department of Conservation
Farmlands
Foundation North
Geographic Business Solutions
Gotcha Traps
Hunting & Fishing
Sustainable Business Network – Million Meters stream project

Mataia Restoration Project
Ministry for the Environment
Living Waters
NZ Landcare Trust
Reconnecting Northland
Rodney Local Board
Waikato University
Whitebait Connection
Wharehine Group

.....and the wonderful schools, landowners and communities who have jumped on board CatchIT Schools and CatchIT Communities.



Kevin Adshead
Chairperson
The Forest Bridge Trust



**THE FOREST
BRIDGE TRUST**
'protect, enhance, connect'

Highlights 2019

BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

253



**new students
participated
in the Catch IT
programme
(2 schools)**

2



**Pest Control
Parent
Workshops
held**

6



**Community
workshops
held**

BUILDING THE BRIDGE

support
continued
for

2



**existing
hubs**

\$338,000



**funding
received.**

4.7kms



of fencing completed

1,214

Traps deployed

33.7ha

**of
bush/wetland
protected**



4,689

**volunteer hours
donated**

2,559

Pests Caught



3

**new hubs
initiated**

2019 REVIEW

This section describes the 2019 Trust activities in more detail.

THEMES

The Forest Bridge Trust's long-term vision is a connected landscape with healthy forest and flourishing indigenous wildlife from the Kaipara Harbour to the Pacific Coast.

In 2019 the Trust had two identified themes, which provided focus for the work of the Trust within this period; building the bridge and TFBT capacity and learning.

BUILDING THE BRIDGE

Desired outcome by 2020

The Trust builds *hubs* of protected biodiversity supported by an engaged community

These outcomes will be achieved through a four-step process

Engage

A 'spark of interest' in taking action to fence and control pests is ignited amongst landowners and the community

Commit

- Landowners committed to protecting biodiversity on their land
- Individuals willing to support local landowners are identified

Enable

- Funding secured for fencing and pest control projects
- Advisory services are put into place (eg pest control advisors)
- Resources (ie for fencing and trapping) are provided
- Information and education are provided (eg CatchIT programmes)

Connect

A connected and self-sustaining network supports landowners in ongoing biodiversity protection

Desired Outcomes for 2019

- A monitoring programme will be further developed to measure progress with fencing, weed and pest control and volunteer effort. This will incorporate landscape wide mapping of fencing projects, photo points of forest and wetland projects, recording traps, areas under pest control and measuring community engagement.
- 2 schools are engaged in trapping through the CatchIT schools programme
- 2 pest control workshops are held for parents
- Support for 2 existing *hubs* is maintained, and *halos* of protection around them are grown.
- 4 new *hubs* are supported – gradually shifting from the engage to enable phase
- 4 areas of interest are explored – future opportunities that will enable the connection of *hubs* and connection of *networks*

- 5 pest control workshops will be held in communities that are able to become 'quickly independent'.
- Traplines in 3 geographic areas will be set up. Corporate volunteers will be recruited, trained and empowered to undertake the ongoing maintenance of these lines
- Trap data will be collected and mapped
- 25ha hectares of bush remnants and wetlands protected, and land retired from farming
- 2.5 kilometres riparian and bush margin protected from stock
- Stage one of the Eastern Connectivity Project will be undertaken

Outcomes Achieved in 2019

- ✓ A monitoring specialist has been engaged to measure progress with fencing, weed and pest control and volunteer effort.
- ✓ 2 schools engaged in trapping through the CatchIT schools programme
- ✓ 2 pest control workshops held for parents
- ✓ Support for 2 existing hubs has continued – halos of protection have been significantly built around one
- ✓ 2 new hubs have been developed and are now being actively protected by their community. A further hub is being developed and support has been provided for an existing community group already protecting a hub
- ✓ 3 potential hubs have been explored, along with a potential network
- ✓ 3 pest control workshops have been held in communities able to become 'quickly independent'. Planning work has been completed for a further 2 workshops
- ✓ Traplines in 3 geographic areas have been set up and are now actively maintained.
- ✓ Trap data continues to be collected and mapped
- ✓ 33.7ha hectares of bush remnants and wetlands protected, and land retired from farming
- ✓ 4.7 kilometres riparian and bush margin protected from stock
- ✓ Stage one of the Eastern Connectivity Project has been completed

CAPACITY AND OPPORTUNITY

Desired outcome by 2020

The Trust improves its practice by sharing and learning with other landscape scale projects.

Opportunities to advance the vision of the Trust are planned for and explored.

This will be achieved in three ways:

Sharing and Learning

TFBT contributes to other like-minded projects to build its own capacity and share knowledge and skills.

Growing

- Partnerships are developed with public good organisations
- Funding opportunities are identified and explored to grow the capacity of TFBT

Exploring and Planning

Future opportunities to enable the connection of hubs and creation of networks are explored and planned for.

Desired Outcomes for 2019

- TFBT representatives will share the TFBT story and learnings with other landscape-scale ecological connectivity initiatives when appropriate
- TFBT representatives will attend 2 conferences or regional/national sharing initiatives
- A funding strategy will be created
- 4 areas of interest within the TFBT area of interest will be explored – future opportunities that will enable the connection of *hubs* and connection of *networks*

Outcomes Achieved in 2019

- ✓ TFBT representatives have attended 1 conference and 4 regional/national sharing initiatives
- ✓ TFBT representatives have shared the TFBT story and learnings with various other landscape-scale ecological connectivity initiatives on at least 3 formal occasions
- ✓ A funding strategy has been created
- ✓ 5 hubs and 2 potential networks within the TFBT area of interest have been explored for delivery in 2020

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

Governance and Operations has four main components: the Trust itself; work of the trustees; communication and promotion of the Trust; and partnerships and funders.

The Trust

Outcomes Achieved in 2019

- ✓ A fundraising strategy has been completed
- ✓ Support for GIS and database management is now in place
- ✓ A second Community Facilitator has been recruited

Work of the Trustees

Outcomes Achieved in 2019

- ✓ Two newsletters to recipients of free traps have been completed

Partnerships and Funders

The Forest Bridge Trust has proven capable of securing funding. Our strengths in this area are due to our:

- professionalism
- strategic focus
- proven skills (particularly in delivery of projects)
- our strategic focus aligns well to current political topics. i.e pest free
- proven capabilities at reporting results

Outcomes Achieved in 2019

- ✓ \$338 000 of funding was secured in 2019.
- ✓ Partnerships have been developed with private enterprises interested in supporting the work of TFBT

LEARNINGS and REFLECTIONS

During 2019 the Trust undertook many new activities and projects. Below are some of learnings and reflections from along the way:

Hubs

This was the second year TFBT has run the hubs programme. It continues to be a great success.

Learnings

- Every hub is different. Therefore it is important that TFBT remains flexible, ensuring we are able to adapt the way we work to accommodate the needs of each hub.
- Communities that are encouraged to join together in pest control for their own rohe, then look beyond their project to see what other opportunities exist. For example the halo surrounding Logues Bush has grown extensively as landowners look to expand trapping on their own land and also actively look for ways to support others to reduce pest numbers.
- It is important to involve families in traplines, they enjoy the social aspect and the children thrive on it (we now have family groups trapping in two separate hubs)
- A direct approach to landowners by knocking on their doors does work. For example a verbal workshop invitation delivered by door knocking was used for the McElroys project. The workshop was very well attended, with good reports of community interest.
- People like to hear their trapping results, it's important to give them accurate and regular feedback on what's being caught as a group.

- Some projects take a while to find the right path or even location, however patience is rewarded. For example the Kaukapakapa Scouts expressed an interest in protecting Omeru Reserve. Unfortunately this was not possible due to kauri dieback issues. However with perseverance a suitable reserve for the Scouts to adopt and protect has been found.
- As a neutral organisation with a broad geographical base we can be effective in bringing together a community in disagreement to find a way forward with a contentious issue.
This occurred with the Dunns Bush hub where the presence of pigs was a contentious issue for the community. TFBT offered to support the community with this issue, and with financial support from Auckland Council, we were able to engage an expert facilitator to lead a community meeting through the issues at hand. The result is a community led working group investigating options to address the issue of pig control.
Having no defined political or interest group affiliations also means that we remain open minded to any opportunities to advance our cause and achieve our vision.

CatchIT Schools

The CatchIT Schools programme has now been running for 5 years. The programme continues to be a success and the opportunity to grow and expand the programme is vast. However we remain mindful of capacity and the need to focus on our strategy.

With this in mind we will begin to consider ways of transitioning the programme into a more family focused model by 2021.

One to one pest control support for strategically important landowners

Individualised support for strategically important landowners has been provided intermittently by TFBT over time. This is addressing an identified need in the TFBT area of interest and continues to be an important role of the Trust.

Learnings

- Challenges sometimes exist in getting the community surrounding owners of large farms to understand the complex reasons why pest control is not being undertaken. A supportive community where these large farm owners are part of a shared solution is important to ensure sustained pest control into the future.
We have found that often owners of large farms do not have the necessary knowledge and time needed to undertake pest control. In the interim TFBT is providing support for these farm owners. We will continue to provide this support and work to develop supportive relationships between the farm owners and the community.
- Developing workable and affordable pest control strategies for the owners of very large areas of land is challenging. For example the large farms in the lower hoteo are often difficult to access and involve vast areas of land.

New Opportunities

As the success of TFBT grows and our public profile builds we are becoming aware of an increasing array of opportunities for further projects, programmes and ways to

expand our work. Managing requests for support and assessing new opportunities in a way that aligns with our strategy and culture is essential.

As a result we have developed a procedure for managing and assessing new opportunities. This involves a decision making matrix where each new opportunity is assessed against key criteria. Each opportunity is also entered into a database where it can be tracked and reviewed for further action.

FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Auckland University
CUEhaven
Department of Conservation
Farm and Lifestyle Centre - Warkworth
Farmlands
Foundation North
Geographic Business Solutions
Gotcha Traps
Hunting & Fishing
Mataia Restoration Project
Ministry for the Environment - Community Environment Fund
Nature Designs
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