

Restoring Biodiversity: a significant project.

I have become involved in this project as a way of contributing to the greening of Hamilton.

Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park (WNHP), Hamilton,
New Zealand

<http://waiwhakareke.co.nz>



The journey to restore 60 hectares of farmland began in 1975 when Hamilton City Council purchased the land, within the city boundary, surrounding Horseshoe Lake. Some 20 years later the wheels are well in motion with volunteers turning more and more of the park's 60 hectares back to its four original ecosystems each year.



Waiwhakareke will be a rich resource for everyone to enjoy - drawing an estimated 85,000 visitors per annum by 2027 and supporting recreation, education, conservation and science. Already WNHP has drawn international recognition. It is one of Australasia's Highly Commended ecological restoration projects, as judged by the Global Restoration Network.

The Four Project Partners

The growth of Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park is managed by four project partners. Representatives of these partners meet as the Waiwhakareke Advisory Group (WAG) to make operational decisions regarding activities on the park. The partners are:

Hamilton City Council (HCC) administers the reserve land that the park is located on. They also look after the operational side of activities on the park including track construction, organisation of plantings and signage.

The Centre for Biodiversity and Ecology Research at the University of Waikato provides scientific advice regarding plantings at the park and water quality of the lake etc. The Centre have set up sample plots within the existing plantings to monitor growth rates. Post Graduate students often undertake work at the park as part of their studies for the University.

Tui 2000 Incorporated is a community group made up of like-minded volunteers committed to restoring Hamilton's biodiversity. Members of the group organise planting volunteers through the Friends of Waiwhakareke group and apply for funding to further grow the park. There is also a group of volunteers who pot up plants for the park. It is critical that the plants be eco-sourced so as to provide a valid seed source for the Hamilton Ecological District in the years ahead.



Waikato Polytechnic provides scientific advice on aspects of the park such as invertebrates. They organise student groups from a variety of study fields to volunteer at the park which in turn helps the students learn more about restoration.

Nga Mana Toopu O Kirikiriroa are not an official partner but provide advice regarding iwi matters at the park. Waiwhakareke is a culturally significant area for local maori and it is important that this is recognised in the park's development.

Critical Milestones

1. Ensuring that the land was gazetted as a reserve under the NZ Reserves Act 1977
2. Supply of ongoing funding for plants and infrastructure including an education centre and walking tracks.
3. Community participation in planting (Autumn / Winter) and releasing of plants (Spring / Summer).



4. Sign off on, and adherence to, a comprehensive Operative Management Plan
5. Publicity through articles, presentations, and submissions to local, regional and central government.
6. Participation in Arbor Day which this year attracted 1700 school children, teachers, parents etc and resulted in 23, 000 plants being put in the ground in 3 hours!

