

VOL. 2 ISSUE 1 - JANUARY 2025

# THE LAKE NEWS

Official Newsletter of Rotokare Volunteers

## View From The Top

BY MIKE WEREN - TRUST CHAIRMAN

Already more than a week into 2025, only 50 weeks until Christmas!

Thanks to everyone for helping out over the holiday period keeping all the important tasks up to date. This enabled staff to take an uninterrupted break.

The trust will be holding their annual strategic planning meeting later in January, reviewing long-term and high-level goals. If anyone has major ideas or suggestions for us to consider, please let Adrian or one of the trustees know.

The purchase of the 20ha land behind the buildings has now gone through. We will continue with the land being leased by the Craig family for now – with some new conditions regarding the use. Eventually we will look at fundraising to further develop this land and incorporate it into the reserve.

The Interactive Education building is reaching a milestone this month with work starting on the actual construction rather than the ground work. Keep an eye on progress.

We're all looking forward to another exciting and rewarding year.

Mike

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## Last month at a glance

As is usual for December it was a busy month.

The lake was opened again for boating for the summer months with the Council reporting water quality to be satisfactory.

The volunteers' Christmas barbeque was enjoyed by a small hardy group with the weather again being a little unkind.

For the first time anyone can remember a rabbit was found to be inside the fence. Even after thorough investigation it is unclear how it found itself on the wrong side of our predator proof fence. Attempts to capture it have not been successful but over the past few weeks there have been no further fresh signs of the intruder. If anyone sights the rabbit or sees fresh signs please report it.

Trainee ranger Fyfe has been busy helping with regular tasks such as trapping, fence checks and tracking cards as well as catching up on some of the other site maintenance work including weed spraying.

The entry gate upgrade project has progressed further with the installation of security cameras. The gates appear to be functioning reliably now after an extended settling in period.

A lizard monitoring survey was successfully conducted during the month with 27 lizards captured and measured.

The sanctuary's Hihi and Saddlebacks appear to have had a good breeding season with reports of many juveniles being sighted. Even a family group of Whiteheads, which included a number of juveniles was sighted near the wetlands boardwalk.

The Peak season tracking card run was conducted over the holiday period with initial reports indicating no predators present. Many thanks to those who gave up holiday time to help.

## Test Your Rotokare Knowledge

1. At Rotokare what does the term "Take a bucket for a walk" refer to?
  - a. Taking water from the lake
  - b. Spreading gravel on the ridge walkway
  - c. Cleaning duties
2. Over the past few years what is the average number of school students that participate in the education program annually?
  - a. 800
  - b. 1800
  - c. 4800
3. In a normal year how many tracking card runs are conducted in the Rotokare sanctuary?
  - a. 3
  - b. 5
  - c. 7

**"If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way."**

**Napoleon Hill**



## Volunteer News

Welcome to the new volunteers who started with us recently, great to have you join the Rotokare family.

Robert Goble and Tyler Greenwood

If you would like to help at Rotokare but don't feel comfortable scrambling up and down hill in the bush there are a couple of opportunities for you:

**Cleaning Roster**, this involves assisting with the cleaning of the public facilities at the lake. The cleaning is done 3 times a week and you would choose how often you helped, once a week, fortnight or month.

**Tracking Card Runs**, assisting with the preparation for the runs, organising volunteers on the day and then reading cards when they are recovered. This work is done on a mix of Sundays and week days.

For further information contact Ross at [volunteers@rotokare.org.nz](mailto:volunteers@rotokare.org.nz)

## Volunteer of the Month

### Ray Willy

I have been a volunteer since 2005, initially helping to set up rat lines and then checked the 80 traps two or three times a month. We were averaging a rat a day. I still have my notebooks, 423 rats caught.

When the fence got the go-ahead, I left the rat lines and helped create the card tunnel lines.

I went to Cambridge a few times to learn from the Maungatautari Sanctuary. I also helped at Bushy Park, staying in their Bunkhouse. I made several trips to Rotorua transporting kiwi eggs. On one trip we had a chick on board.

While the fence was being built, I helped carrying material up. One of the bigger jobs was covering the skirt with dirt. On one occasion the weather packed up and we had to leave a tractor and trailer up there as it was too dangerous to drive it down.

Once the fence was completed the surveillance and stock wires were added. The three areas of land donated by neighbours were planted in Manuka and Karamu. Alex Ballantyne and I made the first jetty on the far side of the lake so that volunteers and gear could be boated to the far end of the lake to plant Menzies Block.

Win Kerr and I built 'the seat' on the highest point of the Ridge Walk after talking about it for months when doing fence checks. I continued doing weekly fence checks for many years till I started to slow up. I have helped with tracking card runs and numerous bird releases.

I have been involved with the education program from the very beginning. I've always loved working with kids (coached kids rugby for years) and as I know a lot of the history of Rotokare I enjoy the school visits.

I feel privileged to have been a part of the Rotokare family for so long. I have been going to 'the lake' since I was a kid as it is only about three quarters of an hour's walk from the family farm. We spent years water skiing with family, neighbours and friends. I love going out there at night kiwi spotting with visitors and friends. Keeping it in the family, I nominate Angela Willy as the next volunteer of the month.



# Looking Ahead

Sunday January 26th - 9:00am - 12.30pm  
Working Bee - Fence line vegetation control.

Sunday February 16th - 9:00am - 12.30pm  
High Risk Tracking Card Run - Cards Out.

Sunday February 23rd - 9:00am - 12.30pm  
High Risk Tracking Card Run - Cards In



## Task List

- Wetland boardwalk mesh to be repaired.
- Line clearing of sanctuary access lines.
- Fence vegetation clearing.
- Regular assistance with tracking card run organisation and card reading.
- Regular assistance with trap checks around the middle of each month when all DOC traps get serviced and rebaited.
- Help with weekly fence checks and trap rebaiting.
- Weed control - Mexican Daisy and Selaginella. See Fiona for details.

Assistance with these tasks would be appreciated.  
If you are able to help please check with Fiona or Kane for further details. [fiona@rotokare.org.nz](mailto:fiona@rotokare.org.nz) or [kane@rotokare.org.nz](mailto:kane@rotokare.org.nz)

## Knowledge Answers

1. (b). Spreading gravel on the ridge walkway 2. (b) 1800 3. (b) 5

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