



Clearing gorse from around a track at the Pauatahanui Wildlife Reserve, an effort much appreciated by Forest and Bird who manage the site and DoC who control the reserve. Left to right: Jonah Tu'uga, Calum MacMillan and Jason McCormick. Photos: Chris Ferkins

One of the shorter (6 month) projects is the development of a walking track along the Roxburgh Gorge. As well as working on this track, the corps members will produce an information pamphlet describing the walk and the historic significance of the area to Maori, Europeans and Chinese.

These seven projects are a good sample of the 19 NZCC pilots, but it is important to realise that the conservation projects are only one part of the Conservation Corps. The Conservation Corps also aims to give young people opportunities for personal development and skill acquisition through participation in conservation activities of lasting benefit to the community.

LOCATION OF NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION CORPS PILOTS



Setting Up and Running A Conservation Corps Project

The Wellington Conservation Corps project is a \$400,000 undertaking – just under \$200,000 for direct costs and about the same for the members' allowances. The value of the work done is much higher because the Corps members are paid an average of only \$2.50 per hour compared to \$9 for a DoC labourer. In addition, we have received much welcome sponsorship, particularly from Shell and Monsanto.

The project was put together in a fortnight from the time a meeting of five Wellington regional branches decided what activities should be undertaken and who should prepare what, to when the application was lodged.

Our proposal was one of only 19 accepted out of about 150 applications. Having looked at the outstanding quality of the other projects accepted, and some that were not, I think we were pretty lucky. The fact that ours was the only one from a purely voluntary organisation and that we were based in Wellington probably helped.

What has Forest and Bird gained from this project?

- A higher public profile within the overall community, which will hopefully lead to more members and more involvement by members in

Society affairs.

- An opportunity for branches to work regionally on activities which are important to the region and to the country as a whole.
- Better liaison with some very good people in DSIR, DoC, Forest and Bird Head Office, the Queen Elizabeth National Trust and regional organisations. They appreciate outsiders taking an interest and being prepared to help.
- Involvement with 15 very fine young people.
- Knowledge of, and appreciation for, the environment of the region and the conservation challenges it offers. This has been very important to me personally as a new member.

I am looking forward to the continuation of our project next year. I would urge other branches to likewise become involved. If you can't do it on an individual branch basis put in a joint proposal with your neighbours, DoC, the local Polytech or Maori community.

Some points to keep in mind:

- Remember this is a youth development programme, incorporating conservation work, training and education, personal development, recreation and Maoritanga. It is NOT slave labour.

- Anything you do MUST NOT take work away from other people.
- The ideal project would have a diversity of activities and experiences with a common theme.
- Corps members are keen and motivated. It is over to you to keep them that way. They could earn just as much sitting at home watching the telly.
- The supervisor is the key person on whom the success of the project depends. Look for a person with people skills, rather than technical ability.
- Figure on spending at least 10 to 20 hours per week administering the project.
- Be very conservative with your costings. Just to be on the safe side, add 10 percent for contingencies. We have had to absorb more than \$20,000 for education, recreation and Maoritanga. Don't forget about such things as postage, photocopying and advertising costs. A mobile phone has proved very useful.
- Watch running costs like a hawk.
- Be creative.

I know what you're asking yourself. Yes, it's worth the effort.

Colin Ryder

Project Co-ordinator