

The GULLY FIX

October 2012

Signs of spring are all around us and at time of writing we're having some squally spring weather, the cooler weather is good for skiers but tough on lambs. Ground temperatures have been higher than average over winter and weed growth has continued. But also good growing conditions for the more than 10 000 plants which have gone into private gullies this year.

What's On and the Waikato Home and Garden Show

The Gully Restoration Programme will be at the Home and Garden Show this year. The show starts on the 4th October and we're working together with some of our gully restoration service providers (see attached gully contacts) to put together a display of a gully stream; a boardwalk bridge, TerraLock in the stream channel, ecoir geotextile on slopes, local plants, and self setting kill traps for rats and possums. Hope to see you there. www.waikatohomeshow.co.nz
Keep checking the website www.gullyguide.co.nz to keep up to date with other future restoration events.

Plants for gullies scheme

This has been the last season which HCC has a specific budget for the "Plants for Gullies Programme". With support from Regional Council and generous funding from the Waikato River Authority, over 10000 plants have been planted this year thru this programme. Plus many more via the Community Planting Programme and other planting in HCC parks. Fingers crossed we'll find a way to continue to help with plants and other restoration incentives in the future.

Thanks to many submissions from Hamilton restorers the programme will continue to support the great work many of you are doing.

State of the Environment; Tui

Budding blossom around town is feeding the growing tui population and among the tui some budding romance is likely at this time of year. There are many groups of birds around town and it's likely that some have fledged in Hamilton and will hopefully nest here. While it's tricky for us to see differences in male and female tui other than a small difference in size, I'm told the younger tui have smaller white spots so you may be able to pick these. I've had reports of groups of bird which may well be adults with offspring.

What you can do for tui:

Keep planting tui food trees, see <http://www.forestflora.co.nz/birds.html> for a long list of native species especially those that flower in late spring or summer when tui nest. Flax, rewarewa, and others serve this purpose, with kowhai great nectar source. Plus you can trap rats and possums to improve tui fledging chances. Please not e if you currently have one of our Timms Traps which you are not using please return it so we can pass it on to others. This way we can be sure the traps are being kept in constant use. You can also purchase traps from one of our Gully Restoration Service Providers on the accompanying list.



GULLY TIPS

Get involved with the Community Planting Programme

Many of you will have been involved in a Community Planting at some stage in the last ten years or more. Every year thousands of plants are planted, tens of thousands of weeds released and thousands of weeds are removed. Recent successes include almost complete eradication of tradescantia/ wandering dew from Claudlands Bush/ Te Papanui. Massive weed clearing and planting in Seeley Gully as well as supporting the work of Community Restoration Groups (Mangaiti Restoration, Mangakotukutuku Streamcare, and Riverlea Restoration Groups). Work is carried out by diverse groups including many corporate groups and Volunteering Waikato Volunteers. Get involved thru your place of work, via Volunteering Waikato or via the Hamilton City Council website, www.hamilton.co.nz and search Community Planting Registration Form.

It's a great way to get to know parts of Hamilton you wouldn't know existed and to make a great contribution. Contact Gerard Kelly if you have other questions about the Community Planting Programme.

Tracks and Access

Check out the new tracks in Seeley Gully. You can explore the gully from the end of Whyte St of Armagh St with a loop track linking the two. It only take a few minutes on the short part of the loop or a little longer the other way round. You can walk all the tracks in 10 or 15 minutes but you'll want to stay longer and enjoy the area. Alwyn Seeleys back yard restoration of a bare donkey paddock is now a patch of bush in the centre of Hamilton to be enjoyed by all.

Stream and Bank Stability

Thanks again to Waikato River Authority funding we've been able to provide some plants and ecoir geotextile to a number of gully owners. Where slips occur a geo textile mat such as ecoir fibre, in combination with planting can help with surface stability. The geotextile is biodegradable and lasts long enough (2 to 3 years) for plants to become well established. Visit the Home and Garden Show to see a demonstration of how geotextile bags and natural ecoir can be used to stabilize stream banks. Planting grass seed along with natives is a helpful way to quickly establish vegetation, native grasses and sedges such as carex species can be added to grass mixes. Maintaining vegetation cover on steep areas is beneficial, so if you have a steep, wet gully it is important not clear too much at once.

Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park Update

The Arbor Day 2012 plantings are looking good, though with the weather warming up the grass is likely to grow rapidly! Future working bees at the park will involve the releasing of plants now that the planting season itself is over for another year.

What you can do:

The best way to see the site at this time is to attend a working bee. Contact Moira Cursey on m.cursey@xtra.co.nz or phone 07 8465066. www.waiwhakareke.co.nz. Come and join a summer "Pukeko Stomp" to squash down the grass and release this seasons plants. The benefits of stomping the weeds are that the new plants get extra sunlight while the squashed down grass takes less moisture and nutrients out of the soil while maintaining good soil structure. This also avoids evaporation and nutrient loss which you get with bare soil. You can also support Waiwhakareke and keep in touch with events what's on Facebook.

Brighter future for gully restoration in Hamilton

Thanks to all of you who made phone calls, sent in emails and most especially all the submissions which came to council in favour of maintaining the Gully Restoration Programme. I apologise for this very late acknowledgement of the support from many of you which has saved this programme. The renamed Parks and Open Spaces Unit is now finding its feet and we look forward to continuing great partnerships with private residents and other stakeholders. Following on from work in Seeley Gully and Humarie Parks where we've recently had tours we'll be running more workshops tours and education events



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