

The GULLY FIX

February 2012

Greetings and Happy New Year. I hope you've all dried out from the Christmas holidays!, or that you managed to go somewhere where it was sunny! In this Newsletter; February is gully month in Hamilton with lectures tours and other events. Lots of opportunities to visit and learn more about Hamilton gullies. See the attached flyer for more details. Our Gully Contacts have again been updated and we've enclosed the latest Plants for Gullies application form. Remember to have your say in submissions to the Hamilton City Council Long Term Plan, opening 19th March (see tell us what you think at the bottom of page two of this newsletter).

What's On

Make the most of the great opportunities we have coming up in learning more about gully restoration. See the enclosed flyer for all the exiting events that are lined up February. Events range from Thursday evening lectures and workshops, to local gully tours, tours of community and the Hamilton City Council Nursery, the Waikato Herbarium, trips up the Waikato River and the Hakarimata Ranges.

The events are intended to inform as well as to inspire. Get a sense of what our gullies used to look like hundreds of years ago and how to speed up the natural restoration process to develop your own gully into a local ecological paradise of natural biodiversity!

See some of the different approaches to restoration around the city and get a finger on the pulse of what's happening around Hamilton as well what assistance and resources are available all are welcome, bring friends and neighbours. The series will be cheap or free to attend, you just need to register at the Centre for Continuing Education; Email milly@waikato.ac.nz or phone: 07 8585153. This is a great chance to see some impressive restorations and stunning gullies, to have a guided visit to some of our natural areas, and to share in some of the restoration research the University of Waikato Centre for Biodiversity and Ecology Research have been working on, as well as to hear from experts about some of the unique aspects of our gullies.

Check out the website www.gullyguide.co.nz to keep up to date with what's on and contact Tim Newton 8386878 for more information.

Plants for gullies scheme

From all accounts the record rain in December is helping last years planting and I've seen some exceptional growth. Its now time to battle weeds to maintain existing plantings and eradicate problem weeds from areas in preparation for the next planting season from late May onwards.

Please find enclosed an application for the Plants for Gullies Programme. I look forward to record applications this year.

State of the Environment; Tui

There have been a few sightings over December and January which is very encourageing. Hopefully we now have a number of newborn tui in Hamilton. If you're on facebook the Hamilton Halo site is a good way to keep up with Tui activity.



GULLY TIPS

A word on weeds, herbicides and glyphosate. A disadvantage of spraying with glyphosate is that it is very effective at killing grass, which includes Carex species. Most grasses are not a serious threat to restoration plantings can help prevent surface erosion and act as protection from heavy rain fall. In grassy areas simply walking around new plantings every month or two is enough to help plantings establish. Weeds such as those in the Gully Guide should be individually sprayed, so you're just targeting the problem weeds. Glyphosate gel can be an effective way for targeted herbicide application and avoiding overspray. Other chemicals are available, such as Grazon with the active ingredient picloram which does not kill grass. Picloram is the active ingredient in vigilant gel which can persist in the soil for a time so care needs to be taken to use at recommended doses. For safe and effective spraying a Growsafe Course is advisable.

Seed collection the season seems to be a good one for many fruit and flowers and its a great time to start collecting seed, at the moment especially grasses, sedges and flaxes. To learn more about how, when and where to collect and how to propagate see some of the events in February.

What you can do for tui:

Keep planting tui food trees, see <http://www.forestflora.co.nz/birds.html> especially those that flower in late spring or summer when tui nest. Flax, rewarewa, and others serve this purpose, while kowhai is a staple food in September-November.

Tracks and Access

Good access will mean you visit you restoration more regularly. The steep contours which create some challenges also make the gully the most potentially interesting part of you garden.

The next track building workshop is to be held at Humairie Park (access off Cranwell street, starting at 1 pm on Saturday 25th February. Come along to learn and/or participate and check the gully guide website for more details.

We're promoting the proven design of Department of Conservation style tracks and steps. Boxed steps are maintenance free, should last 25 years and help stabilise slopes while providing the all important access.

Stream and Bank Stability

Heavy rain is continuing to cause a few problems around Hamilton. I've seen a couple of slips and slumps and imagine there are more. Rainfall stats tell us that 2011 was a much wetter than average year and 2012 has certainly made a very wet start.

Maintaining vegetation cover on steep areas is very important, so if you have a steep, wet gully it is important not clear too much at once.

Where slips occur a geo textile mat such as ecoir fibre, in combination with planting can help with surface stability. Planting grass seed along with natives is a helpful way to quickly establish some vegetation, native grasses and sedges such as carex species can be added to grass mixes. Now is the time together these seeds, plus I currently have some which are surplus to nursery requirements.

Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park Update

The Waiwhakareke restoration is looking great at the moment, with established plantings powering away and lots of fruit and seed being produced this season.

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

Tell us what you think

With budgetary constraints facing Hamilton City council there is potential for changes to services provided by Hamilton City council. Be sure to have your say on the site below:

<http://getinvolved.hcc.govt.nz/>.

Or go to www.hamilton.co.nz and search notify to be reminded of upcoming submissions such as long term plan submissions coming up in March. If you're not on the computer you can ring 959 9029 and ask to be added to the Long Term Plan Database so you'll be sent a reminder and submission information.

