

The GULLY FIX

March 2011

It's been an incredible growing season after a droughty start to the summer, with a very dry November /December and very wet December/ January. In fact in the six weeks ending mid December there was only 25 mm of rain. In the next six weeks to the end of January we had 330 mm of rain! This has meant a few plant losses in the dry and lots of growth following all the rain and summery weather. Exceptional growth of weeds such as tradescantia and binweed/convolvulus has been a challenge for newly established plants. A word of encouragement if you're feeling a bit over whelmed by weeds: Don't give up, you will get there. It seems that just about every gully restoration goes through a really tough phase, often in the first two or three years of restoration.

In this mailout

Lots of useful information so please read carefully.

- Plants for Gullies application forms are out for Hamilton residents, note the deadline for applications is the end of April this year.
- Gully contacts list, if you're looking for some extra help in your gully.
- A flyer promoting the Seeley Gully Reserve working bee.

What's On

Check out the website www.gullyguide.co.nz to keep up to date with what's on and contact Tim Newton for more information. Coming up on the 26th March is the Seeley Gully Reserve Working Bee. I hope to see some of you there.

Plants for gullies scheme

For those of you with gullies in Hamilton its time to think about an application to our plants for gullies programme. This continues to grow every year, with funding support from Environment Waikato. Please note that applications close at the end of April this year which is a month earlier than usual. This means plants will be available for pickup in June instead of July so you can get them in the ground before the coldest weather in July. This year, also thanks to our Environment Waikato colleagues you can also request a litre of glyphosate herbicide. This will be available along with your plants at Peter Morris's nursery and QE II covenanted restoration in Matangi.

I have visited many of last year's recipients and hope to catch up with the rest of you over the next month or so. It's very encouraging to see the impressive progress being made in gullies all over Hamilton and to share restoration ideas.

State of the Bat Environment

It is hoped that more research and monitoring will soon take place to help us learn more about Hamilton's Long Tailed Bats and what we can do to ensure bats don't lose out as development takes place in the east of the city (Including runway extensions at the airport). Hamilton Echo project are currently conducting a trial to see if bats will live in man made boxes mounted on trees, potentially giving us the opportunity to ensure there are always plenty of nesting and roosting sites.

Tui and Bellbirds

Some of you will have read a few weeks ago about the Tui fledgling spotted in Melville, one of potentially quite a few around town. Unfortunately we also have had a report of a fledgling fatality and suspect a rat. However there are increasing number of Tui being spotted around town which is a credit to the Hamilton Halo project as well as Hamilton restorers turning the tide against weedy gullies and providing additional habitat and food sources.



GULLY TIPS

Check out the Seeley Gully Reserve

Starting with the working bee on the 26th March and continuing as an ongoing project Hamilton City Council will be managing weeds, improving access and adding infill planting for understorey diversity. Although it's a 2 hectare area the principles are the same as in a smaller private restoration (including limited resources!). We're trying to create a model restoration to provide inspiration for private restorers. It's a public gully so you can visit. It been identified as a key ecological site too.

Control of Tradescantia/ wandering dew/ wandering willie:

Restorers have been trialing and refining the tradescantia grave we described in the last mailout. Find a clear area in the bottom of your gully (out of the flood zone). Rake and pull downhill, pile it up and cover carefully with a thick piece of thick black polythene sheeting. A layer of carpet over the top helps keep it weighed down, along with logs, bricks, concrete etc. Jumping up and down on top of the pile helps it rot as well as making you feel good (so I'm told) Keep loading the pile and it keeps rotting down till you have none left on your property!! Can be achieved in a year or two with persistence. If you can't get the neighbours to do the same you still have border patrol. Tradescantia will not grow from seed so can only spread as fast as it can grow and does not send roots far into the ground. Unfortunately it does get washed down streams and the river.



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Rats

Controlling rats is increasingly becoming important as we welcome tui and bellbirds into our gullies. Traps, poison and information is available from contractors and suppliers on the gully contacts list.

Also of interest a researcher at Landcare Research. Has project screening rats for genetic evidence of mutations that might confer resistance against anticoagulant toxins. Phil Cowan would like help from any trap rats. Phil provides collection vials and instructions and just needs a little bit of tail.

Even a small number of tails will be useful E.cowanp@landcareresearch.co.nz PH; +64 6353 4806 Mob: 0272214482 www.landcareresearch.co.nz

Seeleys Gully and Community Groups

See the attached flyer for the working bee coming up on March 26. We're expecting 250 helping hands (church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) volunteers for the morning and hoping for a hundred or more others. Hamilton City Council will be giving the reserve a tidy up over the nexts few years and can achieve so much more working in partnership with locals.

Weeds

Keep a look out for Japanese Knotweed. This is a terribly invasive plant, it spreads quickly and has an incredible root system (rhizomes that travel about 7 m radius around the plant and up to 3m deep). This makes it very resilient to even the strongest weed killers. It will push up through concrete and can cause structural damage to buildings.

If you spot something you suspect is Japanese Knotweed please contact Darion Embling on **0800 246 732**. To find out more about knotweed or other pestplants visit the Environment Waikato office in Grey St or www.ew.govt.nz and search weeds; you'll be directed to the below page : <http://www.ew.govt.nz/environmental-information/Plant-and-animal-pests/Plant-pests/> which has good pictures and other information.

Schools

A number of schools have gullies of their own and even those without often have nature walks and native areas. Most Hamilton schools have also been involved in community planting such as the Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park. We're keen to encourage schools to restore their own backyard as well as getting involved with other projects like Waiwhakareke.

Let me know if you are willing to provide some kind of support and assistance to a schools restoration of native planting. Schools can also apply to the Plants for Gullies Programme and residents neighbouring school gullies can apply and plant on behalf of a school as long as the school supports (and signs) the application.

Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park Update

Build up is starting for this years Arbour Day planting on Friday 3rd June. The goal is to plant 30,000 plants with 3000 people on 3rd June, We are inviting willing workers from schools and businesses.

To register as a team or individual please visit www.waiwhakareke.co.nz . The Friends of Waiwhakareke (FOW) also hold regular working bees at the park on the **last Saturday of the month** from 9.00-12pm Please contact us at Email waiwhakareke@gmail.com

Electronic Contacts

Please help us save paper and postage and only receive this mail out via email. Phone or email me with your email address if you'd like to be added to the electronic only mailout list. Email tim.newton@hcc.govt.nz or phone (07) 838 6878. We're also happy to keep mailing out copies for those who prefer this. We currently mail 650 copies and email 400! More than 1000 in total.