

Port Underwood Association

October 2022 Newsletter

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Weka – Gallirallus Australis

President's Introduction

Greetings all,

I realise that there has been some time now between newsletters but certainly a lot has been going on. We have faced a year of two halves, firstly getting over the COVID-19 hump and lately, the response to the August storm events and the Port Underwood Hill Road 'hump'. These two factors have somewhat altered our normal rhythm of newsletter communications. On the first change, we successfully managed an AGM via ZOOM and although somewhat mechanical, it did meet our compliance requirement. Like all, I am certainly looking forward to a return of our normal face-to-face AGM early in the New Year, date, time, and venue to be confirmed.

The August weather event has had an unprecedented impact into our daily lives, no matter if you are a permanent resident facing the on-going challenges of resilience or if you are a Bach owner, facing on-going access issues. Looking forward, we now have opportunity to critically examine the collective response and shape recovery. In the coming months, in conjunction with the MDC, we will drive an examination into our preparedness to deal with both natural disasters and failing infrastructure. This requires a whole of community involvement. Recent events have shown that in time of need, we are on our own until help arrives, and that can take days or weeks. It is in times like these that we realise, we need to be able to assure our own resilience. I am also mindful that we don't get blindly focused on the immediate problem and throughout, we, as your committee, retain sight of our constitutional objectives. I encourage you all to be engaged.

Best wishes

Wayne

Committee Members

President: Wayne Boustridge
Secretary/Treasurer: John Davison
Members: Ken Roush
Kirsty Vercoe
Martin Loach
Bruce Hearn
Phyllis Heard

Principle point of contact to the Committee is through our e-mail address:

port.underwood.association@gmail.com

Neighbourhood Support

Unfortunately, there remain a number of reports of thefts from rural properties in the Marlborough region. Items targeted include quad bikes, fuel and tools. Further details are included on the Neighbourhood Support and Policing tab on the Port Underwood Association website (Rural Police newsletters). Security can be improved by ensuring gates are locked and using web enabled security cameras. These are available from most DIY stores and are simple to install. Camera will provide alerts when there is movement detected.

Website

The website has been updated. Recent additions include the Rural Police Newsletters and the Sounds Advisory Group minutes of meetings.

Sounds Advisory Group

Since the last newsletter, Ken Roush has resigned from the Sounds Advisory Group and Wayne Boustridge has stepped up to attempt to fill this void. It would be remiss not to acknowledge the significant (20 + years) contribution that Ken has made to this Group on behalf our community. The exemplary input Ken has provided to the Sound Advisory Group on key issues reflective of our community is very much acknowledged. I am mindful at times like this what true community service is. I feel that, as an association, we owe Ken a huge acknowledgement of service provided.

The SAG is currently in the process of reviewing its Terms of Reference and once agreed, these will be posted to the website.

Roads

We can all relate to the recent storms that have caused difficulties on the roads into and around the Port. Persistent closures for periods due to slips, slumping or trees falling across the road have now, sadly, become the norm. As we now work through an MDC driven recovery plan development period, your engagement and inputs are encouraged. As such, your inputs to, and attendance in the 8 November recovery ZOOM meeting would be welcome. In the meantime, noting that there are some issues with network access, a widely used means of reporting or receiving road information and alerts is through the Antenno app. Antenno is a free mobile app that can be used to send notifications and alerts relevant to Marlborough. In addition to roading reports, Antenno provides rapid notifications to the MDC through an established category of issues menu.

As an alternate to Antenno, MDC can be advised of issues by phone, on 03 520 7400 or by email on mdc@marlborough.govt.nz

Wilding pines

As an Association, we have received numerous concerns about wilding pines. In some respects, we must be mindful that, as a community, we are surrounded by commercial pine forests and seed escape from these forests and other forests, is inevitable. We, as an association must be realistic in our ability to 'force' wilding pine control on private land or on the road reserve. On the later, the recent storm events would suggest a correlation between slips, particularly on the road reserves and the wilding pines that have been allowed to become established on that land. With private land, we certainly encourage wilding pine control efforts and have reached out to Andrew MacAlister, who is the local coordinator for the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme to see what assistance this programme may be able to bring. Internally, our Pest Control Programme (see below) has included wilding pines within a fledgling biodiversity project and as an interim, the link below provides a DOC/MDC guide on the use of the herbicide metsulfuron to assist those who wish to use this method on trees on land they own, noting that the advised best time to poison pine trees is during the spring and early summer as the tree is actively growing and the sap is moving.

[fact-sheet174-poisoning-wilding-radiata-pine.indd \(marlborough.govt.nz\)](#)

Pest Control Programme

Martin Loach has been working alongside James Lambie (Flagg Bay) to secure funding through Predator Free NZ to assist in our desire to supply at least one wooden boxed rat trap with the Victor Powerkill trap to each of our qualifying residential property owners. Unfortunately, as with our previous application, we didn't get across their funding line again! Not to be disheartened, Martin is now exploring alternative funding avenues.

Martin and James have recently linked into the Marlborough Biodiversity Forum and we are in the process of establishing our own biodiversity project. While in its infancy, the initial measures if success will see:

- A reverse in the anecdotal trend of Weka decline in the Port Underwood area and maintain or improve the other bird life in the area through sustained predator control.
- Improvement in the quality of tree canopies on our properties and in high profile public areas by reducing the occupancy of old man's beard and banana passion vine.

- Improvement the quality of the bush in the Port Underwood area by reducing the prevalence of wilding pines and ungulates, to the point that they are rarely seen.

As always, Martin welcomes inputs and assistance as this is developed as to be successful, we will need to establish a network across the community clusters.

Story Board Project

In July, we met with MDC Small Townships Project Manager to determine the way ahead for our previous project initiative to develop a Port Underwood story / history board that was did not make a 2021 funding approval. Since that initial meeting, we have developed a new concept design, and this is now with the Small Towns Project Manager who is facilitating the coordination of inputs to the suitable sites and the narratives describing specific places of interest.

Access to Port Underwood has been problematic for most of late August and September and this has resulted in an understandable delay on site reconnaissance etc. We are hoping to see this project now begin moving in the next few weeks.

Facebook Page

Just a reminder that the new Marlborough Port Underwood Community - Te Whanganui Facebook Group has been established as the previous Facebook Group got hacked and had to be shut down without the ability to transfer the membership across to the new Group. Facebook has been a good way to rapidly disseminate information across the community and if folks wish to join the new Group, please apply via the new Group name.

Memberships

Just a reminder, the last AGM voted to waive the membership fee for this year. Members that had already paid will have their payment held over until next year. Receipts for payments already received will be sent out shortly. Reminders for any members that have not yet paid will also go out soon.