



Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter, No 2-3

(Stamp)

1st December 2021

Welcome to the new Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter. It is the third Edition for the second Trust. This issue lets you know about our amenity area which you can check out on OUR PICNIC in January.

Skidsite Amenity and trackside tree planting: Local-sourced silver beech trees continue to be planted, this time with trees supplied by the Dunedin Amenities Society. Once again, the Policy team of Otago Regional Council (ORC) helped with planting and after-care of beech trees. Thanks, DAS & Richard's workmates and their family/friends.

Thirty-eight more Beech trees were planted on 17 April this year, including at a gorse-ridden, open stretch of the track to the shelter, where we had diverted the track under the bush canopy. This was an idea promoted by Trustee Sam Patrick, to provide a good, practical and relatively easy approach to sustainable track maintenance, although one does lose any remaining view. The next job is to put low plants around the Skidsite picnic tables. More trees can be planted alongside the Simes' Beech Walk, which is currently being kept open by pigs.

There are now two picnic tables on the Skidsite, and a bright coloured panorama in front of a very nice seat, overlooking the flat area from the eastern side, naming the visible locations, with associated informative signage. The many walkers we have met have commented extremely favourably.

Key milestone dates for our recent Skidsite Amenity Area work:

Sat 13 March Photo for panorama taken. View location identification begins. *(See below for low-quality image.)*

Sat 17 April Official Opening of amenity area (with draft panorama and locations only). QEII represented by Cathy Rufaut. This was the hundredth anniversary of Ben acquiring his land.

Sat 12 June Photographs at panorama installation, more speeches recognising efforts to complete the job, especially Margaret Cleveland (and son Andrew) on hand receiving thanks for funding underwritten by the Cleveland Charitable Foundation. Note, the late benefactor and ORC Councillor. Les Cleveland, was among those recommending our forthcoming indigenous revegetation programme many years ago. The Trust and its forerunner individuals followed his advice (among other botanical expertise received). It is very fitting that Les has still been helping us today.

Check the latest FMC bulletin "Backcountry" August 2021, for a bit of a story and nice photo Tracy took.

Friends, please do not carry out work on the property without letting a Trust member know in advance. This may allow us to work with you, and stop us from planning work you've already done.

Pest control: High Country Contracting (HCC) have blitzed the possums on the hills from Flagstaff to Swampy. They asked all users of the land to avoid disturbing the traps, as it could affect monitoring the progress of the control effort. You may recall that the Trust was turned down when we asked the DCC Biodiversity fund if we could be funded for more traps. This was because it was considered a pointless gesture if a neighbour didn't complement our efforts. We wanted to do our best for the noble "Orokonui Halo" effort.

Well, the great news is that the team doing a lot of rodent and stoat control within the Halo have put a LOT of traps on our land, as well as on neighbouring land, with a trial to see if Predator-Free Dunedin would work OK in situations like ours. This has meant a lot of little tracks have been cut in our lovely regenerating bush for trap setting and maintenance access. We are relieved that our objective has been adopted by a group of keen and diligent workers! "Phew..."

The Trust still has to ensure pig control continues. Lately there has been a **lot** of porky activity on our land.

Broom Gall Mite bio-control: Broom Gall Mites continue to be released on our land and in Otago. Our trial for the ORC has been going on since autumn 2019, at several locations on our land, but we have seen no sign yet of them. ORC tell us the mites are now present in Eastern Otago, but their movement and establishment remain unpredictable. We'll keep you posted if they show up. We do hope broom will get a very big hit. Soonish.

The tiny mites make their home in a rough-shaped, powdery grey, lentil-sized gall.

Vegetation survey: DCC Biodiversity funded our drone photography trial to help manage our land. Graham McArthur is tidying up some gaps in the flight images he has flown under a pre-determined grid covering most of the property. This is the terrain visible from the Skidsite. Graham uses the same flight plan so it can be replicated, in different seasons where necessary, to monitor vegetation trends. The footage will help us monitor the condition of new pest control tracks.

Donations. If you wish to donate, please use account 03-1369-0356642-00. Email benruddtrust@gmail.com if you would like a receipt emailing, and so we can say THANKS. Donations are tax-deductible, and Ben's Charity number is CC29407. *A big thanks to Ron and Sara Keen for their continuing generosity, and also Pete and Ann McKellar.*

The panorama print as a fundraiser

Lookout and seating provided by the Ben Rudd's Management Trust, for the OTMC and the people of Dunedin, on the occasion marking the 100th anniversary of the occupation by Ben Rudd of his land, on 17 April 1921.



The Trust has been considering fundraising by offering for sale various sized copies of the panorama image. If you are interested in buying your own copy, please email Ben on benruddtrust@gmail.com. We already have indications that this form of donation or assistance with funding our work this way should prove popular. Tracy and Richard think it would look splendid in their hallway.

Events to attend

We have our next **work party on 4 December** (5th is the rain-day) for preparing the skidsite for flax, shrub and snow-tussock planting next Autumn. We are placing sacks, tree-releasing, and possible light track work. All welcome, meet at Bullring 9.30 or come up to the Skidsite any time. We should be finished by 2 pm-ish.

And now, a special invitation from David McArthur, our Trust Chairman

Picnic: 22 January 22, Ben Rudd's

The Ben Rudd's Management Trust wishes to invite OTMC members and Friends of Ben Rudd's to our social picnic at the site of Ben Rudd's old home. Also, a great opportunity to view and discuss ongoing property development.

The trust would welcome comments to assist with future planning. In recent years, Trust members have been inspired by the ongoing positivity from visitors and the many passers-by. I'm looking forward to catching-up with you all at one of Dunedin's natural environment and amenity area highlights.

Meet at the Bullring 10am or around midday at the Shelter.

David

Please contact the Trust if you have any contributions, advice, suggestions, etc, for these newsletters, or for property or data management. We can be emailed at benruddtrust@gmail.com, or try phoning 03 481 1478

On behalf of the Trustees, Richard Pettinger.