

SIRCET news

www.sircet.org.nz

December 2012

A word from our Staff

Denise Hayes

I've been busy co-ordinating volunteers and checking rat traps. After high rat numbers over winter, we should start to decline soon. I'm really excited to start putting some of the new self resetting rat traps out in the field. Thanks to sponsors and grants we are looking at putting about 50 of these out at Ackers Point, although with summer coming on it seems a shame that I will get to walk in that part of the bush less often!

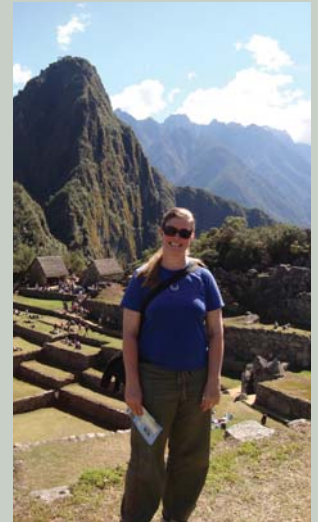
Letitia McRitchie

I've taken over the Project Administrator job, on a temporary basis, after Alina Atkins (she got married last month!!) resigned to concentrate on her and Matt's businesses. This is my first newsletter and I wanted to produce a different style and keep lots of big articles for our 10 year anniversary, special edition next year!

I live here with my partner Andrew and my two little children, in an 108 year old 'renovation project' house. That all keeps me busy!



Denise



Letitia

UPCOMING EVENTS

SIRCET turns 10 next year! That's 10 years of less rats, cats and possums and 10 years of more tui, bellbird and all those other critters that live in our forested backyards.

Planning is underway for an event to celebrate all the hard work done by trustees and volunteers and to acknowledge the support the community has shown. Venue and date to follow!

Some random things that were happening 10 years ago, it seems like it was only yesterday:

- Labour and Helen Clark were re-elected for a second term.
- It was the best breeding season for kakapo on record, with 24 surviving chicks, a population increase of 39%.
- Bluetooth was the big technological advance, following on from the first iPod in 2001.

We are looking at establishing a weed control programme for Ackers Point and the first step is to find out what is there! With funding from Environment Southland and support from DOC we are looking at surveying the Point on the 10th and 11th of December. If you would like to be involved and get a close look at the Ackers bush, please contact Denise denise@sircet.org.nz Ph 2191159.

SIRCET

SIRCET (Stewart Island Rakiura Community and Environment Trust) is a group of dedicated trustees who with the help of local volunteers and our Pest Manager Denise Hayes, control pests on 210 ha of land from Ackers Point to the Golden Bay road.

We fund our work from sponsorship and applying to many and varied funders. Our goal is to improve the environment around our township by reducing pests, therefore allowing native birds and plants to flourish.

SIRCET invites your ideas and feedback

Do you have any suggestions for improvement, require further information on joining SIRCET, or have an article of interest you would like to see featured...

Just give Letitia a call on 03 21 915 35 or e-mail info@sircet.org.nz

TRAP UPGRADE

After the successful sponsorship of ten self resetting possum traps last year, SIRCET embarked on the more ambitious project to get 8 new cat cages, 10 possum traps and 56 rat traps.

This project is well underway with \$5000 worth of traps being funded by Birdlife International Community Conservation Fund, \$900 worth of rat traps being donated by the Stewart Island Pub Quiz (thanks Vicky!) and individual traps being sponsored by Solutinz, Stewart Island Flights, Bevan Mudie and Jim and Hilli Barrett-Massett. We are awaiting confirmation of another funding application but hopefully we should have several lines at Ackers Point operating with these traps by summer. More dead rats, more live birds!!



Photo of Goodnature A24 self re-setting rat trap with weka excluder fitted

Cat Catching

Feral cats are major predators to our native species and can have a big impact on ground nesting birds, like titi.

To control cats we trap at selected times of the year. Running these traps is time intensive, as being live capture traps, they require checking every day. During April this year, 8 traps were set out, for just over a week and we caught 5 feral cats! Trapping in August caught another 2 cats and over the last week the traps have again been open, we have trapped a lactating female feral cat and a pet cat that had been missing for 5 months! The pet has now been returned to a very grateful owner. A great result and the birds would like to say thank you to Denise and the volunteer trap checkers for making the bush a safer place for them!

With funding recently won through the BLICCF, we were able to purchase an additional 5 cages and with the generous donation of 2 cages by Environment Southland, we now have a total of 16 cages spread across the project area.

Denise would like to remind all pet cat owners that SIRCET have cat collars with bells attached along with name tags to give away free, so if you own a pet cat and would like to help prevent them catching birds – contact Denise for your free collar.

Grants Received

In September we were excited to learn that we received a three year grant from The Community Trust of Southland, to part fund wages.

Unfortunately the grant reduces over the three years so we will have to do some extra fund raising to cover this.

In October we were very happy to receive the news that our application to the Birdlife International Community Conservation Fund (BLICCF) was successful and we received \$5000 towards the purchase of new cat cages and self resetting possum and rat traps

In November we found out our application to New Zealand Post was successful and we are the grateful recipients of 500 postage included envelopes. This helps to keep our administration costs low and allows donated funds to be used 'in the field'

NURSERY

Denise continues to be busy at the nursery, growing hundreds of plants for restoration projects and for local gardens.

If you haven't been out there, pop out for a look. If there is a plant that you like the look of, there is an honesty box there and the plants are a \$2 donation

Over the last three years the nursery has really flourished and many systems and processes have been put in place to ensure it runs smoothly. Our Pest Manager has been funded for 10 hours a week to work at the nursery but our Lotteries Environment and Heritage Fund has now expired and with budget cuts starting to impact on DOC's financial support, we are unsure how to continue to fund these hours. We will be looking at options for the future of the nursery and also asking the community what they want.



TRAPS FOR SALE

SIRCET have for sale Victor Traps made up with bases and covers. These are the same design that we have been using and they have caught thousands of rats!

A dab of peanut butter, check them once a week and it keeps the rats from living in the ceiling chewing on those yummy wires and means you don't have to use poison.

Traps cost \$20 and contact Denise



Donations

Donations can be put directly into our bank account ASB 12 3154 0103153 00 or contact our Project Administrator, Letitia McRitchie info@sircet.org.nz

SPONSOR A HECTARE

This programme began in 2005, aiming to bridge the gap between volunteer time and projects and equipment that needs to be financed.

Each of the 210 hectares within our project area is available for sponsorship through the annually renewable sponsor a hectare program. Each Hectare can be purchased for \$50.

A map of the project area is up in the Rakiura Environment Centre and your name can be allocated to the hectare of your choice, maybe some nice beach front real estate?

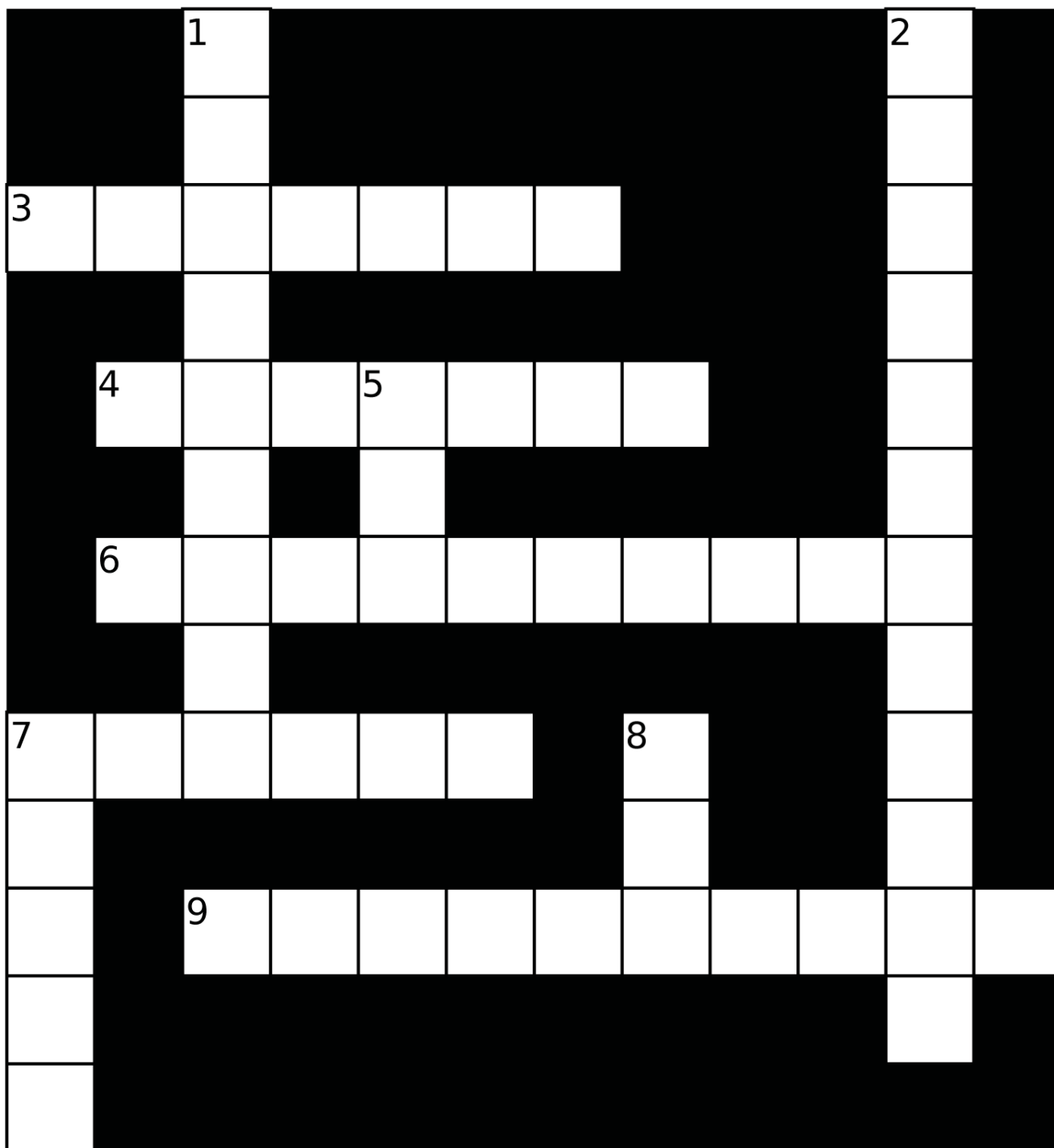
Sponsors receive a certificate and our quarterly newsletter emailed or posted to you

BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP

Local business support is invaluable for us to operate and making a yearly donation of \$250 entitles you to have your logo up on the map at the Environment Centre, in our annual report, on the website and displayed at events. You will also receive a certificate and quarterly newsletters. Please help support us in the work we do in the community.

SIRCET CROSSWORD

Have a go at our mini crossword, if you get stuck, the answers are posted in the Environment Centre! (Sorry not much help if you aren't on Stewart Island!)



ACROSS

DOWN

- 3. Also known as Piwakawaka
- 4. Not an acre
- 6. A latin cat
- 7. Aboreal furry pest
- 9. Our dedicated rat catchers

- 1. Our restoration beach
- 2. This weed must go
- 5. Parson bird
- 7. A mega herb available at the nursery
- 8. Small furry pest

