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MATAKANA
COAST
TRAIL TRUST

News from the Pūhoi to Mangawhai Trail

Tēnā koe <<First Name>>

What a year! Let's not dwell on it, because there's been quite the momentum on trail progress in 2021, so much cause for celebration as we come out of restrictions and into the festive season. We can't wait to tell you about the developments that are occurring.

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When is an upgrade not a grade-up?

When we are improving the gradient, of course!

Regular users of the connection between Takatu Road, Matakana, and Jones Road, Omaha, will variously find the rather steep gradient in this section: a challenge; a thrill; or down-right (no pun intended) scary!



We've responded to feedback and with the assistance of some VERY generous donors and regular users of the track, are undertaking a realignment of this section under the competent project management of trail-blazer Gary Heaven.

Gary reports:

"A kind donation of machine time (in the form of a large digger and a small digger) from Johnstone Construction has allowed us to address a section that the original trail builders knew would be a challenge. At the time they lacked the resources to do any more earthworks than they did. Keen trail users can be sure that the exercise factor of the hill will remain but the new line will be safer and easier for novice riders. We thank Watercare for their continued enthusiastic support of the trail.

"Works are scheduled from 10-13 December. The trail will be closed from Takatu road to Jones Road while the large machines are on site. Unfortunately there is no alternative route.

"In the interim we have upgraded some of the signage for the steep bit on that section of trail."



If you see Johnstone Construction Ltd on the trail, or around and about, these are them. Give them a toot and a big thumbs up.

Everyday Heroes - Watercare

A BIG SHOUT OUT of thanks and appreciation to Watercare!

Watercare is host to the Matakana Coastal Trail in a few places on the master plan. Probably the most significant location is the section of trail between Takatu Rd and Jones Road. This trail is enjoyed by thousands of visitors each year. In 2010 the Matakana Community Group [built a six kilometre cycleway](#) that links Matakana to Omaha Beach and Point Wells. This well used route was made possible by the generosity of many different landowners. Some of them Private and some of them Public. One of the Public landowners is Watercare. Auckland Council has an easement which allows around 1.5-kilometres of the cycleway to run through Watercare land (next to Omaha Wastewater Treatment Plant).

To their credit Watercare don't just own it. They 'own it'. On the agenda for this summer are several safety improvements. Watercare will next tackle a plantation of 1500 gum trees that line the border. Years ago, a tree fell onto the cycleway and they were felled for safety reasons. Now the regenerated growth has reached 10-15 metres high: "The trees are going to be cut down to ground height and the area will be replanted with native Kanuka that is locally sourced and raised in a nursery right next to the plant – so it almost has a zero-carbon footprint!" says Watercare Omaha and Snells Beach Wastewater Treatment Plant technician Alistair Chisholm.

Alistair says these are the latest safety improvements to the track and it is all part of being a good neighbour: "Over the years we've done a lot to improve the cycleway from simple things like checking the track for branches or flood damage after heavy rain, to major things like realigning the slope. We get a lot of pleasure from knowing that members of the public enjoy using the track and we like to do our bit to keep it safe."

Pictured here is Mark Walden who does much of this work – with a smile on his face.



Trail Trivia

Watercare works closely with the Matakana Coast Trail Trust which oversees the track and Auckland Council which operates it. But it's not all about safety it's also about the environment. Pāteke (Brown Teal ducks) live on the dam at the treatment plant along with quite a few locally rare species. Watercare together with Auckland Council, have also provided 200 bait stations and 89 traps for pest control. Volunteers from the Takatu Landcare group have caught 300 rats in the past two years, along with several stoats. On a more botanical note, this block of land also has possibly the best 'patch' of an endangered endemic plant called pale flowered kumerahou (*Pomoderris hamiltonii* - pictured below), identified by local Lucy Moore in honour of local Dr Max Hamilton and family.



Omaha pathway becomes reality



Wonderful news as the Omaha Drive Pathway nears completion from the roundabout to the Community Centre & Golf Club.

It has been 15 years since Peter Jackson on behalf of the Omaha Beach Community campaigned for Rodney District Council to build this, at a fraction of today's cost(!), but sadly Peter has not lived to see the initiative completed.

A huge thank you must go to Beth Houlbrooke and Allison Roe, and the Rodney Local Board, for promoting and funding this community project for the safety of Omaha residents and visitors - which is part of the Matakana Coast Trail Trust's Puhoi to Mangawhai trail plans.

Furthermore, the project would not have been constructed without the huge amount of time and pro-bono professional engineering services donated by Ian Hutchinson of Hutchinson Consulting Engineers in Orewa - a truly generous community spirit for which we wholeheartedly thank you.

An additional benefit is the kerb and channelling which will collect the surface water off the road, reducing the risk of flooding and this will be channelled to the golf course lakes to be used as irrigation.

The mountable kerb allows cars to continue to park on the grass berm.

A win-win result so thank you Auckland Transport and local contractors Wharehine for listening to the locals.

Enjoy the wonderful views across the golf course to the Whangateau Harbour whilst walking or cycling safely on this pathway connection.



Former Trustee Martin Dancy, Ian "Hutch" Hutchinson (provider of pro bono engineering services), and Trustee Allison Roe looking pretty happy about long-awaited progress on the pathway.



L-R: Movers and shakers Omaha Beach Community Inc. Chairman Chris Allan, Martin, Allison, Hutch, and Christine Wilkinson of both Omaha Bowling Club and Omaha Golf Club.



While some passed away waiting, Martin only nearly passed out.

Every user counts

As planning work for developing further cycle and walking trails around the Puhoi, Warkworth, Matakana and Mangawhai area continues, data is beginning to be collected on existing trails to establish usage of these popular trails.

Digital counters have been installed by the Matakana Coast Trail Trust (MCTT) on the trail between Point Wells Road and Omaha Flats Road as well as sites at Snells Beach and on the Matakana bridge. The technology has been provided by Auckland company Be Counted with funding

provided for the MCTT from Auckland Council.

“We know that these existing trails have provided great commuter pathways for people staying out of their cars and walking or cycling for both business and lifestyle purposes,” explains MCTT spokesperson Allison Roe. “When we met for the installation of the counter on the Points Wells trail near Omaha Flats Road the Be Counted team helping with the installation were astounded by the amount of people walking and cycling through.”

Allison Roe says the Matakana to Omaha/Point Wells trails are used extensively for those commuting for a range of purposes. “I know that people from Omaha and Point Wells use the trails to meet at local spots such as cafes for both business and pleasure. Many also use the trail to go to Matakana and beyond. Extended trails such as the one we will be building from Puhoi right through to Mangawhai will open up huge opportunities for commuting, both short and longer trips.”

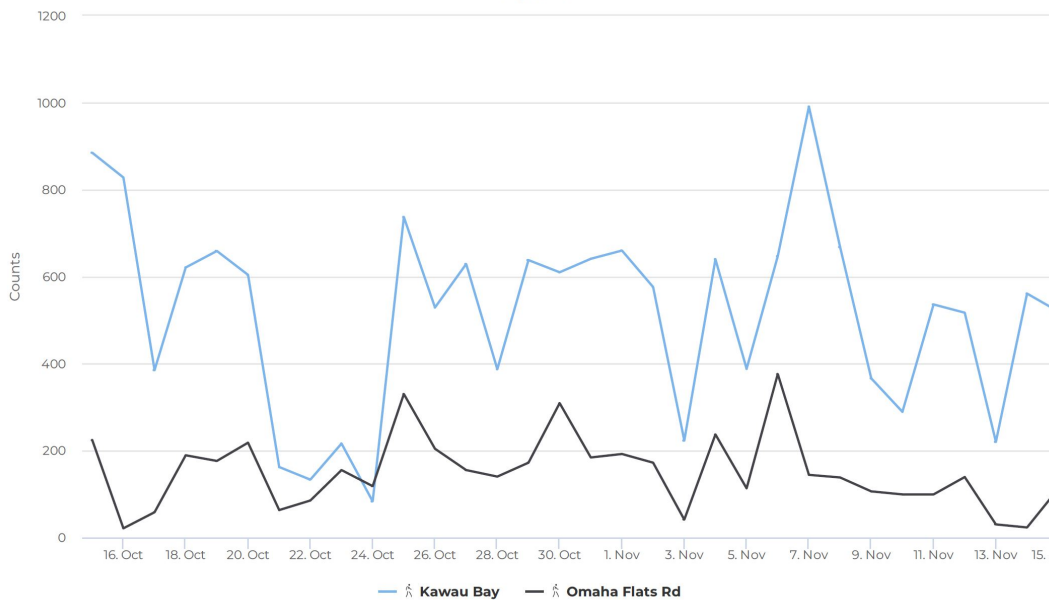
Data from the digital counters will result in MCTT being able to provide live feeds to their website on trail usage as well as understanding the growth of those using existing trails and the new trails that will be built.

Photos below: Trail counters being installed - Ian and Philip from Be Counted with Shelley Trotter on the Snells Beach Esplanade walkway (L), and at Jones Road Omaha (R) with Gary Heaven, Shelley Trotter and Allison Roe. Be Counted offers a range of technology based solutions that promote cycling infrastructure and highlight active routes for both pedestrians and cyclists, encouraging increased usage of sustainable transport modes.

Bottom: A trail counter report.



Daily traffic



Thank you Graeme



The September meeting of the Matakana Coast Trail Trust was the last for hardworking chair Graeme Stretch. After three years as trust chair Graeme tendered his resignation. This was due to a move to Central Otago.

“Graeme has been wonderful for the trust, stepping into the chairs role at a critical time and helping to steer us through a very important planning and development period,” says founding chair and trustee Allison Roe.

“The combination of his business and governance experience and a liking for trail and mountain biking and the outdoors meant his input has been extremely valuable. It is ironic Graeme’s tenure has come to an end just as we launch our much anticipated website, unveiling this exciting project to the wider community.”

“I want to say a big thanks to Graeme. Despite having moved (from the Matakana Area) to Central Otago some time go he continued in the chair’s role from afar. He was great to work with personally and I feel we complemented one another and the trust achieved a great deal under his leadership.”

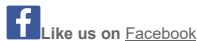
Graeme has been replaced by two new co-chairs Aidan Bennett and Craig Donaldson as outlined in our last newsletter. More on Aidan and Craig [here](#).

Your help makes a difference


*The Trust values the contributions our friends make. These keep our organisation humming in the background as we prepare to step things up a notch when significant funding becomes available to start constructing new sections of what will become a world-class trail attracting hundreds of thousands of annual visitors, bringing unprecedented economic benefit to our region. **Please consider making a donation or regular automatic payment via our [website](#). Donations are tax deductible.***

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