

OPBG Newsletter May 2018

Working Towards a Pest-Free Peninsula since 2008



OPBG's new Volunteer Coordinator

We are pleased to welcome our new Volunteer Coordinator, **Kate Tanner**. Kate has joined the OPBG after having worked for the Department of Conservation as the Project Coordinator for the South-East Marine Protection Forum. She has had much experience in working with people towards lasting conservation efforts and is passionate about community-led conservation. Please contact Kate if you are interested in becoming an OPBG Volunteer volunteers@opbg.nz / 021 0235970 or if you are interested in hearing about our current activities.



....and we also have a new Trustee



Sophie Fern has lived on the Otago Peninsula since moving to Dunedin in 2002, first in Broad Bay and now in Macandrew Bay. She trained as a marine biologist but the last few years has moved into conservation policy. She is currently doing a PhD through the ecology program at Otago University, looking at non-human charisma and its effect on conservation policy. She runs a natural history radio show on Otago Access Radio, sometimes writes science for kids and has both peripatus and kōura in her back garden. She can be found on Twitter @SophieFern.

A Big Welcome to both of them.

What has been happening this year so far!

Volunteers BBQ

In February we held our now annual Volunteers BBQ at the Hoopers Inlet Hall. It was a beautiful Saturday afternoon with a huge turnout and we were able to spend the afternoon outside, enjoying the view over the inlet to Harbour Cone and taking time to catch up with everybody. Again we were treated to great food, including sausages and meat generously supplied and cooked by Brendon, Ally and Bruce. Thank you to all who helped!



Moira, Ally and John preparing.....



.....then waiting for the crowds!

Peninsula Gateway

The Peninsula Gateway communities of the Waverley/Vauxhall/Andersons Bay area became the focus of one of our main projects for this year. A survey of households adjacent to the main bush corridors, which we identified as prime possum habitat, was carried out by **Frances Hernandez**, a Wildlife Management Masters student at the end of last year. This was done to gauge community expectations in this suburban environment. Results showed a fair bit of knowledge of what OPBG is trying to achieve and a great willingness to participate. Survey participants went into a draw for a High Tea and Garden Voucher, kindly donated by the **Larnach Castle management** and the lucky winner was **Gillian Crosbie**. Congratulations!



Castle director Norcombe Barker presenting the voucher to Frances

With the new OPBG brochure and flyers ready for distribution our new volunteer coordinator Kate had a job on her hands, getting them out into the community. A big thank you to the **Red Cross volunteers** and our own hard-working volunteer **Barbara Smith**, who together with Kate must have been getting a few kilometers under their belt walking up and down these hills! Well done!

OPBG Public Information Sessions – Guardians of the Peninsula



OPBG Project Manager Ursula Ellenberg

The year continued with a series of Public Information Sessions in March/April, which took place in Waverley, Vauxhall and Andersons Bay. The sessions aimed to engage and inform 'Otago Peninsula Gateway Residents' about our mission, what we do, and most importantly, how to become involved as a 'Guardian of the Otago Peninsula'. Over 50 residents attended and we have a growing list of enthusiastic Guardians.

If you live in the Waverly, Vauxhall, Anderson's Bay, Musselburgh or Tomahawk areas and would like to become involved, please contact Kate volunteers@opbg.nz / 021 0235970



OPBG Volunteers Coordinator Kate Tanner showing area maps



UniCrew Student Volunteer Fair

OPBG Volunteer Coordinator Kate Tanner and former Trustee Moira Parker had a very successful and enjoyable day at the UniCrew Student Volunteer Fair and managed to sign up over 30 student volunteers. We

are delighted with the response and look forward to working with students in the coming months.



ANZ Volunteers –Chew carding at Allans beach pines and Okia

It was great to have the volunteer crew from our **ANZ NZ Bank** back with us in early March, checking for possum activity with our trusty chew cards at Okia and around Allans Beach pines.

A Big Thank You. We detected quite a few possum bites on the cards and the subsequent activity in our possum master traps! The group also went out to Taiaroa to check chew cards that had been placed earlier.



***Setting chew cards** is a very effective way of detecting the presence of possums and needs to be done on a fairly regular basis. This is the perfect way for anybody to contribute in their own time and on their own patch, easy to fit in as you are walking your dog or going for your weekend walk and looking for something else to do while you are out there. We are always looking for volunteers to take this on and would very much welcome anybody who feels this is something they could do. If this is you please contact **Kate** on volunteers@opbg.nz / mobile: 021 0235970*

Track clearing at Sandymount

For last year's winter operation, a whole network of tracks was established in the Sandymount and Sandfly Bay area to set up traps and bait stations. These tracks will grow over in no time at all and track maintenance is an ongoing task. A lot of blood, sweat and tears goes into cutting these tracks and if we don't want to repeat this all over again every year, they need to be maintained over summer.

So a Big Thank you to the **UniCrew volunteers** and the group from the **Malcam Trust** who came out and spent time with us to get on top of all this vegetation.





***Clearing tracks** is not just for larger groups, there are plenty of areas we could use 1 or 2 people, who are keen to get their own little patch to maintain at their own pace. If this is something for you, please get in touch: Marita secretary@opbg.nz or Kate volunteers@opbg.nz.*

Wild Dunedin – OPBG Trapping Workshop

The Wild Dunedin Festival of Nature took place over the weekend before Anzac Day in April and showcased all that Dunedin has to offer of its unique and abundant wildlife. Protecting biodiversity is the core focus of OPBG and to that end we held a trapping workshop for the residents in our Peninsula Gateway and the wider Dunedin area during the Wild Dunedin weekend.

It was an interested and engaged community that participated in Waverley, where again our own community trappers were on hand to demonstrate the tools of their trade.





We were fortunate to have Goodnature Ranger Sean O'Brien setting up his own stall to demonstrate their arsenal of self-resetting traps, which generated much interest.

Goodnature also donated one A24 (rats/stoats) and one A12 (possums) trap as door prizes, which were drawn at the end of the session.

Lucky winners were **Nicola Everett** and **Barry Douglas**. **Congratulations!**

Backyard Kiwis

The Wild Dunedin festival welcomed guests from the far North to exchange ideas and experiences in dealing with protecting precious wildlife. Four members of the Whangarei Heads Backyard Kiwi campaign came to Dunedin for a series of events and also gave a talk to our Peninsula residents. OPBG took the opportunity to treat everybody to a sausage sizzle beforehand. Very popular and great fun.

OPBG Trustee Sophie Fern and volunteer Erin Anson cooking up a storm.



Meet our Trappers

In past editions we have always featured some of our dedicated volunteers. This time however we want to introduce you to some of Bruce's hard-working team, all of whom started as volunteers, but have graduated to being part time Operations Assistants. So far, they have usually scrambled around thick scrub on Sandymount or scaled steep cliffs to get to their traps and bait stations. Now they had to scrub up a bit and are roaming around suburbia, doing the first pass through the bush corridors in Waverley and surrounds. They are also known as the 3 musketeers!

Frank Pepers



My wife Annie and I live in Broad Bay in a forest of our own making.

I come from a forestry background, leaving school and home in Dunedin to go on the adventure that working in the bush brings.

When I started in 1973, the forestry service looked after pest control in national parks, state forests, and offshore islands, as well as unoccupied crown land. A fair chunk of my time with NZFS was doing this work and I also did a lot of possum control. I did quite a few months shooting goats in the Shotover.

And when finances were tight in the 1980 I sold skins to help pay the bills. I'm happy to help rid the Peninsula of possums and ultimately get rat numbers really low. My kids and their kids live in Dunedin, so we've got to do it for them as well.

Peter Preston

Hi, I'm Peter Preston. I currently work with the other trappers in Sector 5, helping to remove possums that may move onto the Otago Peninsula. I've been controlling pests since the late 70s when I started as a trainee on the Lindis Hawea Rabbit Board under ex All Black Hec Wilson. Hec was a hard man and probably the best boss I ever had.

I've chased rabbits, possums and other pests all over NZ and overseas. In 2011/2012 I was team leader of the hunters and dog handlers who eradicated rabbits and rodents from Macquarie Island in the sub-antarctic. I've had jobs as diverse as working on a sheep and beef station in Southland,

working as a motorcycle courier in Sydney and driving a recycling truck in Wanaka. But pest control is my first love. So after leaving Otago Regional Council, my employer for the previous 28 years, I've started my own pest control business and here I am!



Peter (right) with fellow trapper Sol at our Wild Dunedin Trapping Workshop in Waverley in April

Sol Wogan

Sol and his wife Emma came to Dunedin from Christchurch after the big earthquake and have made their home on the Peninsula. Sol is not just a keen and skilled trapper, he has a love of cars that sees him collecting all kinds of vehicles in need of love and care, amongst them a few much cherished but still very unpolished gems. Sol came to OPBG as a volunteer and quickly became one of Bruce's main trappers, setting traplines with leghold traps and as a side collecting the fur and running lines of bait stations around Sandymount. He is now working the bush corridors in the Peninsula Gateway areas around Waverley and has always helped with our trapping workshops.



Donations and Grants

We would also like to acknowledge our supporters:

OPBG was successful in receiving a grant of \$5000 through the **Kiwi Bank Community Fund**. This grant will heavily subsidize traps for residents in an urban environment in the Waverley/Anderson Bay area – which are now known as the **OPBG Guardians of the Peninsula**.

A big Thank You also to **Tim Ritchie**, who donated \$500 and...

Ed Sheeran, who visited the Peninsula during the time of his amazingly successful concerts and donated \$1000

It is not always cash that will make a big difference. To that end a big Thank You also to **Robin Thomas from the QEII Trust**, who generously donated top quality tools (loppers, saws, secateurs and gloves), that will be held with STOP, but are available for use by Otago Peninsula community groups. This means we can supply volunteer groups that come for working bees with the tools they need.

A Message to our Community:

Could you please check whether you still have an OPBG trap sitting somewhere and if it is not in use, please contact us: Marita secretary@opbg.nz and let us know, so that we can set it elsewhere.

We would like to encourage you to send us your feedback on what you are observing in your backyards. Are you hearing more bird song? Are your roses blooming again and do you get to eat the fruit from your trees again instead of the possums munching away? All these anecdotal recordings are valuable information for us and help us with our planning.

NEED TO REPORT A POSSUM DEAD OR ALIVE?

**Contact Brenda Cameron at:
brenda.wayne@xtra.co.nz**