



Newsletter March 2025

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2025. Hope you have caught some summer warmth and managed to have some time outdoors in Hawkes Bay.

Our first activity of the year – the Summer Picnic at Pandora Pond.



Gareth Boyt, Pou Taiao (Environmental Lead) of Mana Ahuriri Trust, spoke to our group about the Muriwai o te Whanga plan for the estuary catchment, produced by the Joint Committee of Mana Ahuriri Trust, Department of Conservation, Napier City Council, Hawkes Bay Regional Council and Hastings District Council, to provide guidance and coordination in caring for Ahuriri Estuary/te Whanganui a Ōrotu. Our regular AEPS activities are included in the plan.

P.S. Did you leave a seat bag behind? Let us know.

### We have been:

- **Engaging in Submissions** to councils' plans,
- presenting Power Points on our concerns for the estuary re **Fast Track Expressway Extension**, to Mana Ahuriri Trust, councils and government departments
- **Re-writing our Constitution**, as required for 2022 Charities Act

(This will be presented for feedback at the next AEPS AGM later in the year)

### Some examples of submissions are:

- NCC Ecosystems and Biodiversity (variation to the NCC District Plan) - Submission
- Napier/Hastings Future Development Strategy- Submission and Hearings
- NCC Reserves Management Plan – Submission and Hearin
- Power-Point Presentation at Hearings for the NCC Proposed District Plan (submitted in 2023)

I think you would be surprised how much time and energy our volunteer committee and involved members are putting into research, preparation, writing, and presenting. Thank you to all involved and others who have attended as support for AEPS.

We are attempting to understand the council processes, and protect Ahuriri Estuary/te Whanganui a Ōrotu and the habitat of the wildlife, in the face of all the proposed development plans:

- Airport business park (extending to mid-estuary channel edge),
- Expressway 4-lane Extension (into estuary land/water/Westshore Wildlife Reserve between Prebensen Drive and Watchman Rd),
- Ahuriri Regional Park proposed recreation/cultural activities on the mid-estuary channel
- Ahuriri Station Fast-Track plans of Mana Ahuriri Trust for housing and industrial development to the north and west of the airport up to Bayview, and their shared solar farm commercial project with the airport (possibly in the path of the godwits arriving from Alaska each year).

Google: 'migratory birds and solar farms', and 'Schipol Airport (Holland) and the effect of nearby solar farm'.

### Launch of Te Muriwai o te Whanga Plan

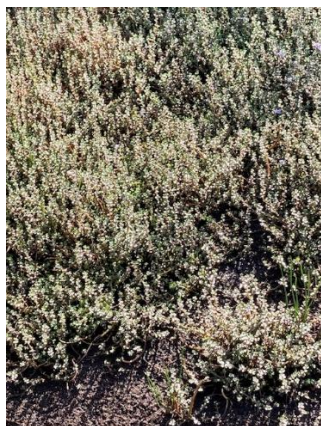
AEPS was invited to the launch of the plan, held at Waiohiki Marae in February. On a hot, sunny day, AEPS members met there and were welcomed on with the other groups. After the formalities/speeches, a delicious kai prepared by the Waiohiki Kohanga Reo was shared in the Dining Room. It's a beautiful new wharenuui and whare kai. Thank you, Mana Ahuriri Trust and Waiohiki Marae.



## The 'At Risk/Uncommon Native Plant' at the estuary

– *Thyridia repens* (Maori Musk, and other names)

At the end of March, Valerie and I visited the estuary site of this plant to check out how it had fared over summer. The patches we saw had lush foliage and were showing the last of the flowers for the season. (Imagine the flower the size of your little fingernail.)



We have further 'scouting' to do in that area to get a clearer picture of how many more patches of *Thyridia repens* there are. Anyone interested is welcome to join us.

## AEPS 2025 Farewell the Godwits/Kuaka event

Never far from our thoughts .....



Photo: Beautiful bronze statue at HB Airport (Sarah Atley)



Photo : Godwits/kuaka landing for a feed on the mudbanks (Art Hyde)

On a balmy, end-of-summer day in February, a group of about 40 adults and children listened to the godwit/kuaka story and walked to view the birds roosting in The Scrapes (Westshore Wildlife Reserve) at high tide. Thank you for the generosity of the BirdsNZ members who bring their scopes for better viewing. We also offered the opportunity to airport staff to learn about these birds and gave them a 'tour' in February also.

## **Fast-Track 4-Lane Hawkes Bay Expressway**

Stage Three of the current Government's plans entails a 4-lane extension from Prebensen Drive to Watchman Road (entrance to airport).

If you would like to imagine that, add two lanes of roading (and its berms) on to the western side of the current expressway. Picture a birds-eye view: that's two road lanes built closer to the Southern Marsh (habitat for many endemic/native/and migratory birds), then continuing on the western side of the current 2-lane expressway/causeway across the estuary tidal water path (extending the three narrow culverts that slow and diminish the current tidal flow to the Upper estuary, and doubling the filled-in causeway area across the estuary), and follow the two extra lanes proceeding across Westshore Wildlife lagoon 'The Scrapes' bringing the road closer to the area where (specially built for) the godwits and other wading birds to roost every high tide, and then proceeding to cut into the raised land that is the Westshore Wildlife Reserve at the northern end.

Photo: Lynne

Anderson



Current view of the godwits/kuaka on The Scrapes facing the 2-lane Expressway.

Let us know if you would like to be involved in our protection for the estuary. We have a sub-group advocating on this issue.

## **Ahuriri Regional Park (ARP)**

The Masterplan for the Ahuriri Regional Park is due out soon. It will be an opportunity for the public to voice their views on the plan as it stands now.

The original intention of the proposed, man-made wetlands in the plan, as we understood it, was to improve flood resilience and 'polish' the 70% of Napier's Stormwater before it goes into the estuary. Those aspects seem to have got harder

to include in the plan, and there are many other ideas: recreational, commercial, and cultural that are being explored.

Our interest is how these plans effect the water quality in the estuary and wildlife habitats that border the plans. We were invited to the 2 Stakeholder Meetings (along with a broad, cross-section of interested parties) at the Napier Old Boys/Marist Rugby Club rooms at Park Island, where the consultants' designs were presented, and feedback from invitees was gathered, and we have been attending the ARP Joint Committee meetings chaired by NCC Deputy Mayor, Annette Brosnan.

### **'Seaweeek' Estuary Clean-Up Collaboration with Dept of Conservation in March**



Great collaborative effort for Seaweeek – DOC staff, Westshore Sea Scouts and AEPS volunteers collected 16 bags of rubbish plus bags of recycling from the northern Pandora Pond area and up the northern side of the Estuary Channel. Thanks to all involved.

\*If you'd like to become a member of our society, the subscription is \$5 yearly (+ donation if you like), delivered to the Secretary at 167 Kennedy Rd or paid on-line to:

Account name: The Ahuriri Estuary Protection Society Inc

Account number: 15-3979-0038763-80

And then please email [aeps.hb@gmail.com](mailto:aeps.hb@gmail.com) with your contact details – address, mobile number, thanks.

If you wish to 'unsubscribe' from this newsletter/'clean-ups' reminder, let me know.

Angie Denby,

Chairperson, Ahuriri Estuary Protection Society