

Planting day to revitalise Mawhitipana

A small forest of pōhutukawa grown from seedlings sourced on Waiheke has been planted on Little Palm Beach's Mawhitipana Valley.

Hauraki Gulf Conservation Trust's Mark Jackson has been growing the trees from seedlings taken from pōhutukawa on Onetangi beach and Orapiu and they are now grown enough to transplant.

Having helped fund the project with \$19,500 from Foundation North, chair Ian Burrows was talking with Paul Dyson on the ferry about the Dyson family's Mawhitipana Valley Regeneration project and suggested he may like some of Mark's trees for the site.

It wasn't too much of a decision. Mark delivered and even helped plant the trees, which were added to about 550 other specimens - mostly kāmuka, mānuka, hebe and karo - for last Saturday's planting day.

A team of about 20 volunteers took part in the event after Cameron Ryan, Sam, Alison and Paul Dyson had prepared the site over several weeks by controlling pampas and clearing honeysuckle. Mātua George Kahi of Ngāti Paoa led a pōwhiri and karakia on the site, which covers 3.72 hectares next to the Mawhitipana Reserve above Little Palm Beach.

It is an important catchment area, with



Mark Jackson and Maria O'Connor donated 55 pōhutukawa trees for the Mawhitipana Valley planting day.

Photo Mark Jackson



Cameron Ryan and Sam Dyson helped organise and conduct last Saturday's big planting day at Mawhitipana Valley. Photo Paul Dyson

a wetland and water-course that flows into Little Palm Beach and the wider Mawhitipana Bay. Except for a patch of protected old-growth taraire forest, the valley had been almost completely deforested and the wetland significantly degraded until 2007, when the previous landowner began replanting native trees. Since purchasing the land in 2012, the Dyson family has covenanted around 60 percent of the land with Auckland Council, including the wetland. With the old growth taraire forest, about 80 percent of the land is now protected.

Over the past seven years more than 250 volunteer workers and about 10 paid workers have been engaged for weed control, predator control, watering, planting and tending new trees. The focus has been on clearing invasive weeds, controlling mammalian predators (including, since 2017, a systematic programme of stoat trapping and baiting) and planting trees. More than 6000 seedlings, mostly sourced from, or propagated on Waiheke (including many from the on-site nursery) have been planted, tended and weeded.

The Mawhitipana Valley Project is now part of the Waiheke Collective and closely cooperating with the Waiheke-wide predator eradication project, Te Korowai o Waiheke. •

PIZZAS
9 inch \$7
12 inch \$10



OPEN

Fri & Sat: 11am - 10pm
Sun to Mon: 11am - 9.30pm

Tel 09 212 5505

Waiheke Countdown building
13-19 Belgium St, Ostend
www.islandpizza.co.nz