

Catchment Group Story

Wellington/Te Upoko-o-te-Ika | OCTOBER 2024

Pareraho Forest Trust

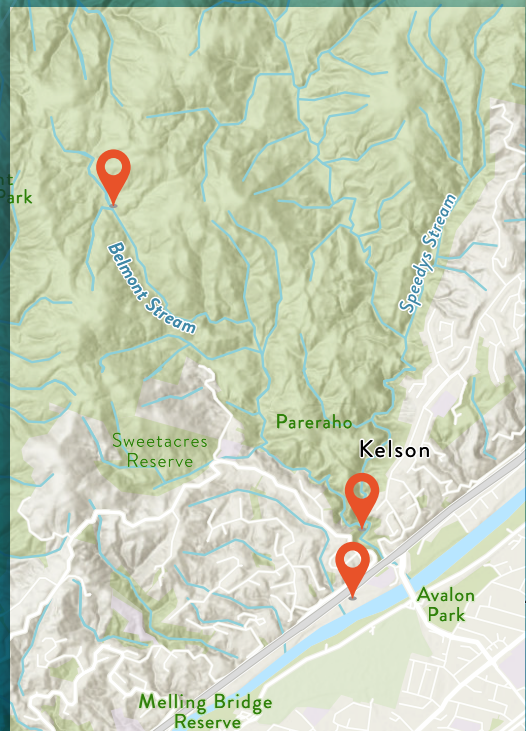
Pareraho Forest Catchment, Te Awa Karangi/Lower Hutt

The Pareraho Forest Trust works to protect, enhance and promote the natural environment for the benefit of current and future generations. They aim to facilitate the local community – including children – to enjoy and recreate in Pareraho Forest, and to maintain/construct facilities/equipment to support this aim.

This includes:

- » pest control and trapping
- » streamside planting/restoration
- » picnic/rest areas
- » water quality monitoring with their own SHMAK kit.

The group expressed an interest in monitoring their local streams last year, and reached out to our Mountains to Sea Wellington (MTSW) 'Wai Connection' team for some training and monitoring planning. John Simes and Beth Reille, with help from Quentin Duthie (Greater Wellington) and Jamie Stuart (Chair, Pareraho Forest Trust), are actively involved in water quality monitoring training. The group currently has four monitoring sites, with two more they'd like to add in the future.



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It was great to see a tuna! And hear how excited the kids were. I also really loved the idea of 'who do you share the neighbourhood with?' I thought about the fish as I was laying in bed, knowing they'd still be in the awa.

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Speedys Reserve, Pareraho Forest Events



Spotlighting

FRIDAY, 7 JUNE 2024: MTSWs 'Wai Connection' Catchment Coordinators hosted a spotlighting event in partnership with the Pareraho Forest Trust. The aim of the event was to support the Trust's goals to encourage community engagement, and learn more about the fish present in their catchment. We were delighted to run our survey close to one of their regular monitoring sites as it allowed both the wider community, and the team who run the tests, to see what was living in the stream conditions they've been collecting data on. Many attendees were from the Pareraho Forest Trust, and a member of Hutt City Council's Environmental Team also attended. The group spotted a few giant kōkopu, kōura, banded kōkopu, toitoi/common bully, and some tuna too!



Water Quality Monitoring

To better understand the impact of different land use activities on water quality, the Pareraho Forest Trust has identified monitoring sites the length of the catchment:

TOP OF CATCHMENT: In Belmont Regional Park there are three tributaries representing a mix of active farm and recently retired pasture. The group are comparing streams to track the efficacy of the restoration planting efforts in the retired farm sections.

LOWER CATCHMENT: They monitor two tributaries of Belmont Stream to help them understand any impacts of the surrounding urban environment, and further development nearby.

BOTTOM OF CATCHMENT WETLAND: They're monitoring a wetland area at the bottom of the catchment to track the efficacy of the wetland as a swale system.

This will also help them understand the changes in water quality from top to bottom of the catchment.



SHMAK Programme

Beth and John have been learning the full scope of the SHMAK programme, which covers nutrients, water quality, *E. coli*, macroinvertebrates and habitat assessments. This will help them better understand the impact of different activities on their local waterways.

John had a keen interest in learning the water quality and *E. coli* monitoring, and he has independently monitored stream sites of interest near his home – teaching his family and neighbours how to collect and identify macroinvertebrates.



Fish Surveys

They've also recently started doing fish surveys. During a water quality monitoring training session last year, John and Beth spotted a pīharau/lamprey climbing the stream ramp to enter the channel under the motorway – this was the original inspiration to host the spotlighting fish survey in Speedys Stream.

PHOTO CAPTIONS – Front page: 1. Tuna sighted during Speedys Reserve Spotlighting event. **Page left:** 2. Local Pareraho Forest community at Speedy's Reserve Spotlighting event. 3. John and Beth filling the water clarity tube at their wetland monitoring site. **Back page:** 4. Beth checking nitrate levels of the water sample. 5. John undertaking a macroinvertebrate survey. 6. Mayfly found in macroinvertebrate survey.

Next Steps



As part of their goals to understand the current state of their local streams and monitor any changes over time, the Pareraho Forest Trust catchment group will continue to complete their water quality and *E. coli* monitoring. They're hoping to use the data collected to find out the efficacy of their restoration planting efforts, and to monitor any changes to water quality as a new development is underway in Kelson, Lower Hutt.

Next steps will include:

- » understanding and interpreting the data they collect over the next year
- » equipping the group with knowledge and resources to undergo restorative action throughout the catchment
- » growing active participation in the group within the local community, and host more engagement events with MTSW to bring more people onboard.



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To learn more about the Pareraho Forest Trust, or how 'Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai' is supporting them, please contact:

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