

Welcome Back! Nau mai hoki mai!

Welcome to the newest edition of the Styx Living Laboratory Trust's quarterly newsletter! Within this issue you'll learn about all the amazing things the Trust has been up to and how we plan to move forwards. Panui koa!

Bioblitz in the Styx - April 2024!

The SLLT in collaboration with the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch City Libraries and our incredible volunteers held a Bioblitz event at the end of April. The team helped community event attendees with on-site sampling biodiversity and discovered what lives along the river and upload photos into iNaturalist NZ for the City Nature Challenge. It was awesome!

Christchurch ended up placing 26th in the world for number of iNaturalist uploads, how cool is that!

We are looking forward to next year bigger and better as we discover what biodiversity we have in the Pūharakekenui.



What's going on at the Styx



Update from Anita

The May newsletter update for Project Kōtare

At the moment we are all looking skyward wondering when the first decent rain of the year will come. We have about 42,000 plants to get in the ground this year and the lack of moisture in the soil is a real concern. We were glad it stayed fine for our Summer in the Styx event though, with lots of people coming through to enjoy the events and displays.

One of our first planting sites for the season is on the busy corner of Blakes and Belfast Road that runs along the Kā Pūtahi Stream. This land is owned by the company Ceres. The staff from Ceres joined us with the planting and it was impressive how much a committed group of people can get done. Everyone will be able to see how fast the plants grow as they go past.



Another site we are working on borders the Styx River in the lower part of the catchment. The team has made the area stock proof and planted nearly 3000 plants along the bank. As a bonus a bittern was surprised from the river edge, one of New Zealand's most cryptic birds. Keep your eye on our website and Facebook page for opportunities to join us on our planting days.



Jackie and her partner Josh welcomed baby Lily to the family in March. We are waiting for our first visit, and she will soon be knocking off milestones - first gumboots etc. Courtney has well and truly slotted into the community coordinator role so if you live along the Styx/Pūharakekenui and would like to partner with us on restoring the catchment please get in touch. Project Kōtare runs through until June 2026, so we only have two more years of being able to fund and undertake this large scale restoration project.

What's going on at the Styx



Introducing...

Creative Communicator Programme

Dr Jo Burzynska is a multimedia artist, researcher, writer and arts facilitator. Her central arts practice in sound and field recording, is often combined with scent, taste and touch, with sensory interaction in art the focus of her doctoral research at UNSW Art & Design. She is currently interested in exploring the different connections and understandings that can be made between people, place and the environment through a focus on embodied and nonvisual sensory knowledge. In 2022/23, she was a Creative Communicator at the Styx Living Laboratory, creating a Sensory Map of the Styx Pūharakekenui, which later this year should be available to experience in the catchment and online.



Alongside her own artmaking she has worked in facilitating the creativity of others, as a founder of the Auricle Gallery, and currently working one day a week as the manager and curator of Stoddart Cottage Gallery and its artist residency programme see how fast the plants grow as they go past.

And introducing...

George Aitken - Field Staff Intermediate



George is one of our field staff rangers for the Pūharakekenui Freshwater Improvement Fund Project. Prior to joining the Trust George was involved in restoring parts of the Te Waihora lake margin. In his spare time George enjoys making music, growing trees and spending time with whānau.

Creative Communicator Updates

Dominic has finished putting together a basic mōkihi/mogi/bullrush raft and tested it on the Styx before the cold crept in. The mōkihi is made from raupō, kōrari (flax flower stalk) and

sisal rope. It can be used like a paddle board with the user standing, kneeling or straddling the vessel. This mōkihi will be available to view at this years Matariki celebration at the Rongoā Māori Demonstration site at 567 Marshlands Road.



Community Education Highlights...

Courtney has been out with a number of students coming to the Pūharakekenui for Environmental Education, so fun! We had school camps from Hoon Hay Te Kura Kōaka, Geography students from Marion College and Rangiora High School. We also had Waitākiri Primary School out for two planting days where they smashed out over 1100 plants!

What's on next?

It's straight into planting season for the Field Staff Team (hopefully more rain!) with a number of sites already completed or near it! Sites we are working on border the Styx River in residential, industrial and public spaces. Keep your eye on our website and Facebook page for opportunities to join us on our planting days, if you want to join us email courtney@thestyx.nz!

Events coming up:

- PLANTING: join the Field Staff Volunteers on the 12th and 26th of June from 9am-12pm at 75 Lower Styx Road for planting.
- Matariki Night Walk: 6pm, Saturday 29th June we will be walking through the lit up Te Waoku Kahikatea (303 Radcliffe Road) for stories and to celebrate Māori New Year. Register for the whanaū friendly event on EventFinda, 60 spaces.

Letter from the Editor

It's been a busy year for our small but mighty team, and for me a lot of work has been going into our community connections and education programme. I would say it's the best part of the job, connecting with our community and getting to take students out to learn and experience in the Pūharakekenui, but it hardly feels like work! Do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life, well you will but it will be filled with fun. Jackie is back from Maternity leave in September, so if you want to connect about anything in the Styx until then get in contact!

- Courtney

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