

Ki Uta Ki Tai: From the Mountains to the Sea Volunteer Week 1-4 May, 2015



Group photo with Joel Vanderburg of River Estuary Care supported by Brendan Flack and volunteers before planting on the Waikouaiti Estuary.

Last month we ran another successful Ki Uta Ki Tai: From the Mountains to the Sea volunteer week with the four coastal groups in the Waikouaiti – Karitane area: Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka, River Estuary Care, East Otago Taiāpure Management Committee and Hawksbury Lagoon. This year we welcomed 13 incredible volunteers as the core volunteer group who were hosted at Puketeraki Marae over the duration of the week. Local members of the community also came to lend a helping hand alongside the volunteers.

On the Friday around 35 volunteers in total worked alongside Joel Vanderburg and River Estuary Care potting up seedlings with Gretchen Brownstein (some trays of seedlings donated by Landcare), planting 500 native plants along an estuarine edge of DOC land in the Merton Tidal Arm along Coast Rd, and releasing plants on the same site from previous planting days. The plants were sourced from the shade house (350) and Shetland Community Gardens (140). Volunteers were invited to the Vanderburg's house for lunch, for a much-needed bowl of hot soup and the most gourmet sandwiches you've ever seen!

A film crew from Animation Workshop also came along to film a short documentary for the Land, Air, Water Aotearoa (LAWA) website, highlighting the community effort to protect the waterways through active conservation and habitat restoration. Overall it was a great first day to kick off the volunteer week!



From left: volunteers Mary Beban, Ana Keelty, Keith Finlayson and LeAnne Petherick potting up seedlings at the Rūnaka grounds.

Keith shares his insight of Ki Uta Ki Tai saying, *"I think its important as it makes you consider all effects that one can have, and thus teaches you to just consider the environment. It is a very good philosophy for looking after what we are so dependant on"*.



Group photo with George Meikle and volunteers planting on Huriawa.

On Saturday volunteers teamed up with Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki rūnaka planting 350 native plants on Huriawa. The ground had been prepared prior to the planting, which was greatly received by the volunteers. It made for a breezy and fun day of planting for all. We also got the chance to plant some of the larger trees down in the gully which was quite the adventure getting down to the site.

The volunteers finished the day with a walk around Huriawa and a kōrero (talk) about the history of the Pā site for the local hapū.

Volunteers were told the vision of replanting at Huriawa in order to restore the Pā back to a glimpse of what it used to be. I know many of the volunteers are excited to come back in a few years time and see the difference they have made in supporting this vision.

Volunteer Dominic Schwarz shares his view on giving back:

“It is important to give back to the local community as well as to the environment as it easy to get disconnected in a big city and forget that while jobs and studies are very important when it comes down to it, the environment you live in and the people you share it with are the most important things”.

Photo right: volunteers take a rest on a hilltop at Huriawa.



Photo above: volunteer Duncan Nicol digging holes. He explains the importance of Ki Uta Ki Tai for him:

“It’s given me a new appreciation for the role of community work in NZ. I have come to value Māori customs more having participated in them. I have returned with knowledge of the history, of the species, of the terrain, and of the community”





Volunteer Sue Galloway planting on the causeways.



Members from the Dunedin Rotaract club volunteered their time helping Shirley and Hawksbury Lagoon with their efforts in the day's planting. Their timing was exceptional, as we needed many hands for the causeway job!

On Sunday the volunteers teamed up with Shirley McKewen and Hawksbury Lagoon in Waikouaiti for a massive planting mission, putting 300 plants in along the causeways of the Lagoon. Although the ground was incredibly hard to dig, we managed to finish the planting before lunch! The volunteers were more than rewarded for their efforts when they saw the gourmet lunch that was prepared for them. A special thank you to the Hawksbury ladies who once again fed us to the point of bursting! The food was incredible.

After lunch volunteers removed Broom from the Steward St planting and weeded the area. Shirley and Brendan then took the volunteers for a walk out to the beach to look at the pou (post) called Matainaka. Brendan spoke about the importance of these signposts for signaling the rāhui (temporary closure) that covers this area and gave a talk about the community efforts of looking after the estuary, the lagoon as well as the sea and its coastline.

Volunteer Moss Norman raves about his experience on Ki Uta Ki Tai saying it was a *“very inspiring community and an impressive initiative. I get the feeling that we were able to be a part of something that, with time, will prove to be much larger than we can even imagine”*.

Photo below: Our little helpers Te Manava and Charlie at Hawksbury Lagoon.



On the final day of Ki Uta Ki Tai, volunteers worked alongside Brendan Flack and the East Otago Taiāpure committee undertaking surveys of the coastline utilising the marine metre squared (Mm2) protocol. Information gathered was then uploaded to the marine metre squared website

(<https://www.mm2.net.nz/>) using a smart phone. This was a neat way for the volunteers to engage with marine science and learn the various species found on the coastline.

After lunch Brendan took the volunteers out waka ama paddling and fishing. This was the perfect way to wind down after a long weekend of work, and it was another great way to thank the volunteers for their efforts.



Photo above: volunteers work with Brendan surveying the coastline.



Volunteer Dominic Schwarz undertaking a marine meter squared survey on the beach.

Dom describes his experience as *“the chance to spend a good weekend out in a small community doing some fun work towards helping the local environment. It was a great chance to get some solid work done in the fresh air that left me feeling really good”*.

Chanel Phillips (Coordinator)

If you are interested in getting involved with Ki Uta Ki Tai please contact Chanel for more information: chanel.phillips@otago.ac.nz

A Māori concept the volunteers were introduced to was that of *rāhui*, or the temporary closure that currently exists to restore the paua population. Volunteers were taught the importance of placing restrictions on taking paua in order for this resource to replenish itself.



Suzi Flack was kind enough to come in one evening and run a harakeke weaving workshop for the volunteers as thanks for all their hard work over the week. The volunteers raved about this new experience and were able to take home their finished creations. Volunteers made dream catchers, bracelets, flowers, four corner baskets and little kete or bags. They also learnt the various tikanga or customs around harvesting the plant and particular rules when working with harakeke.