

UPDATE ON OKAREKA MISTLETOE RESTORATION PROJECT

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Since the last newsletter RBS have had another two workdays in March and late April.

The March workday was very successful with releasing of existing plantings which have really put on good growth this past summer. Minimal manual releasing was needed at both the planting sites in the marginal strip area, mainly around the top of the bank where we have had to replant several times after spraying. In the older planting area we have almost got canopy closure lower down the slope near the lake with plantings mostly 2m+ in height requiring little ongoing maintenance. The use of good sized plants in the area planted last spring has been beneficial with good survival and growth rates. Both areas had a release spray.

This allowed us time to focus on the weeds in Tikitapu Scenic Reserve. Mike Goodwin and Brian Law spent most of the morning poisoning larger cherry and wattle trees in the reserve which had so far evaded capture. The rest of the group focused on rechecking and retreating all the previously controlled sites with small patches of weed regrowth noted at most, which were quickly dealt with.

In April some further brief manual releasing of plantings was required but no spraying needed. The rest of the day was spent in the marginal strip at the Calder Rd end with a small group controlling the usual wandering willie infestation but also tackling some large patches of Japanese honeysuckle on the road edge and rogue cherries and cotoneasters which had regenerated over the past few years since last control. Brian Law again spent the morning in Tikitapu Scenic Reserve chasing up cherry saplings which had been missed in the February work. It is astounding just how many cherry trees are lurking in there and how quickly they are regenerating from seedlings. One of the large mistletoe trees within the new planting area was also banded as the mistletoes were still looking a bit browsed.