

## Expressions of Interest welcome for baseline surveying of habitat

### **Rishworth Reserve, Waiwhetū Stream, Lower Hutt**

Friends of Waiwhetū Stream (FoWS) would like to offer interested students the opportunity to conduct baseline surveys of various insect species, skinks and geckos as part of the general restoration efforts conducted by the FoWS.

#### Background:

The Waiwhetū stream begins in the Eastern Hutt Hills behind the suburb of Taita in Lower Hutt. It ends its journey joining the Hutt River near the sea. The Waiwhetū stream was once one of New Zealand's most polluted waterways, as a result of urbanisation and intensive industrial activity. Since the mid 2000s efforts have been made to improve the ecosystem of the stream.

The Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Hutt City Council, along with the community group, FoWS (begun in 2011) have restored much of the stream so that today water quality and the general health of the stream is much improved. One key activity undertaken early on was the eradication of the Cape pondweed which was literally choking the stream. In addition to weeding, the FoWS carry out rubbish removal on a regular basis, fish surveys and plantings for bank stabilisation. Over 9,000 native plants of over 80 different species have been planted since 2011. Visit our website for more info [here](#).

#### The Rishworth Reserve

As part of the bank protection works undertaken by the FoWS, an area at the end of Rishworth street, near the base of the Wainuiomata hill road has been replanted. This area is on the true left of the stream, 190 m long and 37 m wide, just over half a hectare. Before 2011 it was undeveloped public land that was very prone to flooding. The site was weedy and filled with industrial rubble. Today the area is largely restored with native plants and birdlife has noticeably improved.



**Project:** The FoWS would like a baseline survey to be conducted of native insects, skinks and geckos. The parameters of this survey can be decided in conjunction with the FoWS committee. Ideally the survey can be conducted to include:

- Quantifying various insects and fauna (range to be determined)
- Habitat improvement suggestions (such as good places for rocks to be placed for geckos to bask on)
- Photographs and other observations of the reserve

The survey parameters should be able to be repeated within a certain timeframe, such as twice-yearly or annually. This data would then be used by the FoWS for planning purposes to improve the reserve. Ideally FoWS would like this survey to be carried out before October 2019.

This project could be conducted by a student as part of an assessment. FoWS would endeavour to assist the student with information, the design of the survey and help in carrying out aspects of the survey. The FoWS cannot offer any financial support for this project, but we are confident that we can offer a real-life scenario that would be invaluable experience for any student of ecology.

Students and/or supervisors interested in applying to conduct this survey, please be contact with: Merilyn Merrett, FoWS co-chairperson: [mfmerrett@gmail.com](mailto:mfmerrett@gmail.com) or Rachel Tallon, FoWS committee member: [rachel@sqrl.net](mailto:rachel@sqrl.net)