BANKS
PENINSULA
CONSERVATION TRUST

Peninsula Matters Winter 2026

As we approach the middle of the year, it is fair to say that 2026 has presented its share of challenges. Many Banks Peninsula landowners and communities continue to recover from the impacts of February's severe rainfall event, we now face an exceptionally dry autumn, and international events remind us how quickly New Zealand can be impacted in an uncertain world. For me, this highlights the importance of strong communities, shared purpose and long-term thinking.

This year also marks the 25th anniversary of Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust. Throughout 2026, we are celebrating the foresight of the peninsula landowners who established the Trust in 2001. These founders believed that lasting conservation outcomes are best achieved when local people are supported to lead the protection and restoration of the landscapes they care about. Twenty-five years on, that philosophy remains at the heart of our work.

Recent months have also provided opportunities to celebrate what can be achieved through partnership. During local authority annual planning processes, we have been proud to highlight the remarkable conservation work being undertaken across Banks Peninsula by landowners, mana whenua, community groups and many others, and the importance of ongoing support for these efforts. In May, we were pleased to host the Pest Free Banks Peninsula partners' hui, bringing together organisations from across the programme to consider the next chapter of this ambitious initiative. Both experiences reinforced something that has been true since BPCT was founded 25 years ago; the best conservation outcomes are achieved when communities, partners, and agencies work together.

In this newsletter, we are proud to share stories that celebrate the people, projects and partnerships helping to care for this remarkable place. They showcase the extraordinary commitment that exists across the Banks Peninsula community and demonstrate what is possible when people come together in service of a place they care deeply about.

Ngā mihi
Maree

Maree Burnett – General Manager

News

Running, eating and talking – three ways we’re helping nature thrive!

BPCT enjoys the support of a very diverse range of partners and supporters – from big corporates to small businesses, agencies, service organisations, community groups, families and individuals. One thing we all have in common is a deep love for the communities we live in and for the environment that makes living here so awesome.
Over the past few months, our fundraising efforts have included running up big hills, talking to big groups of people, and going to the pub (this one we liked a lot!).

In May, BPCT was the 'charity of choice' for Akaroa

Salmon New Zealand's ‘kitchen takeover’ at Moon Under Water in Somerfield. The event was a sell-out - with more than 150 diners tucking into the best salmon dishes in town, dished up by chef extraordinaire, Nik Mavromatis and his team. The event raised over $4000 - such big thanks to Akaroa Salmon for their continued support of our mahi, and to the team at Moon Under Water for being so welcoming to us all.

Two weeks later, it was time to run off all that decadence, so we headed for the hills to support the inaugural ‘Run Akaroa’ event. Billed as ‘New Zealand’s most scenic road race’, it was also a chance for runners to see evidence of the amazing conservation work our community does. We spoke to runners after they crossed the finish line and so many of them talked about the beautiful pockets of native bush and forest along the Summit Road, and hearing the lovely voices of tūī and bellbird as they ran along the top.
As event organiser, Kerry Uren, so eloquently put it: “It was so lovely to hear how positive it was for BPCT to connect with Run Akaroa competitors and their supporters. I think runners in general are very environmentally aware. Officially connecting with BPCT as our charity of choice going forward will be very special.”

We also have a team of wonderful volunteers who spend their days, evenings and weekends talking about BPCT’s work with, for, and in the community. Over the past few months, we’ve talked to businesses, community groups, service organisations - like U3A, Lions and Rotary Groups - and retirement village residents. These audiences ‘light up’ when we describe the conservation work happening on Banks Peninsula. We thoroughly enjoy seeing the enthusiasm and curiosity people have for Banks Peninsula and the natural world, and it’s fabulous listening to their stories about the things they love about nature.

We are so very grateful to all the people and businesses who back BPCT, thank you!

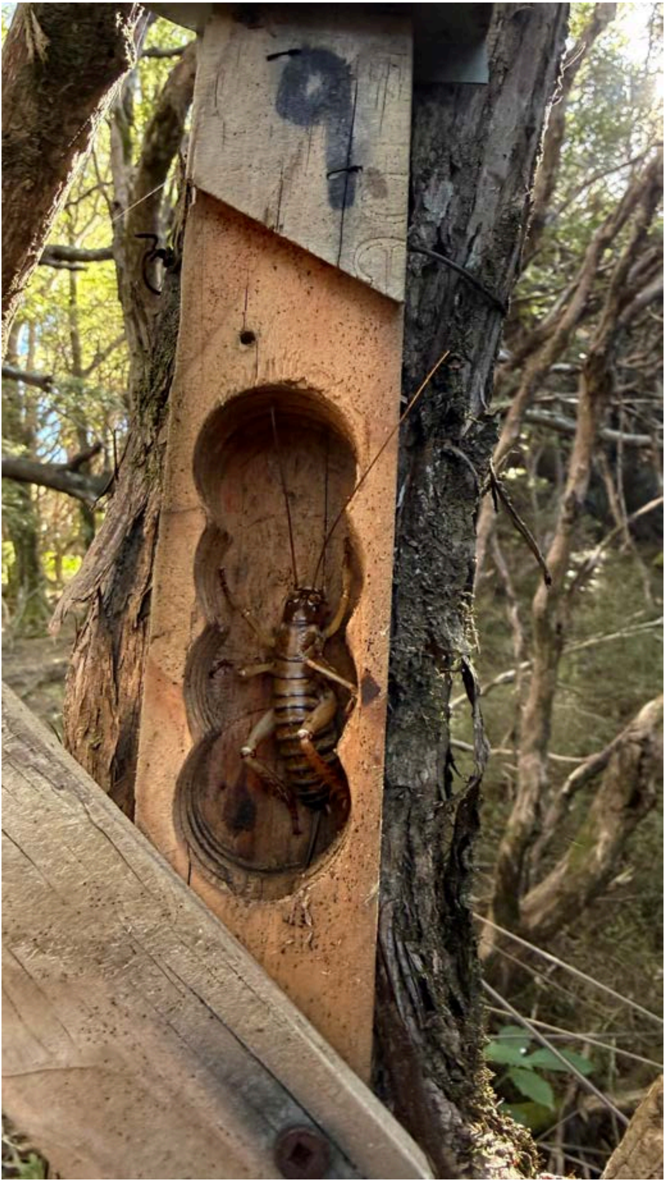
Thank you + Questions

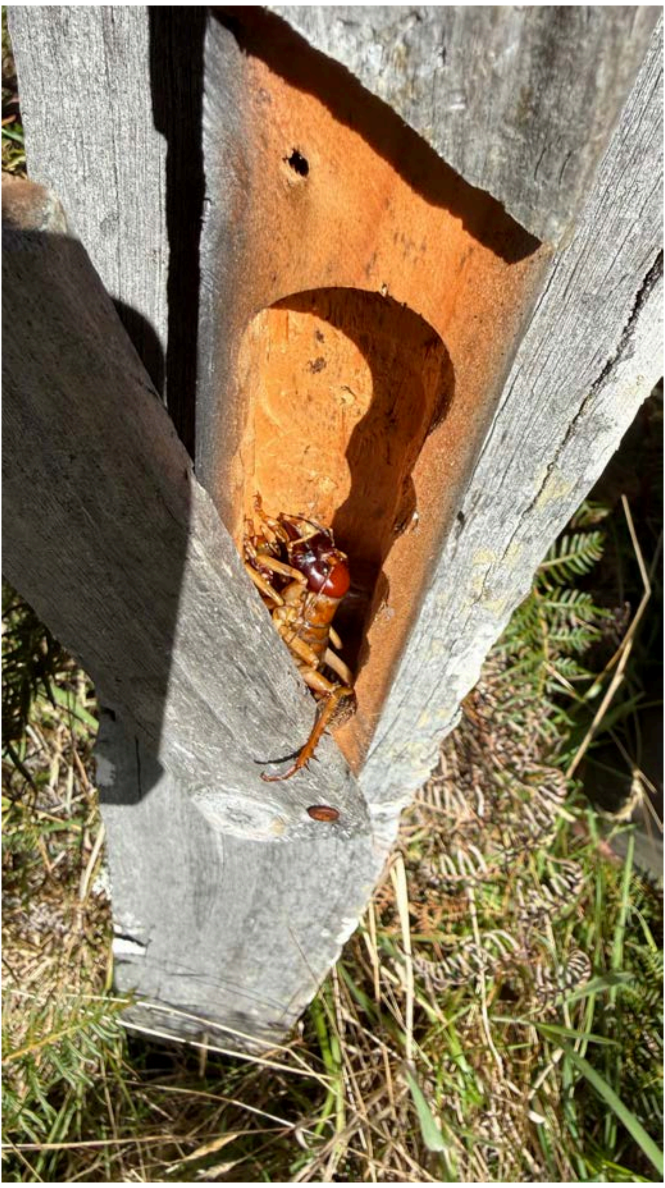
HELPING NATURE THRIVE
BANKS PENINSULA
lpc

We love wētā!

BPCT Administrator, Katie Pitt, was lucky enough to swap the office for the field over the last few weeks, visiting monitoring sites across Banks Peninsula to survey wētā populations.

Biodiversity monitoring is an important part of BPCT's work, helping us understand how our native species are faring and measure the long-term outcomes of conservation efforts across the Peninsula. The data collected will be compared with surveys completed in 2021, giving us a better picture of how our wētā populations are tracking over time. We will let you know the results very soon!





Te Wiki Tūao ā-Motu National Volunteer Week

BPCT runs on volunteers – they are the very heart of our work and success.

National Volunteer Week runs from 14-20 June, and during this time, we'll be celebrating the contribution our volunteers make to our organisation, our community and our environment. In the meantime, here's some lovely pics of our volunteers showing all the different ways they're helping nature thrive!

Find out more:
https://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/campaigns/national-volunteer-week

Te Wiki Tūao ā-Motu
National Volunteer Week

Meeting of Minds

Our Pest Free team hosted the annual Pest Free Banks Peninsula Partner Hui in late May – a wonderful opportunity for representatives from the 24 partner organisations that make up the PFBP collective to get together, share successes, talk openly about the challenges and seek solutions together.

A big focus this year, as you might expect being an election year, was around funding. It is the 'eternal challenge' we all face and it was certainly acknowledged that measuring impact – like biodiversity monitoring and demonstrating the 'community-level' impacts of our work (e.g., job creation, economic impact of pest management) - will be critical in securing future funding.

In March, the PF team took their work to Wellington - showcasing and sharing our work with government agencies, partners and other predator free programmes at the annual Predator Free 2050 hui.

The work we do on Kaitorete and the Wildside is nationally recognised - PFBP is one of the most successful 'landscape' projects in the PF2050 portfolio. We were invited to share our experience - the lessons we've learned from our attempt at multi-species elimination, the 'pointy end' of eliminating a species - the effort and investment required to get the 'last one/s', and how we use data to shape our strategy and on-ground actions.

It was a privilege to be able to represent the wider PF partnership here, and it was acknowledged that Pest Free Banks Peninsula's major strength – and point of difference – is the incredible collaboration that exists between landowners, mana whenua, community groups, local councils, and government agencies.

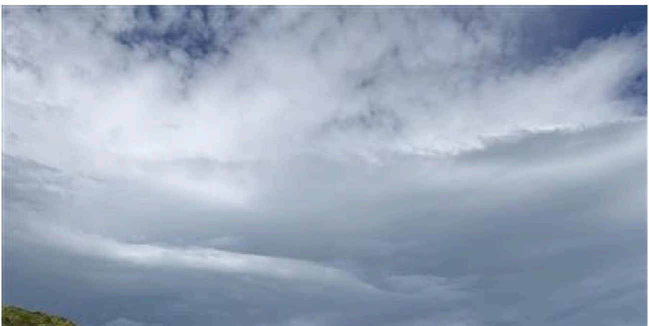
The hills are alive with the sound of music...

Autumn is a spectacular time to be on the peninsula – its stillness, colours and orchestra-level birdsong...all of it simply breathtaking. We've been making the most of the season's predictable weather, hosting loads of visitors who're interested in our work and keen to showcase it to the world!

In early May we were joined by our friends from the Predator Free 2050 Trust. They talked to our partners, landowners, and people in the community doing their bit to help nature thrive. Over the next few months, they'll be running a series of stories in national media about our work here – this is the first one:

https://www.thepress.co.nz/nz-news/361013305/canterbury-couples-creative-efforts-boost-local-tui-numbers-including-repurposing-high-school

Amongst our other autumn visitors was the team from Team Hutchinson Ford. Their Ford Rangers help our PF Rangers get where they need to go – efficiently, safely and in style! Check out the wee video they created here: **https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1CcBta2dzv/**

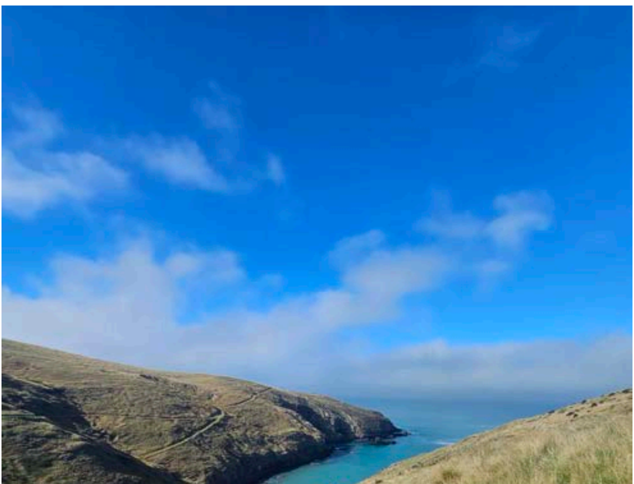


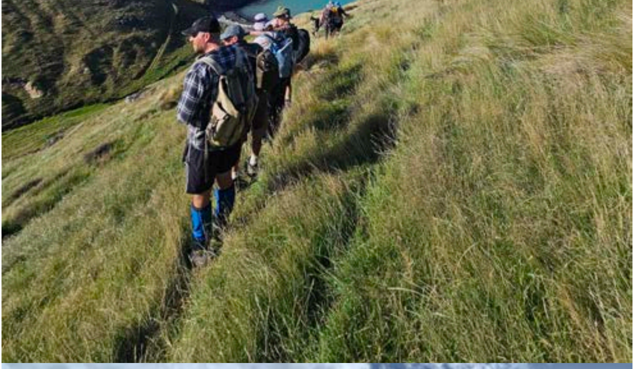
Little Place, Big Impact

It's been all go on the new Tai Tapu Community Reserve, with community working bee and Enviroshool events all helping to turn this once-forlorn little triangle into a burgeoning biodiversity hub.

Last week, Enviro Leaders from a number of schools around Selwyn spent the day mulching and protecting the trees that were planted by the community in 2025. This effort was followed by students from Tai Tapu School, who planted a further 400 native trees.

A big thanks to Mat from Enviroschools, and the team from Te Ara Kakariki, for all their help with both of these events. Longer term, we've got big plans for this little site - helping it grow to become part of a biodiversity corridor to aid the movement of species between the peninsula, the Port Hills and Christchurch city.





‘Wow factor’ Walks

We hope you were one of the many hundreds of people who were able to enjoy the weather-delayed Banks Peninsula Walking Festival in May.
BPCT hosted a walk on Oashore as part of the festival – working with our partners from CCC to showcase Canterbury’s newest Regional Park. The day was so stunning – bright blue autumn skies and a stillness quite rare at the top of Mt Bossu road!

Our group enjoyed the ‘usual’ offerings of Oashore – walking through its stunning tussock tops and rich regenerating shrublands offering glimpses down into its bays and beaches. Walkers enjoyed morning tea watching dolphins and seals at play, then scrambled through pockets of native bush to find its mighty totara and matai, and seeing a little bit of its old whaling history.

We take our hats off to the Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust team who organise this annual event. It is a significant undertaking, involving dozens of sites and a whole lot of logistical input and risk management. We are so grateful for all you do to enable people to access the peninsula - just know that all your hard work brings so much joy to the community!

Speaking of the Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust...

One of the volunteer highlights on our events calendar is the annual Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust working bee.

This year, our hardy group of helpers got to do fun things like weeding on steep hillsides, wrestling overgrown grass, getting poked in the eye by the odd bit of gorse and carrying heavy stuff.

But amongst the hard mahi, they also had the joy of hanging out with the lovely team from RDBPT and eating lunch!

Caring for the Land

Our Farm Biodiversity team has been out and about on farms, in catchments and in the community, helping to promote and enhance native biodiversity in rural environments.
In April, they were invited to present at the Junior Landcare Wetland Planting Day, a partnership between the Bupa foundation and New Zealand Landcare Trust. “It was amazing to see students, volunteers, and the community come together to restore this beautiful and significant landscape. The native species we planted will help boost biodiversity and improve water quality for generations to come,” said NZ Landcare Trust’s Bill Martin.

Watch the video here:
https://www.facebook.com/reel/991670730029913
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Farm Biodiversity Advisor, Josh Foster, also attended the Takamatua catchment meet up in May. This event was a chance to connect the bach owners' conservation group, Takamatua Environmental and Kaitiakitanga Group, with other landowners in the catchment, particularly farmers, and to give them all an idea of what existing ecological work is going on in this catchment and what grants are available to help fund future catchment- wide projects.

The team continued their water focus, helping to facilitate a wetlands workshop run by wetland ecologist, Dr Rebecca Eivers, a leading expert in constructed wetlands and wetland restoration. During the two-day workshop, Dr Eivers shared her scientific and practical knowledge with people eager to learn more about how wetlands can benefit farming operations, catchments, communities and nature.

Whether natural or constructed, wetlands can play a crucial role in improving water quality, they provide essential habitat for endangered species, can help reduce regional flooding, and store carbon, making them one of nature’s most effective tools for restoring ecological balance.

A ‘feasibly ambitious’ New Strategy for Pest Free Banks Peninsula

Almost 5 years since it set its first trap, last month, PFPB released its updated strategy.
“PFBP is almost five years in, so now’s the time to use what

we've learned along the way to ensure we're delivering transformational impact," said Programme Lead, Brett Butland. The updated strategy will see possum elimination on the peninsula extended, based on the programme's successful progress to date, and multi-species elimination expanding from Kaitorete. A significant quantum of new funding will be needed to enable this to happen at pace, with a highly ambitious new goal of achieving full possum elimination by 2030.

The end results, says Butland, include enhanced primary production values, increased recreational and tourism assets, and better ecological outcomes, including opportunities for translocation and reintroduction of native species to suitable sites.

How to Track a Possum

When we created our 'report a pest' function on the PFBP website late last year, we had no idea how important it would become in defending our 'possum free' status in Akaroa.

Thanks to the vigilance of residents, we have been able to defend multiple attempts by possums to 'break back in' to the township.
Over a two-week period either side of Easter, we received 12 reports of possum activity. The great detail residents provide in these reports creates a 'Hansel and Gretel' trail of 'breadcrumbs' - enabling our rangers to pinpoint exactly where to concentrate our camera and dog searches.

"We've been able to achieve possum elimination in Akaroa because the community has supported us at every step," said team lead, Ollie Rutland-Sims. "The community is essential to retaining Akaroa's possum-free status and we're so grateful for your extra vigilance at this time of year - and again in spring, when new 'batches' of these pests will try to set up residence here."

REPORT
A POSSUM
IN THIS AREA
PEST FREE BANKS PENINSULA
www.pestfreebankspeninsula.org.nz

Pest Free Ranger, Karla Franklin, holding the last remaining possum on Kaitorete.
Our possum freedom on Kaitorete has been achieved with the support of the community.

Welcoming CIAL

They deal with different kinds of ‘birds’ than we do, and usually it’s them welcoming people into their business, but we want to take this opportunity to say a big thanks to Christchurch International Airport (CIAL) and welcome them to our family of supporters.

We were proud to be a recent recipient of their Community Grant’s programme, and we have been enjoying getting to know the CIAL team as we work alongside them to develop a new Banks Peninsula-themed airbridge.

CIAL is the passage through which most national and international visitors pass on their way to other places around the motu – including Banks Peninsula. We hope that by working together we will not only inspire people to visit 'our place' but to also help support us in its ongoing care.

Celebrating a New Connection with Gallagher Insurance

Gallagher Insurance has been protecting BPCT's assets for many years, but this year, we celebrate a new connection with them as we welcome them to our family of regular corporate donors.

Like us, Gallagher Insurance recognises the strong link between people, communities, the environment, and economy, and their support of our work is an active demonstration of their commitment.

Gallagher
INSURANCE

Te Kākahu Kahukura: Tai Tapu Locals Night at the Sculpture Garden

Sixty people from the Tai Tapu community joined us for a Locals' Night at the Tai Tapu Sculpture Garden in March.

Generously hosted by Peter and Annabel Joyce, this event was a great opportunity to fuse art, wine and restoration. Guest speaker Graham Corbishley entertained and informed the crowd with the success of the feral pig and goat control work on Banks Peninsula, sparking many hearty discussions about the impact of feral deer in the area.

With tremendous support from the TKK chairs, the BPCT team, Brailsfords, Te Ara Kakariki, and contributions from the Joyce Family, Giesen Wines, Almighty Drinks and our friends at Barry's Bay Cheese, a fabulous, informative and cultured night was had by all!

Celebrating 25 years!

This year, BPCT celebrates 25 years of community-led native biodiversity restoration on Banks Peninsula. As well as celebrating our achievements, we really want to celebrate the people who have made our work - and our successes - possible. That means YOU!

***Save This Date:** Put a ring around Sunday 18 October in your diary – that's the day we'll celebrate 25 years of BPCT. We want to share this joyful occasion with our Banks Peninsula Landowners, partners, supporters, and community. More details (and an official invite) will be sent out later in the year.*

Coming Up:

If you were thinking about curling up into a ball and hibernating for the winter, then we've got a whole heap of reasons why you should not do that. Here are some of them:

Mitigating wildfire risk for the Port Hills Workshop: Living Springs, Friday 26th June 9am-4pm
Te Kākahu Kahukura has secured funding from MPI's Growing Native Forest programme to run a Wildfire Workshop. This will be held at Living Springs, Friday 26th June 9am-4pm. A practical, landowner/land manager focused day, this is a chance for Port Hills people to get in front of the experts, ask questions, discuss solutions and walk away with practical mitigation tools to apply.

Fire management plans will be central to the discussions, and our friends from Te Ahu Pātiki, Orton Bradley and Tupari have generously shared their recently developed fire management plan as a case study. FENZ will present a Wildfire Risk Analysis for the Port Hills, we have an engineering meteorologist to put weather into context, new research opportunities from the Lincoln University fire team and a number of workshops on offer.
If you are a Port Hills landowner or land manager, or interested in attending this free event, please contact Annabelle.studholme@bpct.org.nz for further information and the registration link. And tell your neighbours!

Le Bons Bay Pest Free Update: Sat 27 June, 3.30-5pm at Le Bons Bay Hall
We're inviting anyone in the Le Bons Bay community (and surrounds) to join us for some korero and kai – to share our thanks for the impact community trappers have in this area, to talk about our current and future plans, share results from our research project and answer any prest-related questions.

We'll put on a BBQ, do some 'trapping and technique' demos, and we're asking locals to bring their biggest/best 'catch' story to win a prize!
More detail will be circulated, but if you're keen to attend or find out more, please get in touch: enquiries@bpct.org.nz

Help us get to 10K!
Te Kākahu Kahukura's Podocarp Enrichment project is nearing a huge milestone - we're getting very close to reaching our goal of 10,000 podocarp trees planted across Te Poho-o-Tamatea the Port Hills.

You can help us reach this milestone by joining us at our upcoming Hōteke Winter volunteer planting events:

- **Thursday 25th June** 9.30am - 12.30pm, Te Mana Tamatea, Rāpaki
- **Saturday 18th July** 9.30am - 1.00 pm, Living Springs, Allandale

These events help bring the forest giants back, restore thriving indigenous forest, and grow a more climate-resilient city.

Please email sophie.hartnell@bpct.org.nz if you would like to join any of these events.

And if you need any further inspiration, here's a lovely photo of a podocarp planter, Penny Mahy, with her tōtara and mataī. She's one of 10 recipients planting 2250 podocarps this year as part of the podo enrichment programme.

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