

Newsletter of the South West New Zealand Endangered Species Trust



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www.tepukahereka.org.nz

Our Mission

“To fund and establish a world class sanctuary on Te Puka-Hereka for rare and endangered native species of flora and fauna that will be jointly developed by private philanthropists and government participants.”

In this edition....

- **Cleaning up**
The Great Fiordland Coastal Clean-up
- **Gold!!!!**
In search of fortunes
- **Sponsor Profile**
South West Helicopters

Cleaning Up Fiordland

For many people, Fiordland is defined by the spectacular landscapes of Milford Sound and perhaps Doubtful Sound of pristine mountains, sounds and coastline. Fiordland is also a much bigger place than a lot of people realise—

to put it into perspective, from Martins Bay in the north to Preservation Inlet is about the same distance as it is from Invercargill to Oamaru! That means one heck of a lot of coastline.

Unfortunately the coastline of Fiordland is not pristine. While it is remote, the tides and ocean currents deposit all manner of rubbish upon its coast.

In 2003, the “Great Fiordland Coastal Clean-up” started and has continued every year since. What started as an idea by Te Puka-Hereka trustee Wayne Pratt and fisherman Peter Young has become a major event on the Southland environmental calendar, attracting wide ranging support.

In the first year of the clean-up (2003), volunteers picked 200 cubic metres up rubbish off 76km of coastline from Port Craig to Preservation inlet. The rubbish collected was from a variety of sources—some obviously of local origin,

some that started its journey to the Fiordland coast in seas off other lands.

Since then the project has continued to work its way up the Fiordland coast and continued to collect similar volumes of rubbish. The last stretch of coastline from George Sound to Milford Sound is scheduled to be targeted next year.

As with Te Puka-Hereka and the Coal Island project, the “Great Fiordland Coastal Clean-up” is another example of how we can make a difference.

Below: Volunteers in action cleaning up the Fiordland Coast

Photos: South West Helicopters



There's Gold in Them There Hills The Preservation Gold Rush

In 1857 the Otago Provincial Council offered a reward of £500 for the discovery of a “Remunerative Gold Field” within the Otago Province. And so the search began, resulting in the discovery of the rich fields that were to become part of Otago history. Dr James Hector, visiting Preservation Inlet in the 1860's confirmed the presence of gold but it was to be over 20 years before gold was found in payable quantities.

During 1887, assistant light house keeper at Puysegur Point, Philip de Gruchy Payn took an interest in prospecting for gold on Coal Island. Eventually he left the light house service to prospect full time. Others soon joined him with reports of their success filtering back to Invercargill. By the early 1890's there were 60 to 70 prospectors living and working on Coal Island and by 1892 prospectors were working on the adjacent mainland.

As with so many of the gold rushes, the initial optimism was soon replaced by the drudgery of hard work and tough living conditions—from all accounts the work was hard, the gold hard to find and the weather typically “Fiordland”. Within a few years the rush was over and the prospectors had moved on.

While plenty of signs remain on Coal Island of the prospector's efforts, the most lasting and unusual legacy they left were the names of the four streams that run down to the west coast of the island—simply No 1 Creek, No 2 Creek, No 3 Creek and No 4 Creek. Now what could be simpler?

Sponsor Profile - South West Helicopters

A principle sponsor of Te Puka-hereka, South West Helicopters have a long association with Fiordland and Southland.

Quite simply, without the helicopter support provided by South West, the project would not be possible. Access into Preservation Inlet from the outside world is by either boat or helicopter—around 10 hours from Bluff by boat or 25 minutes flying from Tuatapere. Boat access onto Coal Island itself is very limited. The sponsorship provided by South West has helped these access issues to be overcome and enable the work on the ground to get underway.

Formed in 1996, following a staff buy-out of an existing operation in Te Anau in 1966, the company has bases in Te Anau, Tuatapere and Invercargill. Over the years the company has been involved in a number of environmental projects and initiatives, the most notable being the 'Great Fiordland Coastal Clean-up'. (for more on this see the story on page 1). South West Helicopters Managing Director and Te Puka-Hereka chairman Ian Buick continues the story

"I came to Fiordland to live in February 96. Up to that date I had visited the area from time to time on holiday and on business. Fiordland is a place that grows on you, the longer you live here the more you grow to love the place.

Two things happened since moving here that 'sharpened up' my 'environmental awareness' so to speak:

I moved into a property across the road from Ray Willett, a



To find out more about South West Helicopters visit their web site at: www.southwesthelicopters.co.nz



long time champion of Fiordland, the planet and all things



living on it, and a common sense 'greenie'. I see him now as my 'ecological conscience'.

The second was Wayne Pratt joining South West Helicopters. Wayne brought his penchant for ringing up with "I've had an idea" His first 'idea' was the highly successful 'Great Fiordland Coastal Clean-up'. The next was Te Puka-Hereka.

This has been so far both challenging and rewarding. It has given me a great deal of personal satisfaction to be involved in helping drive this exciting and worthwhile environmental project with the goal of returning Coal Island Flora and Fauna to it's pre human state.

With the stoats now gone and the deer numbers halved - we hope to clear the remaining deer off the island later this year as funds allow - we should begin to see a big increase in bird life and regeneration of plants.

We are still a wee way off tackling the mice but we are hopeful of securing a major sponsor to allow us to proceed with that phase.

South West Helicopters Group is proud to be involved with turning the dream of this becoming an island sanctuary into a reality".

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