

Pīpipi

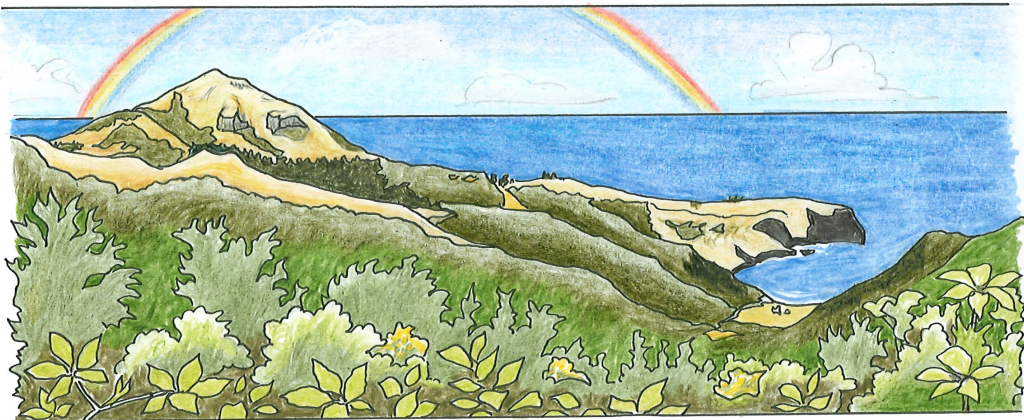
ISSN 1173-6674
print
ISSN 2815-7524
online

Maurice White Native Forest Trust
Newsletter from Hinewai Reserve, Banks Peninsula
Aotearoa / New Zealand

R.D.3 Akaroa 7583

63

May 2026



North-east of Eden

From Hinewai's beginnings in 1987 we dreamed that the new reserve might one day stretch from subalpine summits down to the sea. The subalpine top of Taraterehu / Stony Bay Peak was included in the 1991 purchase of most of Ōtānerito Station. Not until 2020, though, did Hinewai first touch saltwater, when the Armstrongs of Stony Bay / Ōpatoti enabled us to add their Mokimoki Bush to the reserve.

We now look after 1700 hectares, mostly legally "owned" by the Maurice White Native Forest Trust, nearly 200 hectares "owned" by the Native Forest Restoration Trust but cared for by us.

We don't want to make Hinewai bigger just for the sake of size alone, but there are adjacent hectares that would make so much ecological and

2 management sense if they joined the reserve, we want to be ready to jump should opportunities arise. Years ago we set ourselves

some limits — we wouldn't, for example, be tempted by land north of Long Bay Road nor south of Stony Bay Road. Hugh broke this guideline in 2006 when he wilfully bought 1.5 hectares from the Haleys on the



forbidden side of Long Bay Road, named it Haley Brae, and promptly gifted it to the Trust. Thus, in 2025, when the chance came to buy 77 hectares, between Long Bay Road and Goughs Bay Road, further in to proscribed territory, the incursion didn't seem quite so scandalous. Besides, the wind-swept ridge and the prominent peak form Hinewai's skyline when you look eastwards from most parts of the Ōtānerito Valley.

Gold at the end of the rainbow

So prominent is that 564 m summit that we had long bestowed upon it an informal name, Uenuku. We could discover no older Māori name, and "Trig N" seemed lame and inadequate.

In a familiar old Māori story, Uenuku was Hinewai's lover. The liaison was not entirely appropriate. Hinewai the Water Maiden, along with her equally lovely sisters the Rain Maiden and the Sky Mist Maiden, were human only in appearance. They revealed themselves only in the shadows of early dawn or late dusk. Youthful Uenuku came upon them one evening as they were bathing in a forest

pool, and fell hopelessly in love with all three. Hinewai thought that Uenuku was pretty gorgeous too, and she alone of the sisters agreed to take him on, for better or worse. She explained, though, that she could be with him only at night; if the sun should find her, she would surely die. For a while all went well. But it was bound to end in tears. Uenuku longed to be with Hinewai all the time. He decided to trick Hinewai by blocking up his windows with wharariki. On that fateful dawn, by the time Hinewai realised that, outside, day was already well-advanced, it was too late. Panicked, she burst through the door in to bright sunlight, followed by desperate Uenuku. Alas, he could only watch as she disappeared in a wisp of mist. For years Uenuku searched for her, beside himself with grief. In the end the gods took pity on him and turned him in to a rainbow. When next at Hinewai, if you see sunshine breaking through the rain clouds, you might see them together again, rainbow and mist beautifully entwined in a lovers' close embrace.

Uenuku Ridge Route

We explored the new land, sussing out the topography, plants, wildlife, weeds, fences, and a possible walking route from Wahanui carpark to the top. The new trail branches off Jules Knob Track beyond Mikimiki Knob, crosses the road at Goughs Bay Saddle, and traverses the ridge, at first broad and grassy, then steepening and narrowing upwards. Higher up, a narrow slot through rock, bordered by a tough old tōtara tree, turned out to be the only feasible way forwards. It's a striking feature of the foray. Edge carefully through it, as if through the eye of a giant needle.

Because parts of the new track involve some fairly rough walking, Max suggested calling it "Uenuku Ridge Route" rather than a track.

The highest point is a bold rock obelisk, adorned

4 with lichens, encircled by native shrubs and tussocks on otherwise gently rounded terrain, fringed with forest, surrounded by spacious views in all directions.



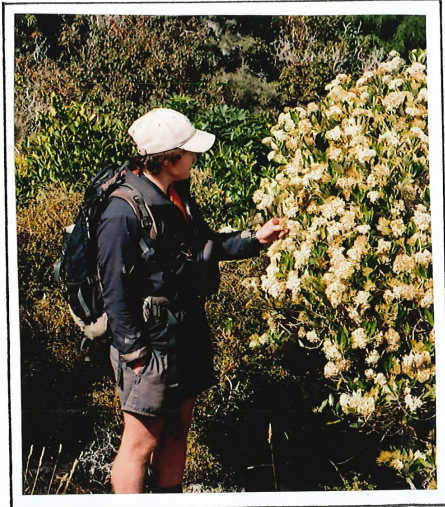
Max and Ash atop the obelisk

although you would never guess that fact from first appearances. *Raukawa* is extremely rare on Hinewai, and *R. anomalus* is overall far from common.

In March, numerous bushes of mountain akeake were in full fragrant flower along the rocky ridge crest. The new route traverses stands of ribbonwood, lacebark, kānuka, kōwhai, shrublands of diverse, small-leaved bushes, open grassland of pasture and tussocks, numerous thin-barked tōtara of all ages, and one adolescent mataī. Easter orchid grows on the prominent northwest bluff, only the second locality we have found so far across all of Hinewai for this lovely species. Just as rare is a

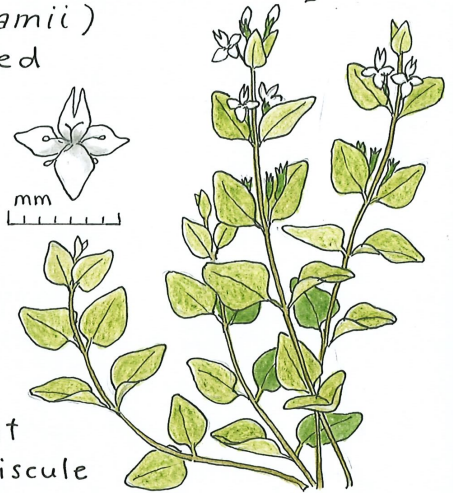
Natural riches

The Le Lievre land in addition harbours a pleasing wealth of flora and fauna. One surprise is the abundance of a small-leaved shrub called *Raukawa anomalus*. It is indeed anomalous. It's a bizarre relative of lancewoods and fivefingers and especially of the handsomely glossy-leaved tree raukawa,



single tussock of gossamer grass, *Anemantele* 5
lessoniana.

Ash particularly wanted to meet the tiny native mint/hīoi (*Mentha cunninghamii*) which he had never encountered before but which Hugh had recorded from Uenuku decades ago. At first we couldn't find it, but one day when we were all sitting comfortably having lunch among rocks, tussocks and shrubs Ash suddenly exclaimed 'Aha!' He had noticed what he thought must be hīoi and, crushing a miniscule leaf, confirmed its identity from the minty scent.



We also found the two rarest of Hinewai's five tree fern species, a couple of very young whekī-ponga (*Dicksonia fibrosa*) on road banks, and one very small mamaku (*Cyathea medullaris*) growing perilously close to the road edge on Long Bay Road.

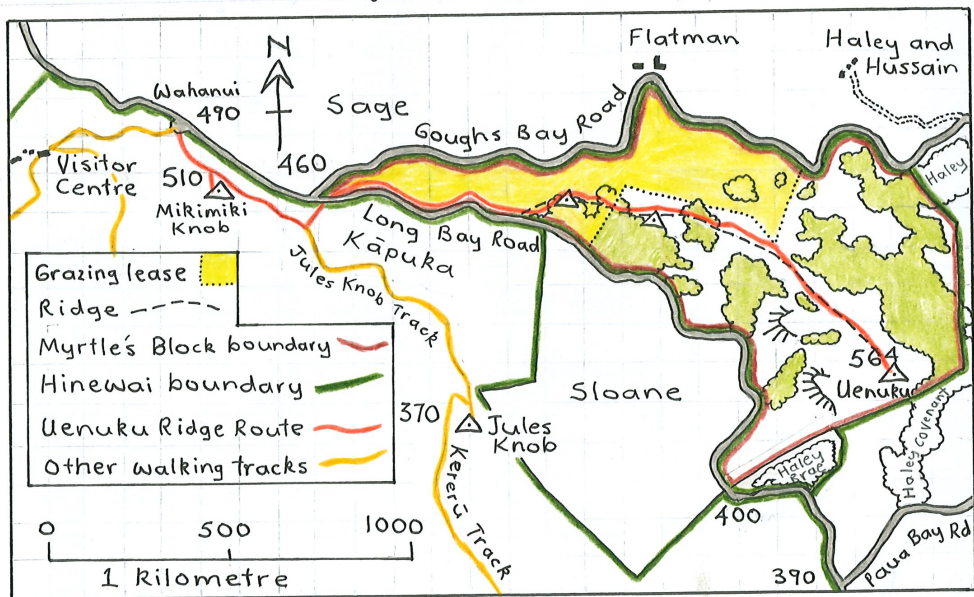
While working along the tracks we were checked out by Kārearea, and looking skywards one lunchtime we watched no fewer than five Kāhu circling overhead.

Sheep may safely graze

Stock will be excluded from most of the 77 hectares, which already has regenerated tree canopy. 26 hectares will continue being grazed by Will and Hannah Johns [by their sheep actually - Ed.], our delightful neighbours at Paua Bay. The grazing agreement we have drawn up with them is a win-win. It involves a new fence, about to be built by our favourite fencers Guy and Rex, allowing understoreys to recover. Grazing the north-facing expanses of mostly exotic pasture with sheep reduces grass competition and favours establishment of browse-resilient native trees and shrubs such as

6 kākā, lacebark, ribbonwood, kōwhai and mikimiki. When native canopy is well-established, grazing will cease, allowing browse-vulnerable species such as māhoe, fuchsia, fivefingers and ferns to increase. Gorse and broom are uncommon and controllable here, and won't be used as nurse canopies as they have been on hundreds of gorse-infested hectares elsewhere on Hinewai.

Another farming neighbour made a nice comment: "Isn't it good", he said "when farming and conservation join hands."



Place Names

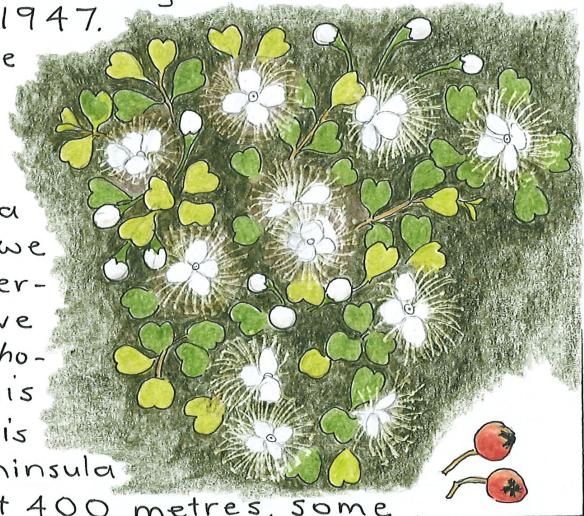
Aotearoa/New Zealand is blessed with a rich heritage of place names. Hinewai is no exception. "In the place names of a country" wrote Johannes Andersen in his 1927 book about Banks Peninsula, "large parts of its history lie embalmed. Names, once accepted, have a vitality that even successive changes of occupation do not destroy." Old Māori names continue to grace Hinewai and are spoken daily, e.g., Taraterehu, Ōtānerito, Ōtepatatu, Te Piki o Te Ake. Pākehā settlers spread their own patina of names on our peaks and passes, e.g., Purple Peak, Stony

Bay Peak, Long Bay, Narbey Stream. Sometimes these names only briefly obscured the names already there. Once the reserve was underway we gave our own names to numerous un-named features. The name 'Hinewai', however, was bestowed by the Bates family, previous occupants of the 109 hectares that became the nucleus of the new reserve in 1987.

All sorts of stories and connections are encapsulated by the numerous names across Hinewai's landscapes and maps. Te Ake, for instance, was a Ngāi Tahu chief who accompanied Moki on his invasion of Ngāti Māmoē around 1700. Narbey Stream honours the long history of François and Mary Narbey and their descendants in the Ōtānerito Valley since 1860. Le Lievre Spur and Jules' Knob refer to the long Le Lievre lineage.

The 77 hectares we have just added to the reserve was known to the Le Lievre family as "Myrtle's Block". Myrtle (Paul Le Lievre explained), was his dad's aunt. Auntie Myrtle sold her land to Paul's dad Lance in 1947.

We thought it might be nice to call our new trail "Myrtle's Track", and hoped the name might turn out to be a 'double entendre' (as we say in Akaaroa) by referring also to the native myrtle / rōhutu, *Lophomyrtus obcordata*. This beautiful small tree is common on Banks Peninsula



but only below about 400 metres. Some of Myrtle's Block lies below this contour, but none of our new track does. We haven't yet seen any rōhutu on or near it. Thus we will continue calling the whole area between the two roads "Myrtle's Block" but will follow Max's suggestion for the trail.

8 Times on the signs

You might ask "How long will it take me to walk from Wahanui carpark to Uenuku Lookout?" It depends who "me" is. [You should say "who I am?"] [Yeah. Thankyou Ed.]. Several walkers were delegated to time their trip. Not unexpectedly the results were varied. A few weeks earlier another

walker had mentioned how useful it would be to have an indication of how far the Visitor Centre is from the bottom end of Big Kānuka Track. Hugh timed this journey at what he fondly imagined was an average

pace, forgetting that he is now 81. His watch reported 28 minutes. He added a generous 2 minutes for good measure, made a sign saying 30 minutes, and nailed it to the masthead. Shortly afterwards Ash and Max were strolling homewards from their Ghost Falls workface, noted the new sign, and decided to test its accuracy. They carefully walked at what they fondly imagined was an average sort of pace, completely ignoring the fact that they are both in their early 30s and hardly average. They clocked in at 15 minutes.

Anyway, take these signs with a grain of salt. The Uenuku Lookout sign reads "1½ - 2 hrs return". That doesn't include the inevitable lingering at the singular summit.

Alien invaders

Vigorous natural regeneration of native forest continues to outcompete most of Hinewai's naturalised exotic plants - or at least the ones that matter. But we work hard against a handful of significant aliens that are (a) deleterious to native recovery, and (b) manageable enough to make control or elimination

feasible. Thus, much mahi has been mobilised against old man's beard clematis, pines, macrocarpas and sycamores. The floods of December 2021 gave grey willow a window of opportunity to spread along the banks of Narbey Stream. We moved to close the window [or nip it in the bud? - Ed.]. This summer Chilean flame creeper advertised its return with its blood-red flowers at a single site on Purple Peak Curry Reserve where we had tried to subdue it ten years ago. The invasive exotic fern polypody keeps sending advance scouts in to Hinewai, and alas its incursion is almost certainly unstoppable. During our explorations of Myrtle's Block Max and Ash detected two recent intruders — Mexican daisy and veld grass. We will try to eradicate the daisy but the veld grass, like the polypody, is almost certainly here to stay.

Weather out of whack?

Weather is chaotic and it's hard to sort out what is "normal", but it's also hard not to suspect that this year's repeated floods, gales and heatwaves across Aotearoa, not to mention Australia [yeah, no, best not to mention Australia - Ed.], are anything short of extreme. Hinewai has not been thrashed to the extent the North Island has, nor even as hard as nearby Wainui and Little River have, but the last six months have seen two more major drenchings here. A state of emergency was declared across the Peninsula in mid-February. The main highway to Aroaro was closed, floodwaters flowed through Little River businesses and homes (including Paul's and Tricia's), raging streams and sudden slips took out roads and bridges at Wainui. Many rain gauges exceeded 300 mm. Hinewai's Skyline gauge had overflowed (at



10 269.4 mm) by the time we reached it. More rain and gales followed in March and April. Bizarrely, late April saw a hefty dump of snow on the mountains, followed by a prolonged spell of calm, sunny, autumn days in early May.

Hinewai fared relatively well through all this. The Ōnīkautahi top fence was cut yet again by a small landslide, three floodgates vanished again, and the Akaroa side of Purple Peak Track lost half its width for about 15 metres where it dropped out in to a large slip visible from afar. For days afterwards the streams and waterfalls looked magnificent, full and furious but crystal clear.

The personal cost to Paul and Tricia was rough. Based now in Little River (Paul continues to work four days a week on Hinewai) they had been traumatised at Ōtānerito Homestead during the 2021 December Deluge Disaster, only to have floodwater right through their Little River home four years later. In a note to Hugh, Paul wrote: "In some ways the non-violent nature of the Little River floods doesn't compare with the 2021 flood at Ōtānerito, but the personal impact is magnitudes greater."

"Hinewai Reflections"

Two old mountain mates of Hugh, Pete and Andy, suggested gathering together a selection of Hugh's natural history drawings, and publishing them in book form. Finance Officer Bruce somehow persuaded some generous Hinewai backers to cover the publication costs so that, if any books sold at all (Hugh was dubious) the Land Purchase Fund might benefit. Quentin Wilson Publishing (no relation) produced 2000 copies, to be offered mostly to interested Hinewai supporters. To Hugh's astonishment the books sold well. Around \$50 from each \$80 sale has flown directly to the Fund. Some copies may still be available; ask Bruce at bahansen@xtra.co.nz, phone him on (03) 354 2207, or write him a good old-fashioned letter at 36 Bainton Street,

Bishopdale, Ōtautahi/Christchurch, 8053. ||

Personal details

On the first Friday after Paul was supposed to be starting his 4-day work schedule, Hugh bumped in to him at the Cabstand, transporting glyphosate to Ōtānerito for his next onslaught on the macrocarpa plantation.

Both Max and Ash are taking some time off through the winter for some O.E. adventures. Given the World Situation, Hugh worries about their safe return. He intends to travel no further than Akaroa and Christchurch, hoping to find enough time to draw a few more pictures and to work on another book project: "Hinewai, Her Nature and Story."

Ash and Max have also been on some adventures in the mountains. When Max returned from the Edwards-Ōtehae area of Arthurs Pass National Park, Hugh dug out some photos from his own trips in the same valleys. "Gosh, I suppose you weren't even born when these photos were taken" suggested Hugh. "Born!" exclaimed Max. "Even



Bluff in the southern corner of the Myrtle's Block near Haley Brae, viewed from Long Bay Road.

12 my parents weren't born then!" [It was 1961 - Ed.]. A few weeks later Ash returned from an Arthur's Pass foray. He had crossed Tarn Col and met rock wrens for the first time, wowed by close encounters of the bird kind.

Possum-free?

In March Pest-Free B.P. declared Akaroa Town possum-free, enlisting the human townsfolk to report any fresh invasions. Across Hinewai, the last few are being detected by means of night cameras, monitoring traps, and scat observations by Luke and his highly trained possum-scat dog. In mid-April Pest-Free's Wildside Co-ordinator, Ollie, visited to update us on Hinewai's status. The reserve is close to joining Akaroa in being declared possum-free. All this is not good news if you are a possum, but native plants and animals are happy. Night cameras are also detecting where deer are lurking too. Far from numerous right now, they represent a looming challenge.

Little lizard, big heart

Nick of DoC visited to release a young moko kākāriki that had accidentally hitched a ride on a stock truck to the city. He and Hugh slipped it on to kākūka near the



Visitor Centre. It seemed active, healthy and grateful. It also seemed wonderful that the burly truck driver had shown such concern for a tiny green gecko.

Pīpi appears twice a year. There is no sub and no obligation to donate, but donations are hugely helpful and appreciated. Contributions of \$5 or more are tax-deductible. We will post a receipt but will need a postal address if we don't already have it.

Account name: Maurice White Native Forest Trust
BNZ 02 0832 0044225 00

Hinewai Reserve, 632 Long Bay Road, R.D. 3 Akaroa 7583 N.Z.