



WAIKATO Regional Council senior catchment management officer Anna John says it's been fantastic to work with Stefan and Michelle Boddie on their regeneration project. PHOTO WRC

STEFAN Boddie (right) and his wife Michelle (second from left), pictured with Stefan's brother Heath and the boys' mum Fran, are years ahead of where they thought they'd be with replanting natives, thanks to Waikato Regional Council funding.

Planting for future generations

By Penelope Hall

FUNDING for planting 2000 native trees has been a welcome boost for a Pakeho couple's regeneration project.

Stefan and Michelle Boddie met Waikato Regional Council funding criteria for the Waipa District Catchment Plan's (WCP) objectives for the Waipa and Waikato Rivers.

The trees were planted by contractors on their Oparure Rd property in July.

The natives chosen were karamu, broadleaf, koromiko, lacebark, kanuka and manuka.

Michelle says: "We won't see the trees grown

to their full size in our lifetime, but we will better the land for future generations."

Sitting on 12.14ha (30 acres), the couple's home and business Glowing Adventures (glow-worm cave) had been part of the original Boddie family sheep and beef farm, in operation since 1912.

Although the cave and surrounding bush were preserved by each generation, Stefan and Michelle want to eventually remove all stock from the remaining eight acres (3.23 ha) and re-establish what was cleared all those years ago.

Pest traps to eradicate possums and rats have quickly hit their mark, with 30 possums and 30

rats caught within three months. They have since noticed a return of the birdlife into the area.

At the same time, Michelle says they are protecting the stream that flows into the Waipa River with fencing to keep stock out, the cost of which was included in the WRC funding.

She says: "Their help has put us years ahead of where we thought we'd be, both physically and financially.

"They've been easy to deal with and are there to assist, advise and fund projects.

"Fencing off the water ways may become compulsory in the future for farming in New Zealand, so why not make the call now and get ahead with

a bit of help while it is available."

FITS WRC OBJECTIVES

WRC senior catchment management officer Anna John says: "The project received funding firstly because it fit in with the objectives of the WCP, which sets a 20-year plan to support the restoration and protection of the health and wellbeing of the Waipa and the Waikato rivers.

"Secondly, the karst features (limestone formations) of this site have been listed high within WRC's top 50 karst features of the region.

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HEATH and Stefan with the Boddie family tree at the rear.

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“This is thought to be the largest underground river system in the region, and possibly within New Zealand.

“Given this karst system is within a partially fenced and forested area and is on unprotected private land, ... significant biodiversity improvements can be made with minimal investment.

“It is fantastic to work with enthusiastic land holders, who have been keen to protect and restore such a unique feature on their property, [because] work like this will result in improved water quality downstream and in our karst systems,” she says.

TARGET FUNDING

WRC has partnered with the Waikato River Authority to increase funding for catchment works in the Waipa within the Te Kuiti region.

They include the Upper Waitomo, Mangarama, Mangatea and Mangarama catchments and potential projects along the Mangapu River and the lower Mangaokewa Stream.

Anna says: “We’re targeting funding into priority catchments and streams, and partnering with other agencies and funding bodies to increase the grant rates available.

“Landholders with high value or significant natural areas may be eligible for funding to help protect those areas, such as fencing off remnant native forest fragments (remains). We encourage landholders in these catchments to give us a call to find out how to become involved.”

Anna is pleased with a rise in the number of property owners contacting the WRC.

Some are interested in fencing off their streams, pole planting for erosion prevention and looking at alternate land uses for their steep country such as manuka plantation.

“It’s been great to see a ripple effect in local communities when word gets spread between neighbours and projects connect across multiple properties. We’re always available to provide advice and information free of charge even if a landholder’s project doesn’t fit the scope of our funding. Interested landholders can contact us on 0800 800 401.”

Scottish lineage

JAMES Melvin Boddie, his wife Isabella and their 10 children emigrated from Scotland to New Zealand in the late 1800s.

He was mayor of Te Kuiti Borough Council from 1910–1912 and 1913–1915.

Their third son, Henry (Harry) purchased 500 acres (202.34 ha) at 1199 Oparure Rd in 1912, which he cleared for the farming of sheep and beef.

The farm continued in the hands of Harry’s eldest son Gordon before Gordon’s son Bevan, (Stefan’s father), took over.

Bevan increased the land holding to 809.37ha (2000 acres) before subdividing out 12.14 ha (30 acres), which included the glowworm cave, in 2010 and sold the remaining land in 2015.

GLOWING ADVENTURES

Stefan grew up on the family farm exploring the glowworm cave extensively and so turning it into a business was always on the cards.

Stefan’s brother Heath works in the business as the tour operations manager, his mother Fran is part-time administration and his father Bevan brings his “farmer know how”, doing maintenance and anything else needing attention says Michelle.

Since opening its doors in 2015, Glowing Adventures has received a Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence every year since.

Michelle says: “We’re off the beaten track and away from the crowds and clients often say they ‘arrived as strangers and left as friends.’

“Regarding the future of the business, we don’t want to take over the world, we just want to offer a high-quality product, and do it well.”

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