

TRUE COLOURS

MARCH 2001

CARTER HOLT HARVEY DONATES 245 Ha VIRGIN FOREST TO PROJECT CRIMSON

Project Crimson's sponsor Carter Holt Harvey has donated a 245 ha block of largely virgin hardwood podocarp forest to the Trust. The forest, which is located in the Utakura valley (northwest of Kaikohe), has been described as a 'spectacular piece of land' by Project Crimson trustees.

Announcing the gift at a celebration held on the Mokonuiarangi marae on 17 March, Carter Holt Harvey Chief Executive Officer and Project Crimson Chairman Chris Liddell said the donation was part of the company's ongoing commitment to the environment and protecting natural ecosystems.

"Carter Holt Harvey has played a significant role in New Zealand for more than 100 years and we recognise the need to leave a legacy for future generations."

Mr Liddell noted that the site's remote location saw the forest remain largely untouched through two generations of ownership by the Austin family. Carter Holt Harvey and the Austins have been neighbours in this area for some years and employees of the company had noted the conservation importance of the Austin block. As the company's neighbouring land was of little commercial value, but was useful for farming, a swap seemed the optimal solution.

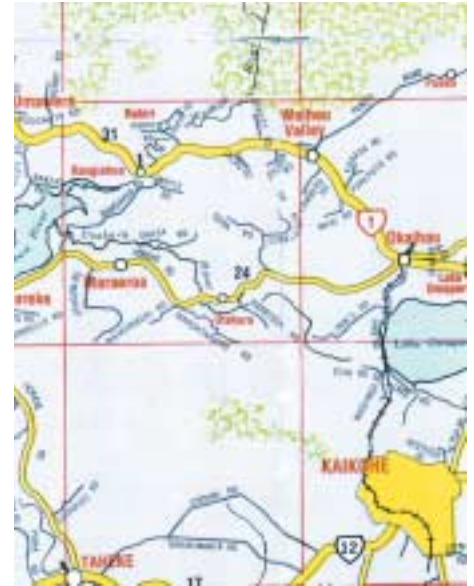
Mr Liddell says the gifting to Project Crimson was seen as a unique opportunity to protect a remnant forest with large northern rata stands, which are of great interest to the trustees. "We have been working on this for almost four years and are very pleased to see it come to fruition. We are also delighted to have the backing of local tangata whenua and look forward to working with them in the years to come."

A preliminary survey of the land conducted by Project Crimson Trustee Dave Bartram shows that it contains a wide range of native trees, including northern rata (*Metrosideros robusta*), flowering white rata vines and yellow flowering rata (*Metrosideros fulgens*). Other tree species noted include stands of mature and developing kauri, dense stands of rimu, kahikatea, totara, matai and kawaka.

Mr Bartram describes the forest as a showpiece for conservation efforts in New Zealand. "While there is some evidence of possums, the overall crown health and vigour are exceptional. Even very exposed ancient trees look very healthy," he says.

"I would go so far as to say that this is the finest remaining example of unmodified Hokianga forest that I have seen during more than 45 years working as an arborist and in the field of tree health. This forest is of great importance to both Project Crimson and New Zealand as a whole."

Peter Anderson, Conservation Officer, Department of Conservation, confirms that the land has the finest stand of old growth podocarps with the greatest diversity of



Hugh Pollock at Utakura

PROTECTING POHUTUKAWA & RATA

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PROJECT CRIMSON
Carter Holt Harvey
In partnership with the Department of Conservation

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indigenous gymnosperms from any single site in Northland today. "This is also the last dense podocarp stand remaining in Northland, and we are delighted to see it protected", he added.

Project Crimson's land sits between two DoC parcels which together gives around 1,200 acres of land under protection.



Photo Dave Bartram

Project Crimson will be considering a range of key issues to ensure that appropriate information is gathered about the site and that it is managed accordingly. Areas considered will include its cultural, botanical, biological and recreational status. Over the coming months, Project Crimson will be working with tangata whenua and the Department of Conservation to develop a comprehensive management plan. A complete flora and fauna species list is yet to be prepared. The Trust acknowledges the contributions of Hugh Pollock and trustee, Bruce Waters.

THREE CHEERS FOR NEW CONSERVATION TRUST

A charitable trust established by former Conservation Minister Denis Marshall aims to raise at least \$2 million to establish an endowment fund supporting New Zealand conservation programmes. The New Zealand National Parks & Conservation Foundation has already raised more than \$300,000 and begun allocating grants to various conservation projects, such as mistletoe restoration in Tongariro and a grant to the Limestone Island Restoration Committee. (See article in the September 2000 issue of True Colours for more information about the island's restoration project.)

The foundation will provide an independent, apolitical means for individuals and the corporate sector to invest in a range of conservation projects.



Its broad overview provides a great complement to the work of more targeted conservation groups such as Project Crimson, Forest & Bird and the Kiwi Recovery Programme.

REMINDER: PROJECT FUNDING APPLICATIONS CLOSE 30 APRIL!

All community groups looking for funding assistance from Project Crimson should get their applications in by 30 April.

While all pohutukawa and rata-related projects are considered, preference will be given to those involving the wider community such as conservation activities by schools, service organisations, marae committees and local councils.

Actions on private land, while considered, are less favoured unless the owner has agreed to an on-going conservation management programme and the work has wider public

value or the land abutts a reserve or beach area which other members of the public have access to.

Last year Project Crimson supported 80 projects around the country. See the 'Projects' section of our web site (www.projectcrimson.org.nz) for more information about funding criteria, projects previously funded, and an on-line funding application form. Application forms are also available by phoning our office at 09 480 8864 and leaving us your postal address.



QUESTION CORNER

Q. My small pohutukawa is growing on the side of a rocky bank and its roots are exposed. Will this harm it?

A. Probably not. Pohutukawa are well-adapted to these kinds of conditions. Many happily clamber up rocky cliffs and survive, even with some of their roots exposed!

Q. Why do my pohutukawa's leaves have black spots all over them?

A. If the spots are on older – rather than young – leaves then the spots could be a glomerella-type disease that generally affects the older leaves just before they are ready to drop off. Try spraying with a copper-based fungicide. If younger leaves are also affected you will need to phone a plant pathologist at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for more information (refer to phone book).

THE CRIMSON AD CAMPAIGN - YOU LOVED IT!

You've probably been seeing a lot more of Project Crimson this summer thanks to our hot new advertising campaign developed by Colenso BBDO. The campaign, which was possible thanks to a special funding grant from our sponsor Carter Holt Harvey, has received great feedback so far.

Two years ago we decided to try the imagery of the rata into our branding. We changed from our logo, which featured a pohutukawa tree for which we are most famous for protection efforts. However, many people still do not recognise that we are actively working with rata particularly through the southern North Island and throughout the South Island.

So recently we made a wee tweak to our look, and now we have been plastering billboards with the Better Red than Dead campaign and using images of either pohutukawa or rata.

We want you, your family and friends to recognise the rata and how closely related it is to our more famous Christmas tree - the pohutukawa. You could say this is one of our most pressing objectives this year. The more people recognise a tree they just take for granted the more we



reckon they'll get out in winter and plant a few more!

So has the campaign worked? Well, to date we are pretty happy with the huge boost in the number of visits to our web site. January is usually a quiet month for web visits, yet this January our site received 1,000 more visitors than was the case in December! It was by far the best month ever in terms of visitors to www.projectcrimson.org.nz.

This summer we also produced a street banner that has made its way around Auckland and Wellington. Many people contacted the trust and claimed we had numerous banners! Actually we've had one banner doing a lot of travelling. Our café cards also appeared nationwide over the summer and, judging by feedback we've received, they were a very popular Christmas card.

The campaign finished at the end of February and the board of trustees will review its achievements and look at whether New Zealanders will be receiving the 'crimson call' again next summer.

We'd like to thank our two photographers Sharon Langridge of Runanga and Kerry Fox of Gisborne for their fantastic images.



POHUTUKAWA FESTIVAL A HIT - AND MORE TO COME

Crimson is cool on the Coromandel Peninsula thanks to a successful pohutukawa festival held over the weekend 2-3 December. Carter Holt Harvey and Project Crimson supported the inaugural event, which saw community groups, businesses and residents join forces to raise awareness about the need to protect pohutukawa, and to attract visitors to the region to see these magnificent trees.

The event's co-ordinator, Jan Blake, says the festival's wide range of activities meant there was something for everyone.

One of the most popular events was the 'Kopine Trash to Fash' wearable art fashion show compered by television personality Suzy Aiken. It showcased an impressive array of weird and wonderful costumes featuring everything from



POHUTUKAWA FESTIVAL



food wrappers, newspaper and pohutukawa leaves, to ducting tubes, beer cans and egg cartons.

Debbie Teale, Project Crimson's Executive Director, says the festival was a timely and fun forum for raising awareness about the need to protect coastlines and pohutukawa. "In summer it's easy to forget about the planting and protection work we actually carry out in winter and just bask in the glory of red-crowned trees. We used this forum to remind people we need to do more."

Another pohutukawa festival is planned for 1-9 December 2001. It will be another fun means of going about the very serious business of protecting pohutukawa – so keep some time aside for it.

WHITE ISLAND'S POHUTUKAWA OF SCIENTIFIC IMPORTANCE

Pohutukawa is an amazingly hardy species. While it has succumbed to the ravages of possums and people in many places, the pohutukawa is the only surviving type of tree found on White Island (Whakaari), an active volcano in the Bay of Plenty. Although its future appears uncertain, the White Island *Metrosideros* is of considerable scientific importance for the species as a whole.

White Island lies about 50 km north-east of Whakatane and has been active with intermittent eruptions throughout recorded history. The island's soils are steep, acidic and thin. Despite these inhospitable conditions, mature pohutukawa forests have developed around the island's coast over the past few hundred years.

From the late 1970s to the late 1980s the island experienced its largest and longest series of eruptions in historic times. Toxic fumes, wet ash coating leaves and sulphurous 'acid rain' resulted in most of the island's vegetation dying. Although many pohutukawa also died, a significant portion of the trees survived. Nowadays White Island is only populated by seven plant species (compared to 13 recorded in 1967). These are primarily small plants such as flax (*Phormium tenax*) and native ice plant (*Disphyma australe*). Pohutukawa is the only surviving tree species.

Scientific research conducted during the 1980s and in 1990 suggest the pohutukawa's ability to resprout from epicormic buds (dormant buds on the plant's trunk or stem) and

resume flowering soon after being damaged has been a key contributor to its ability to survive on the island.

Observations on White Island have proven *Metrosideros* to be a most remarkable species, yet the remaining trees may yet be destroyed by the ongoing volcanic activity. While the trees themselves have survived, in recent years no seedlings or saplings have been noted over much of the island. Even if there were to be no further eruptions, it would take several hundred years for the island's pohutukawa to return to its pre-1970 state.

Despite this gloomy outlook, the White Island pohutukawa are of considerable scientific importance. Volcanic activity in the North Island has damaged or destroyed at least 20,000 ha of indigenous vegetation over the last 460 years. White Island is the only place with substantial and ongoing eruptions, which enables further study of the processes of vegetation change in relation to the North Island's volcanic regions.

Reference:

Clarkson, Bruce D., and Beverley R., 'Vegetation decline following recent eruptions on White Island (Whakaari), Bay of Plenty, New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany*, 1994, Vol. 32: 21-36.

Database update

We want to add e-mail addresses to our database, so please send us an e-mail with your name and full physical and postal addresses. (We need these additional details to ensure new information is allocated accurately). Please send your details to: info@projectcrimson.org.nz