



Mokomoko Newsletter

Inaugural Issue
5th May 2006

FOUNDATION MEMBERS

The Trustees of the Central Otago Ecological Trust are very grateful and wish to acknowledge the encouragement gained through the support of the foundation members. Having the backing of such a group provides the Trust with a huge measure of confidence in which to proceed into what, to some degree, are uncharted waters. The Trustees wish to thank all these members and to be able to include them from time to time at special meetings and to keep them informed of proceedings via a regular newsletter.

WHAT ARE THE SKINKS UP TO?

Since the Prime Minister and the Governor General came to Alexandra late last year there have been ups and downs. An adult female was lost through a crush injury to the head from an unstable rock (she was healthy but had only one lung! – which may have occurred due to possible inbreeding effects?). Of the three babies that unexpectedly arrived over the Christmas holiday period, two soon died of unknown causes. The surviving skink was doing very well however after being placed back with the adults, it was eaten by its own mother! These unfortunate mishaps have better prepared us for

skinks which we will receive directly from the wild.

There are now currently five adult skinks held at the joint Landcare Research/DOC facility; with a further three held at the Alexandra Museum. All skinks are currently doing very well. Names have now been given to each skink, thanks to people who wrote in with suggestions.

At the Landcare Research/DOC facility, the paired skinks are named as:

- Minke and Khani-Belle
- Sphinx and Rakiraki
- Jimmy and unnamed (waiting for replacement female).

At the Museum, Jambo is the large male, sharing his enclosure with the female juveniles, Jinx and Blix.

There has also been some unwelcome attention from at least two local cats. The cat standing up to the cage in this photo was captured and given a good dousing from a hose. This cat has not been seen since.



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APPROVAL RATING FROM DOC

The Central Otago Ecological Trust has had strong backing from DOC. The Trust has been officially approved as captive breeders ideally located within the skinks' former range in Otago. This is a real gain to the Trust as this means the Trust is considered to have the necessary expertise to give the project a real thrust towards its ultimate goal of reintroducing Otago and Grand skinks back into the wild in the Aldinga Conservation Area in Central Otago.

A LITTLE ABOUT THE TRUSTEES:

Dr Grant Norbury

Grant is a senior scientist with Landcare Research (LCR) and has worked as a professional ecologist in Australia and New Zealand for 18 years. He has led and managed multiple research contracts for government and industry in excess of \$3 million, involving financial responsibilities, contract reporting, and team management.

Achievements in the social aspects of research include collaborative arrangements with CSIRO Australia, University of British Columbia Canada, Secretariat for Conservation Biology Hawaii, Central Science Laboratory UK, University of Otago, and Department of Conservation NZ. Grant has supervised 4 post-doctorates, 3 PhD and 2 Honours students, 1 Fulbright Scholar, and led a team of 15 LCR staff in Otago. Grant initiated formal links between LCR and local rununga of Ngai Tahu, and arranged co-location of LCR staff with DOC staff in Dunedin and Alexandra. Grant is involved in school

environmental education programmes and is a committee member of the Galloway Beautification Committee. Grant is regularly invited to give talks and media interviews.

Distinctions include appointment to DOC's Grand and Otago Skink Recovery Group, visiting scientist in the NZ-Hawaii Conservation Exchange Program, Manaaki Tangata Fellowship for overseas study of predator-prey relationships, Wet Tropics Management Authority Research Fellowship, Prize awarded for best presentation at 1992 Conference of the Australian Rangeland Society, Commonwealth Postgraduate Research Award, First Class Honours BSc (Hons), Junior Government Scholarship, Member Australasian Wildlife Management Society and NZ Ecological Society; published 33 refereed papers and book chapters on wildlife ecology.

Grant and his wife, Dale, and two children and enjoy family life, tramping, mountain biking, karate, and kayaking. Grant has lived in Alexandra for 13 years – his vision is to inspire communities to value their natural environment.

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Frances Diver

Frances is Ngai Tahu, Waitaha, Kati Mamoe. She has lived in Central Otago for 35 years and with her husband has jointly raised a family and owns an aquaculture business in Alexandra.. Frances maintains a passionate involvement with the Maori community throughout this time. With a focus on developing better opportunities in employment, education and whanau ora. Frances

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has a clear understanding of governance through her experience as:

- Director of Crop and Food Research Institute
- Presiding Member of Otago / Southland Lottery Community Committee
- Chairperson Central Otago Branch of SF (supporting Families living with Mental Illness)
- Chairperson CO Child Care and Protection Resource Committee
- Takata Whenua representative for Central Otago Health Inc
- Taua Whakaruruhau with Roxburgh Te Puna Whaiora Camp and Kahui Board.
- Board member of Uruuruwhenua Health new Maori Health Provider for Central Otago.

sweetkouraent@clear.net.nz

Gordon Rayner,

Gordon and his partner, Mary Tritt have three children, and moved to Letts Gully in 1983.

Gordon is one of five partners in Checketts McKay, Lawyers, Central Otago since 1986 Gordon is based in their Alexandra office. Checketts McKay have interests in offices at Cromwell and Wanaka. Gordon's work is principally property conveyancing, small businesses, trusts and estates. He is a director of Checketts McKay Mortgage company.

His recreational Interests include mountain biking, kayaking, skiing, snorkelling, reading, camping and travel. Gordon was a member of the New Zealand kayak team in 1979. He competed at the 1979 World Championships in Quebec, Canada. As a member of the NZ Rafting team

and was awarded Otago University Blue for kayaking in 1979. He competed at Chuya Rally (preceded the World Rafting Championships) in Russia (1989) and USA (1990). Gordon is a Conservation Officer for Central Otago Whitewater and is involved in the Hawea River Whitewater Enhancement project. He coaches the Dunstan Kayaking team which is ranked 3rd New Zealand school team.

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Derek Chinn:

Derek is the manager of Montgomery Watson's Queenstown office. This is a multi-disciplinary engineering consulting company. Derek is a senior civil engineer and project manager with the company. He has 20 years experience as a project manager and designer. During his career he has worked for both large construction companies and consulting engineers. He has worked in New Zealand, Hong Kong and Papua New Guinea. In these roles he has been responsible for multi-story building construction, commercial buildings, large elevated printing press buildings, tunnelling, oil refinery construction, construction engineering for 15 km of elevated expressway, large scale sports facilities including 1000 seat grandstand, international track and concrete velodrome, flood protection works and a variety of high alpine buildings.

Derek has managed and designed a variety of challenging and diverse projects, the total value of many of these projects exceeding \$20 Million. His projects have involved difficult technical solutions, tight time frames and extensive consultation and

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consenting issues. He has been responsible for leading diverse teams of people, from construction crews in Papua New Guinea, tunnelling staff to multi-disciplinary design and planning teams. Derek has been recognised and awarded by both the Institution of Professional Engineers and the Association of Consulting Derek.n.chinn@mwhglobal.com

Alistair Campbell

Alistair brings high country management expertise to the trust. He is the managing director of Earnsclough Station Ltd whose land adjoins the proposed Mokomoko Dryland Sanctuary at Aldinga. Alistair is chairman of the Ultra Fine Merino Company which is involved in both genetics and wool export. He also chairs the Central Otago Merino Breeders Association along with chairing the S3 Project researching worm resistance.

He is chairman of the Central Otago Stud Merino Breeders and is currently councillor and past chair of the New Zealand Stud Merino Breeders. Alistair has been a director of the Port Nicholson Wool Spinners, the Otago Wool Processors, Silverstream knitwear and Otago Garment Knitters. He has held office as vice Chairman of the Alexandra Rabbit Board and was a Government Appointed Rabbit Advisory Committee member. He was involved in a Footrot DNA research project and has been a director of the last Chance Irrigation Company akcamp@es.co.nz

Dr Garry Nixon

Garry grew up in Southland but spent most of his holidays in Central Otago as a child and has lived here most of

his working life. He is passionate about the dramatic open landscapes of Central Otago and appreciates the unique plants and animals of the dryland environment. Garry backcountry skis, tramps and mountain bikes. He has been a medical officer at Dunstan for 14 years as well as part time GP in Alexandra. He worked as Senior Medical Officer at Dunstan for several years but now works part time as a Senior Lecturer in Rural Health with the University of Otago as well as working nationally to try and solve some of the workforce and professional issues facing rural hospital doctors. Garry is the Chairperson of the NZ Rural Hospital Doctors Vocational Working Party. Garry also chairs the Backcountry Skiers Alliance and is currently a member of the Otago Conservation Board.

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Tom Lamb

Tom has lived in Central most of his working life. He gained a Diploma in Agriculture from Lincoln College in 1959 and managed farms in Hawea, Roxburgh and Omakau.

In 1968, Tom bought and operated a small business in Christchurch for 5 years before returning to Alexandra to a small lifestyle block of 58 acres. At the same time, Tom established a franchise in building construction for 15 years until 1990.

Training in Wellington and Malta he became involved in missionary work within the Catholic Church in the South Island.

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From 1993, Tom became a support worker, caring for young men who had intellectual disability, encouraging them to live independently in their own flats. In 1997, Tom began training as a Workplace Support Chaplain - a role which takes him into the lives of the local working community. He is also a marketing manager and team leader for Central Otago, and participates in the forward planning for the Otago—Southland region.

Tom is the vice chairman of the Artsenta Trust (Dunedin) which encourages people who are experiencing or are emerging from mental health issues to explore the use of art in its many forms as a means of rehabilitation.

Tom's interests are family, hiking, biking, tramping, camping, good books and through music in the Central Otago Regional Orchestra, chamber groups
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TRUST ADVISORS

Rob Wardle

Rob, 42, lives on 10 hectares at Galloway and works for the Department of Conservation in Alexandra on High Country Tenure Review. Previous employers include Knight Frank(NZ Ltd)/Landcorp working in high country tenure review and vegetation monitoring, Landcare Research with the semi- arid lands programme, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries as a fisheries observer and the New Zealand Forest Service assisting with ecological surveys and research projects.

Rob's higher education comprises BSc and BA Honours degrees in Geography from the University of Canterbury and a Post Graduate Diploma in Agricultural Science from Lincoln University.

Professional skills include assessment of conservation values, consultation with high country stakeholders including farmers, NGO's and Iwi and navigating the legal, technical and social labyrinth of high country tenure review.

Outside of work, Rob along with his wife Kate, has established a walnut orchard which after 10 years is now producing a commercial crop. When not at work or in the orchard, Rob spends as much time as possible in the mountains and hills, tramping, skiing, mountain biking climbing and camping with family and friends.

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Cam Dykes

Cam, 42, is a chartered accountant. After graduating from Lincoln University in 1987 with an agricultural commerce degree, Cam pursued accounting, qualifying as a chartered accountant in 1989, becoming a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in 1991 and currently holds a certificate of public practice.

In addition to chartered accounting, he also has a broad commercial background gained from fulfilling financial management roles within the primary export, tourism and contracting sectors, including a role as financial controller in a publicly listed company.

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Cam joined Ibbotson Cooney Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors in 2004 and was appointed director in 2005.

Married with three children, Cam is very much at home in Alexandra, where he enjoys mountain biking in the Central Otago back blocks.

cam@ibbotsoncooney.co.nz

Trent Bell

Trent, 26, was born and raised in New Plymouth, and attended Victoria University where he gained a BSc in Biology.

Trent is employed at Landcare Research as a Research Technician and works mainly with lizards in this capacity.

He has had a long involvement in herpetology and is a member of both the Society for Research on Amphibians and Reptiles and the NZ Herpetological Society. Trent has kept and bred many native reptiles in captivity, including the large Duvaucel's geckos which he has had for more than 11 years. He has attained the highest wildlife permit for native reptiles and amphibians, which enables him to hold endangered species.

Trent has also worked in conservation projects, including Boundary Stream Mainland Island and at Macraes Flat with monitoring Otago and Grand skink populations.

Trent participates in competitive basketball, running, biking and enjoys following cricket.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE MOMENT?

The Trust is currently gathering information and budgetary details to submit an application to the Enterprising Communities Fund. This would fund a salary for a project manager for 1-3 years. If successful and a suitable person found the project should move ahead very positively.

Another initiative under consideration is the establishment of a public facility on the main road between Cromwell and Alexandra, strategically placed at the start of the Rail Trail at Clyde. The facility would be an all-in-one plant propagation, lizard breeding and education centre which will help achieve the following:

1. **Lifts the Trusts' profile.** A visual presence will help support the funding application for the predator-proof fence at Aldinga.
2. **Raise funds.** This will be possible via gate entrance, plant sales, school programs, tours, donations, souvenirs.
3. **A place for plant propagation.** We need to revegetate key parts of the Aldinga block to restore the habitat for the skinks in the Mokomoko Sanctuary.
4. **A 'Reptile Park'.** This initiative would breed lizards for the sanctuary, and for other sanctuaries nationally.
5. **Educate the public about dryland ecology** (including the special lizard fauna).

DOC supports this plan in principle. If approved, fund raising and consents for the facility would be one of the first tasks for the new project manager.



Please contact any of us with comments or ideas you might have, We'd be happy to hear from you.

If you would like to volunteer help to start propagating local native plants please contact Garry Nixon.

Tom Lamb & Trent Bell 5/5/2006



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