

The Neck Restoration Project

It was obvious to anyone who visited The Neck prior to 2008 that it was an ecosystem on the verge of collapse. Damage to the native bush due to possum and deer browsing was extensive and free roaming stock and uncontrolled burn offs added to the problem.

The Trustees consulted with owners and were given a mandate to carry out a pest eradication programme and do whatever they could to restore the land to its original state. The project began in 2008 with ground based poisoning of possum using 1080 in bait stations. The result was hugely successful with possum numbers being reduced by over 95%. The numbers have been kept low by an ongoing trapping programme. Sheep and cattle that had been allowed to roam freely onto RMLT land were removed and fences and gates were repaired to prevent them from gaining access.

To measure the effects of the reduction in possum numbers and the removal of stock a photopoint monitoring system was established. This involved carefully selecting sites (23 in all), around The Neck and taking panoramic photos at each site. These sites are revisited every 2 years and changes in vegetation can be seen by taking photos and comparing them to the ones taken in 2008. The most recent survey was carried out in 2013 and the improvement in the condition of the bush and the land has been very pleasing

Main changes evident from comparison of the 2013 data with that collected in 2008

1. Marked improvement in the condition of forest margins and a marked increase in native shrub and tree seedling establishment in areas not browsed heavily by deer.

View from photopoint 4 showing change in forest margin



2008

2013