



We Serve



OPUNAKE LIONS CLUB: LOOP TRACK

For walking and cycling





Approximately 24 months ago members of the Opunake Lions Club began investigations with regard to forming a loop track around the township suitable for walking and cycling.



For over 40 years the club has been involved with the formation and maintenance of a walking track along the cliff top which included the construction of two lookouts and a bridge. This walkway has commonly been referred to as the Opunake Lions Walkway.



The envisaged extension to form a loop would more than double the existing walkway to give a distance of approximately 9 kilometres utilising streets, private land and council-controlled reserves.



The club felt, with community support, the project was within its capabilities.

PROJECT BACKGROUND



Initial works included determining what issues were likely to result on the different land parcels and the parameters under which we could operate. Iwi consultation was carried out with Council and local hapu assistance. Some of the land over which the extension was to pass has considerable history and importance to mana whenua and the club wanted to show the respect required.



Submissions were made to the South Taranaki District Council's Annual Plan, and meetings were held with the local Community Board and the public. Formal written agreements were signed with the private landowners.



Because the pathway was passing under the State Highway with work needing to be done at bridge sites, NZTA also needed to be consulted and permission granted. Fonterra were also involved as the pathway skirts an industrial area they have just developed as a milk transfer station. With a large number of heavy truck movements occurring during the spring both they and the Lions Club worked to ensure the health and safety of all track users.



Final approval was given in April 2019 and the extension began immediately.

PLANNING AND APPROVAL

CREATING THE LOOP

A blessing was carried out by representatives of the Te Namu Iki Trust, the local hapu.

A track was cut following the river at the south end of town, a pathway was formed under the two bridges at the north and south of the town and a retaining wall constructed under the bridge at the south of Opunake alongside the Waiaua River.

Spanning the Otahi Stream and the north end of Opunake is an old dam, initially constructed in the late 1800s, for a flax mill which was on the same site as the old Opunake Dairy Factory. The existence of this dam was not known by the majority of the local residents and when the club opened up access, it sparked a huge amount of interest. Articles appeared in the local papers and the club received a lot of very favourable publicity. One family offered to the club \$1,000 for native plants to be planted along the river at the southern entrance to the township, which was done by students of Opunake High School.

A contractor digging an effluent pond very close to the township opened a seam of very good metal which he convinced the landowner to offer to the club. The one stipulation was that the metal had to be removed immediately. The club recognised that this was a tremendous offer as it had calculated that the cost of metal and carting it to site was going to be one of the biggest expenses. Within 24 hours teams of farmers and agricultural contractors were carting the metal and either stock piling it ready for spreading in the following summer or spreading where it wasn't too wet to prevent access. This occurred for four days at no cost to the club and involved over 12 tractors and trailers.



CREATING THE LOOP (CONT.)

During the spring students from St Joseph's Primary conducted riparian planting alongside the stream at the north end of town. Interest has been expressed by both the local Kura and the Opunake Primary School to undertake similar work during the winter of 2020. Plant orders have been placed for these with funding coming from a regional native restoration group.

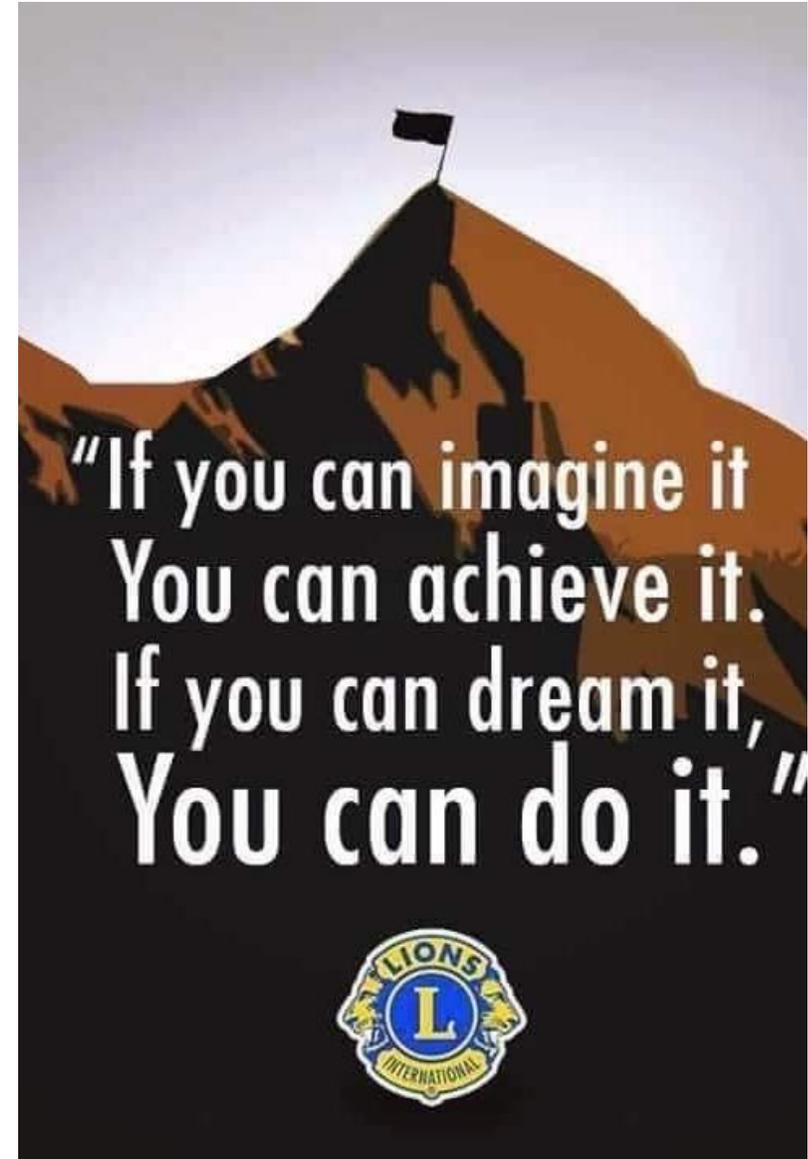
Work was undertaken by community volunteer predator control groups trapping possums, rats, ferrets etc. One very young (primary school) member of the community has been selling rat and ferret traps making a profit of \$5 for each trap sold. At the club's November 2019 business meeting she gave \$1,000 to the club for the loop extension.



READY FOR CHRISTMAS 2019

The Lions Club wanted to have the loop extension able to be used prior to Christmas to allow holiday makers at the beach to use it. Following a huge amount of work this was achieved, on December 24.

Following the New Year and the Opunake Beach Carnival, in which the club plays a big part, further metaling and grading was undertaken give an all-weather surface.



This has been and will continue to be a true total community project which has bought an immeasurable amount of favourable publicity to not only the Opunake Lions Club but Lionism generally.

Our goal is to have easy and safe access for everyone in the community to be able to exercise and get their daily dose of vitamin D both of which are extremely important for health and wellbeing in our battle against diabetes.



Our Lap the Map project to raise Diabetes awareness took place on the loop.

A TRUE COMMUNITY PROJECT

MANAGEMENT OF THE OPUNAKE LOOP TRACK

It was the club's stated intent from the beginning to involve as many members of the community as possible.

Over 60 people attended a community meeting and a community Loop Committee was established. The Lions have representatives on the committee and the chair is the Lions Club's immediate Past President.

This committee is split up into a number of sub-groups involved with maintenance of the original track, the track extension, publicity, iwi liaison and the planning and public consultation for the formation of a pathway and other works within the area previously occupied by the Opunake Railway Station.

The committee has contacts into many groups within the Opunake Community, including the schools, iwi, Council and sustainability groups to name but a few. The committee is extremely enthusiastic and has shown it is prepared to become involved both in a planning and governance sense as well as being physically involved.



PUBLICITY

Keeping Opunake in the loop

The Opunake Loop Track is wending its way around town. Last week Opunake High School students and Lions Club members were busy clearing and planting under and near the Waiaua Bridge. Work is also underway around the Otahi Bridge on the other side of town.

"I'm delighted with the progress that's been occurring," says Opunake Lions club president Ian Armstrong. "It's going faster now than we expected."

Among those who had come to the party were the Brewer family, who had donated \$1000 to buy plants for the Waiaua.

"Ron Brewer said it was one of his dreams to see that area planted, said Ian.



Opunake High School students planting along the Waiaua River.

and last Thursday Opunake the banks and biodiversity squeeze gaps in around the

Adding new colour to Opunake Walkway

Kirsty Meynell returned to art as a way of getting through her experiences of her last deployment to Afghanistan. Now her artwork can be seen by anybody coming on to the Opunake Walkway at the Hickey Place entrance.

Kirsty is a Warrant Officer Class 2 in the New Zealand Defence Forces, and has lived in Opunake for the last two years. She has served on two seven month deployments to Afghanistan and a six month one to East Timor.

"I had drawn at school but hadn't touched it for about 20 years," she says. "Initially my artwork had a bit of a military theme but not anymore. I do pieces that encourage thought in people. I quite like a bit of kiwiana."

About a month ago Kirsty put up artwork lining the fence on the Walkway's Hickey Place entrance.

"I love what the community has done with



Kirsty Meynell.

the secret garden and wanted to do something to brighten up this end of the Walkway," she says. "I've tried to show scenes that you see on the Walkway in sequential order." These include Te

Namu Pa, Middleton Bay and the Secret Garden. She says she has tried to put in elements of Opunake, such as somebody fishing, somebody whitebaiting and the surfboard fence.

She cites a great aunt, Sophie Turol who had come to New Zealand as a Polish refugee and was an artist as one of her main influences.

Loop extension to the walkway

For those living in Opunake, most will be aware of the walkway extension that the Opunake Lions Club has been working on over the last few months. What the finished product is going to be called is still a point of discussion. Work on this project started a little later than expected, however, thanks to all those who have contributed progress has been much faster than I expected.

Prior to work commencing NZ Transport Agency and



Opunake Lions Club members working on the extension to the Opunake Walkway.

PUBLICITY (CONT.)

New seat a welcome addition to walkway



A gathering of Pihama WI members, the Hickey family and friends were on hand for the delivery of the latest addition to the Opunake Walkway.



Loop Trail a walk in progress

The Opunake Loop Trail continues to steam ahead with our Opunake Lions Club having good conditions in the past month allowing for progress to be made at the north end of the track, with a large concrete pour taking place to form a bridge that covers a drain leading to the Otahi Stream. Once this has taken place, the bones of the trail will be complete, except for a small section that follows the stream behind the old dairy factory (with this section hoped to be completed soon) and the walkway through the newly formed Hurst Park.

The outstanding work our Lions Club has made to form the Loop trail has been no easy feat, and their dedication to the project is to be applauded. We know this is greatly appreciated



The walk gives a stunning view of Opunake Beach.



by the wider community. The Opunake Loop Trail committee has been hard at work collating the community's wishes around the vision of the trail, and planning for development stages is underway. As you can appreciate, such a large project it will take time, but with our town and wider community's support the project will enhance the township and provide great recreational, social and environmental benefits. Please enjoy the Loop Trail over the summer months, but always take care as some parts still have work to be completed. If you have any suggestions or would like to know what's happening around the Loop, please follow our Facebook page "Opunake Loop Trail" for up to date information and details on how you can help. We will be holding regular working bees in the coming year to enhance sections of the trail so please come and join in.

Opunake Loop Trail Committee

Biking raises funds for Walkway

The Lions Club Mountain to Sea bike ride was held on Sunday

We had 234 participants and while it is too early to give an indication of profit we are extremely happy with this result.

While the ride is promoted as a family fun ride we do have a race option with trophies given by Energy City Hawera. This year Darry Stevens was first in for the men at 1 hour 18 minutes and Nichola Cox first woman home in 1 hour 36 minutes.

The profits will be going to the work the Club is currently doing on the extension of the Opunake Walkway which



The start briefing gives an indication of the numbers involved and the beautiful day.

we are turning into a loop of approximately 8 km suitable for walking and cycling.

*Ian Armstrong
Opunake Lions Club*

THANK YOU



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