



## Otito Restored!

In January Crown Law informed our lawyers that DoC had purchased an area of beachfront land that, in 1999, had been included in the title of the adjoining property when a defective survey was approved.

The Crown lawyers informed us that *"the offer was made in the best interests of the public and community of Matapouri"* and DoC is now *"progressing on a number of operational matters to ensure the property will become part of the adjacent reserve and be subject to the Reserves Act 1977"*.

DoC has also offered our two organisations a sum of money as *"...contribution towards your clients costs conditional on withdrawal of proceedings"*... against the Crown. This amount is way short of the true legal costs that have been incurred by both our organisations to retrieve the land and also fails to address issues around compensation, discussion about ongoing management of the Reserve and issues relating to the cleaning up of the wahitapu areas.

We are presently seeking information from the Crown regarding these unresolved issues and trying to get access to the agreement and the cabinet papers that gave approval for DoC to settle.

We are outraged that the Crown has re-purchased land that they originally acquired in 1970 and also land that was defined as Crown Grant Road. To understand why they have just spent millions of our tax dollars in this way we demand open disclosure. After all we have been promised a transparent and accountable government.

A Judicial Settlement Conference is scheduled on March 17 in Whangarei. This gives the Crown, FoM and the Hapu an opportunity to settle before attending a 4 day Court hearing in July.

While the fight is far from over we would like to thank all our supporters for their help in reaching this significant milestone. Our community, together with the unstinting efforts of our legal representatives, Henderson Reeves Connell Rishworth, has succeeded in making the Government take action to reinstate this important piece of land to its rightful status as Crown owned Reserve. Well done! We must not yet slacken off though - there is work still to be done to finalise all aspects of our claim and restore the mana of that land.

We must maintain pressure on the Crown through legal action, so any contribution you can afford will help to have this matter resolved properly. For now Otito Reserve including the wahitapu once again belongs to all New Zealanders - of this we can all be proud.

*Leonie Molloy*

*Chair, Friends of Matapouri Inc*

## What's On at Matapouri over Easter

### Matapouri Historically: Good Friday 2 April 8am to 6pm

Once again Jennifer Wilson-Stewart will be displaying historical information about our district at the Matapouri Hall. **"Who they were, where they were and when they were here"** Come and see the early settler history of the district with family trees, photographs, maps and much much more.

### Artists for Otito second exhibition now on our website

The second Friends of Matapouri (FoM) and Te Whanau O Rangiwhakaahu Hapu Trust (the Hapu) fundraising exhibition of NZ artwork was held at Matapouri Hall in January. The exhibition was a fantastic success raising over \$5000 to go towards our legal expenses. Artists include Charlotte Fisher, Steve Moase, Tony Ogle, Barry Squire, Megan Squire, Bruce Pullman, Jenny Bennet, Andrea Low and many other New Zealand artists.

**You can now purchase artwork that did not sell during the exhibition from our website.**



Jenny McMath with some of the artworks at the exhibition. The one she is holding is by a local artist Tagi Orpp.

We still need to fundraise because we need to maintain legal action until all issues are sorted. Our success to date came about because of the legal work and community action. Please keep donating so we can keep fighting.

Bank account: ASB Whangarei, Friends of Matapouri Inc  
12-3099-0880004-00

Restore - Respect - Protect  
**OTITO RESERVE**  
[www.friendsofmatapouri.co.nz](http://www.friendsofmatapouri.co.nz)