

Paterangi School - PIRONGIA FOREST PARK EXPERIENCE 2023

On Monday 4 September 70 excited students and a bunch of keen parents and teachers climbed on the bus and headed to Pirongia Forest Park Lodge.

After morning tea we split into four groups. Two groups headed into the forest while the others stayed at the lodge. Bexie Towle the coordinator for Taiea te Taiao, Maungatautari to Pirongia Ecological Corridor Project met us there to talk to the children about the project and what we can do to help. It was incredibly powerful to be able to stand on one mountain and look across to the other and understand that we are trying to create a safe pathway for native birds and creatures in between, and that our own school lies within that pathway. She brought a range of maps, traps and taxidermized pests for us to check out. Our senior school is involved in trapping initiatives, so it was great for the young ones to see what we use and why. It was great to see this group noticing the traps along the paths when they entered the bush after lunch.



While one lodge group was with Bexie, the other half enjoyed exploring outside. We lit the brazier and roasted marshmallows, put up tents, played games in the space and generally soaked up the beautiful view over our local farmland.



The bushwalking group split into two and headed in opposite directions on the loop track. They were led by the teachers to explore the forest on the way around, learning about the trees and creatures that inhabit them.





When these groups reached the stream they stopped to carry out a water investigation using some of the equipment from the House of Science Water Analysis Kit – they found out that the stream was very clear, very cold, and had a neutral pH compared to Lake Ngaroto that we tested in Term 2. We found several creatures living in the stream including native koura.



We all met back at the lodge for lunch and then split again so each group got to experience each activity, before jumping on the bus, returning to school tired but satiated that afternoon.