



Green Shoots COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

June 2007

Region gets outdoors

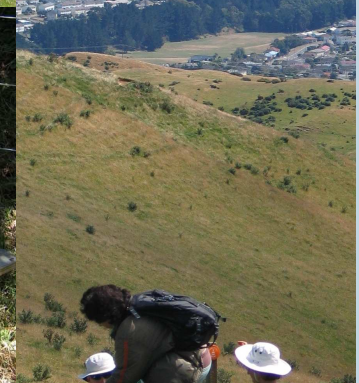
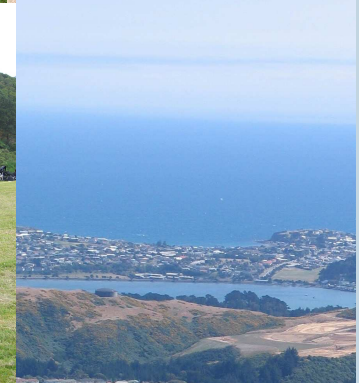
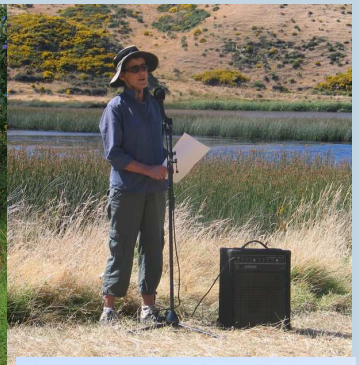
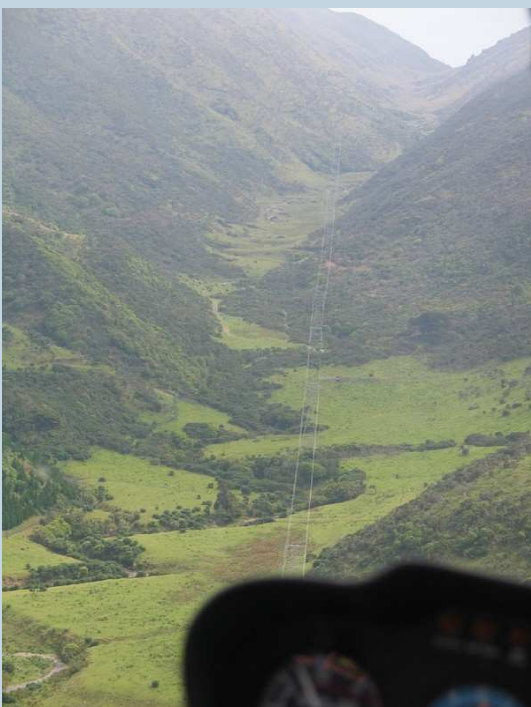
Summer has finished and so too has the Regional Outdoors Programme for 2007. The programme was once again a success with just over 10,800 people taking part in the 49 available events. We've had many comments – here are a few from appreciative participants:

“Well I'm very glad I took that trip. It was very worthwhile, well organised and the scenery superb - not to mention the weather.” – *Lighthouse and Lakes*

“Kia ora for organising this. It was an excellent morning and very informative. The bush at Kaitoke is both magnificent and inspiring.” – *Kaitoke Water Walk*

“Excellent programme. Provides opportunity to tramp with a group instead of on your own. Opportunity to be in off track areas with helpful guides.” – *Lower Gollans Off Track Adventure*

Below: a heli-view of Transmission Gully



Clockwise from top left:

Guides Chris Horne & Barbara Mitcalfe with ranger Nikki at *Botany of the Dunes*; Helen Beaglehole gives a lunchtime talk at *Lighthouse & Lakes*; heading down to Porirua at *Over the Tops Open Day*; a hedgehog haul for Mike Barry in *Project Pateke Pest Patrol*; the Upper Hutt Dog Rescue & Obedience Club supervise participants at *Paws in the Park*

We can only run these events with the help of volunteer individuals and clubs, local businesses, councils and Sport Wellington Region. There are too many to mention but a big thank you to you! You know who you are!

This summer we were very fortunate to have support from the Wellington branch of the Cancer Society and Dwights Outdoors – remember to slip slop slap and where to get your new boots.

Management Plan updates

East Harbour Regional Park

The 2007 Management Plan was formally adopted by Greater Wellington Regional Council in February and has recently been signed off by the Minister of Conservation. This is a “first” for East Harbour Regional Park under sole GW management and it is great to get very widespread support.

During the review Councillors clearly indicated that they wished to accommodate the interests of all potential park users through careful park management. Following the formal submission process and a Council hearing, a number of changes were made to the draft management plan. Designated tracks and areas have been made available for mountain biking, hang-gliding and para-gliding, balloted permitted deer hunting and permitted pig hunting. Dog walking in the Northern Forest, camping in Gollans Valley (excluding Butterfly Creek picnic area) and casual horse riding along designated tracks in the Lakes Block are some of the recreational opportunities that are now available to park users.

We are revising and updating our park maps, brochures and signage to reflect these changes. Visit www.gw.govt.nz for the latest information relating to what you can do in the relevant areas.

The management plan is currently being printed, and it is anticipated that both electronic and hard copies will be available from mid June 2007.

GW Parks would like to say a big “thank you” to all submitters who took part in the formal consultation process.

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

Submissions for the draft Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Management Plan closed on 13 April. 17 submissions were received. A paper outlining the content of those submissions will be presented to the Landcare Committee on 20 June, immediately followed by a hearing of the oral submissions.

The Parks Hearing Committee will recommend any amendments and officers will finalise the Management Plan. It is expected that the completed Plan will be available by the end of August. For further information please contact Fiona Shaw (ph 04 381 7784) or visit www.gw.govt.nz



From left: Gollans Valley flora; Lake Kohangatera

Belmont Regional Park

The pre-consultation phase for the Management Plan was completed in December 2006. 104 submissions were received; approximately 40 people attended the public meeting held in Belmont Hall, contributing their ideas & suggestions for the management of the park. The community identified that the key values for the park were its open spaces, easy access from Wellington, the Hutt Valley and Porirua, its non-commercial nature and its significant heritage aspects.

Submissions were considered by Council in early 2007 and officers have begun drafting the management plan. We expect this to go to Council in August and consultation will commence in September.

Issues to be addressed include the potential for wind farm operations and land tenure throughout the park including the reserve classification for Waitangirua Farm.

New faces around the place



From left: Andy Marriott, Erik Vanderspek;

Already well known in GW Parks for his skills with a hammer and jigsaw, Andy Marriott is now the ranger at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park. He and his wife Cindy together with daughters Samantha (3) and Charlize (1) will be moving into the ranger’s house on the park in July. Andy is especially looking forward to expanding the educational opportunities available at Battle Hill, including its unique place in the history of our region.

Erik Vanderspek is our new Eastern Sector Principal Ranger, overseeing Kaitoke Regional Park, East Harbour Regional Park, Akatarawa & Pakuratahi Forests and the Wainuiomata Water Collection Area. Having spent much of his career with DoC in Mt Cook and Northland, he’s having a “crash course” on the Wellington region. Feel free to fire some tricky questions if you catch up with him!

Learning more about park visitors

This summer was the second during which we surveyed park entrances and visitors to get a clearer picture of how many people visit parks, why they visit, what they value about the parks and how we can describe them. We combine this information with that we receive via our management plan submissions, ranger reports, other surveys and anecdotal feedback to provide a more robust basis for decision making.

Last year we surveyed Belmont Regional Park; this year it was the turn of Queen Elizabeth, Battle Hill and Kaitoke Regional Parks.

There were no major surprises arising from the research. It's confirmed our view that Raumati South is a major entrance for QEP and we will be installing a vehicle counter there in the next couple of months. The counts will allow for the large number of pedestrians and cyclists using that entrance. We have already installed dog poo bins along the Inland and Coastal Tracks; whether there are more will be up for discussion. Soap will become standard in the park toilets and we'll take other smaller scale measures that can be addressed. It was good to see that people want to see more promotion of the regional parks network and we are continuing to work on that.

If you would like any more details on our visitor monitoring programme please contact Amanda Cox ph 04 381 7726

Barn storming ahead



The tender was let and restoration of the barn at Queen Elizabeth Park started on 22 March. Since then the contractors have moved along very quickly and by the time you receive this they will be all but finished.

A big thank you must go to the Friends of QEP especially John Lancashire and Rosalind Derby, for their work in making this happen. Members will shortly be helping to paint the building and re-lay the brick floor under the direction of Leon Kiel.

A Barn Dance is planned for 29 September to celebrate the completion of the project. Keep an eye out for more details on our website and in local newspapers.

GW Environmental Awards to offer cash prizes

Greater Wellington would like to recognise and reward some of the extraordinary work that people are doing in partnership with us to improve the health of the environment throughout the Wellington region. So this year we are launching the GW Environmental Awards. Four awards will recognise the three main groups of people that we work with to fulfil our goal of a sustainable future.



From left: "Heritage" trees of our region - totara and northern rata

Two of the awards target schools with the **Totara School Leadership award** and the **Miro School Sustainable Project award**. The first will recognise one key person's leadership on a school-wide environmental project. The second will go to a school that is working with us on one of our programmes such as Take Action, or Trees for Survival, or on a project in our regional parks or with a community group.

We would also like to recognise the work of a wide range of community groups with the **Rata Community Partnership award**. We work with and support many community groups through our Take Care programme, projects in our regional parks, sustainable transport initiatives, and our flood protection responsibilities and land management programmes.

The **Nikau Compliance award** will acknowledge how consent holders can have a huge impact on our environment and some develop incredibly innovative and inspiring solutions to reduce the impact of their activities on the environment. This award will recognise a consent holder for going above and beyond the conditions of their consent to minimise its environmental effects as well as managing any associated environmental impacts that are not specifically covered by the consent.

Nominations for the awards open in July with applications closing at the end of August. Keep an eye out for more information in the Get Involved section at www.gw.govt.nz and in your mailbox.

Winners of the awards will receive cash prizes and certificates (and yes the way in which the money will be spent will be part of the application!). So think about applying – it could be a real boost for your group's profile and your project.

Rotary Award for Ranger

Recently GW nominated Dean Hearfield for a "Pride of Workmanship" Award offered by the Upper Hutt Rotary Club. Dean was selected due to his 30 years of service in managing the forests surrounding Upper Hutt and the work he does in assisting other rangers and parks.

Upper Hutt Rotary Club accepted our nomination and Dean received his award on 28 May at an awards dinner at Te Marua Golf Clubrooms. Congratulations Dean.

Orange Hut to re-open soon



Floor down, walls up, moving along nicely

Since the Orange Hut in the Akatarawa Forest was burnt down in 2005, there has been much discussion and planning for its replacement. That stage is now over and the rebuilding began on 1 March this year. It has been progressing well with the foundations laid and the main concrete floor poured. Both the floor and the block work involved volunteer tradesmen and labour from a wide range of recreational clubs. It is great to see such a strong sense of ownership of the Orange Hut and the surrounding forest – GW really appreciates the efforts of everyone involved.

An Opening event is planned for Sunday 1 July. See www.arac.org.nz for more information.

Rimutaka Summit toilets to close

The toilets and tearooms at the top of the Rimutaka Hill are to close at the end of this year.

The toilet facility is in need of a major upgrade. However, the gradual improvements to the Kaitoke and Rimutaka Hill Roads have greatly reduced travel times to and from the Wairarapa. Adequate toilet facilities are now available to the public in Featherston and at Kaitoke Regional Park.

Due to the isolated location of the Rimutaka Summit, and the lack of basic services (power and water), providing any public facilities there has always been difficult, making the cost to manage and maintain the facilities increasingly uneconomic.

Revisiting concessions

Greater Wellington is currently reviewing the Regional Parks Concessions Policy which was last reviewed in July 2001. This policy sets out our approach to commercial and non-commercial recreation and tourism activities in the parks and forests. It also outlines how and how much GW will charge for using parks, as well as any facilities.

Prior to the formal consultation period, interested parties are invited to provide feedback, comments, issues and viewpoints on the parks concessions process, policy and fee structure which will be considered when preparing the revised policy. We are particularly interested in obtaining feedback on these areas:

- How the concession process can be made easier e.g. interaction with council staff, information requirements for a concession application, payment of concessions
- The triggers for when a concession is, and is not required
- How easy it is for the concession holder to get information
- Concession requirements for club activities or events (non-commercial)

Once a draft revised concessions policy (2007) is approved by Council, a formal community consultation process as required under the Local Government Act will begin (approximately August – October 2007). As part of the consultation process, members of the public will have the opportunity to provide a written submission on a draft concessions policy, and present an oral submission to Council if they choose to do so.

For more information please contact Victoria McGregor (04 381 7753 or Victoria.mcgregor@gw.govt.nz)

Winter planting days

The planting season is here and there are plenty of opportunities to have a good energetic morning out improving the park environment for visitors and wildlife alike. Please join us for any of the following planting events in the regional parks – and for a cup of tea afterwards:

Sat 23 June & 7 July: **Spinifex planting**, QE Park. 9.30am-12 noon. Meet at Raumati South entrance.

Sat 16 June; **Of Gorse Of Course**, Wainuiomata Recreation Area, 1.30-3pm. To book contact mary.kibblewhite@huttcity.govt.nz Afternoon tea provided at the NewDowse.

Sat 30 June. Raumati South **Wetlands** planting. 9.30am-12 noon. Meet at Poplar Ave opposite entrance to Matai Rd. Followed by sausage sizzle.

Sat 21 July & 18 August. **Whareroa Stream** planting 9.30am – 12 noon. Meet at Whareroa Beach via MacKays Crossing entrance.

Sat 4 August. QEP **Remnant Bush** planting 9.30am – 12 noon. Follow the signs from the MacKays Crossing entrance.

The **Friends of Maara Roa** hold fortnightly planting mornings from Saturday 9 June onwards. Meet at Brandon Intermediate School, Cannons Creek at 9.30am

Wear warm clothing including a jacket and boots and bring drinking water, a snack and a spade and gloves if you have them.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT GREATER WELLINGTON PARKS

Wellington office
142 Wakefield St
PO Box 11646
Wellington 6142

Upper Hutt office
1056 Fergusson Drive
PO Box 40847
Upper Hutt 5140

www.gw.govt.nz
parks@gw.govt.nz

Publication date June 2007
GW/PF-G-07/122

T 04 384 5708
F 04 385 6960

T 04 526 4133
F 04 526 4171