



Regional Parks Report 2007-08

For the year ended 30 June 2008

Quality for Life



greater WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL | Parks



Contents

Introduction	2
Map of regional parks, forests and water collection areas	3
Projects 2007-08	4
Environmental programme	5
Akatarawa Forest	6
Battle Hill Farm Forest Park	8
Belmont Regional Park	10
East Harbour Regional Park	12
Hutt River Trail	16
Kaitoke Regional Park	18
Pakuratahi Forest	20
Queen Elizabeth Park	22
Wainuiomata Recreation Area	24
Water Collection Areas	26
Preparation for new parks	28



Cover

Shown here are: (1) Buggy walkers at QEP; (2) ROP participants exploring Belmont; (3) Spotted skink; (4) Upper Gollans stream; and (5) Kev the Wandering Kiwi at Tunnel Gully.

Introduction

Welcome to Greater Wellington's *Regional Parks Report*, the second edition of a publication informing you of the achievements and issues in Wellington's network of regional parks and native forests.

2007-08 was distinguished by some of the best summer weather of recent times. Visits to the regional parks increased around 25% over last year, and these visits were spread across more of our regional residents. 57% of the regional population visited at least one regional park this year compared to around 50% in 2006-07 based on our survey information.

The range of activities enjoyed in the regional parks continues to grow. Walking is still the most popular pastime but we have seen significant growth in mountain biking and events from a few years ago.



Twitching (bird-watching) on the Coast – Queen Elizabeth Park

Much of our work focuses on creating and maintaining these high-quality natural spaces for our visitors. However, the regional parks deliver other important services to everyone, whether they visit or not. For example:

- They protect significant or rare ecosystems, enhancing biodiversity and making us more resilient to the effects of climate change
- Two of our main sources of drinking water lie within our parks and forests network. Our forests protect our water quality, making it easier and cheaper to treat our drinking water.



Lighthouse and Lakes guided walk

Of the features most valued by park visitors, the flora or native bush are recurring themes. Visitors cite the opportunity to *get in touch with nature and the outdoors* as one of the main benefits they receive from visiting the regional parks.



Battle Hill Heli-Tramp



Upper Western Hutt river

Projects 2007-08

The achievements in the following pages show projects in relation to individual parks. Those listed below relate to the parks network:

- The summer Regional Outdoors Programme (ROP) was completed with 57 events attracting over 14,000 people. Total attendance at Greater Wellington led events was 4,724, up 21% from 2007 – an average of 98 people per event
- Lion Foundation Buggy Walks were held each month around the region in conjunction with Sport Wellington Region. An average of 150 parents and their babies attended each event
- We maintained our ongoing relationships with Parks 'Friends' and other community groups. The June issue of the community newsletter *Green Shoots* was published and distributed to 1300 interested individuals and organizations
- Resource Statements for Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, East Harbour Regional Park, Kaitoke Regional Park and Queen Elizabeth Park were published. Volume One (Physical Environment) of the Regional Forest Lands Resource Statement was published (encompassing Akatarawa & Pakuratahi Forests). Reviews of the Battle Hill Farm Forest Park and Belmont Regional Park management plans were put on hold
- Our draft Concessions Policy was prepared for public comment. Progress was made on reviewing our Park Bylaws for controlling user behaviour
- A telephone survey of regional residents indicated that 57% of the population visited at least one regional park over the past 12 months. 91% were satisfied with their experience
- Vandalism continues to be an ongoing problem in our parks with a great deal of ranger time being spent dealing with the aftermath. Press releases were issued to highlight the problem and to try to get the public to assist in policing this issue. Various options are being considered to help deter vandals, including the use of security cameras
- The region's dry and sunny weather translated into record use of our parks. Visit numbers were estimated at 820,000, an increase of 25% over last year.

How much does it cost?

Total Parks operational expenditure 2007/08: \$6.6m

Expenditure attributable to each park is identified in the relevant sections.

Environmental programme

Greater Wellington's parks, forests and water collection areas contain many remarkable and significant natural ecosystems. Among these are magnificent lowland podocarp forests, ecologically important rivers and streams, and regionally and nationally significant wetlands.



Upper Eastern Hutt

The appropriate protection and restoration of these ecosystems is an important aspect of the management of the parks and forests network. With the main threats coming from introduced pests and human use, GW Parks implements a range of programmes to control pest animals and plants and assess the health of our ecosystems.

Possoms are controlled over most of GW's forested land. Bait station or trap networks are located in the medium and smaller sized forests. A five yearly cycle of possum control using aurally sown 1080 poison is carried out throughout the present and future water collection areas to protect water quality and the water holding capacity of these catchments.

A goat control programme operating across all goat infested areas aims at keeping goat numbers down to low levels to allow forest regeneration. Professional hunters are employed to hunt favoured goat habitat with the help of tracking collared "judas" goats.

Pest plant control plans are in place for all our parks. These plans prioritise the control of infestations using criteria related to urgency and practicality of control. At least 45 pest plant species are controlled by our own pest plants team and professional contractors.

Both pest animals and plants are more intensively controlled within two "mainland island" projects. One is within the upper Wainuiomata River catchment and the other is in the Gollans Stream catchment in East Harbour Regional Park. The aim of these projects is to protect the greater biodiversity values present and to further restore the areas to a semblance of their original character and condition.

An extensive pest monitoring and ecosystem assessment programme is run in conjunction with the pest control programmes. Monitoring of pests first determines the effectiveness of control operations and then whether population levels are rising above pre-determined thresholds.



Monitoring seedling growth

Ecosystem assessment involves a programme of scientific fieldwork and planned observations to record changes in the health and functionality of ecosystems. The resulting information contributes to the knowledge and management of each area within GW's parks and forests network.



Controlling Japanese honeysuckle

Akatarawa Forest

A future water collection area, this steep forested hill country contains original lowland podocarp and remnants of montane forest, exotic plantings, regenerating native forest and several wetlands. The bird and insect life is highly diverse with all the region's surviving indigenous bird species found here. The forest forms links and ecological corridors with other public land in Akatarawa, Tararua, Rimutaka and Orongorongo ranges.

It is important for mountain biking (featuring the internationally renowned Karapoti Classic course), hunting and motorised recreation (4WD and motorcycling). The Cannon Point Walkway is popular for walking and running. We continue to work with the Akatarawa Recreational Area Committee (ARAC) to facilitate recreation in the forest and resolve management and planning issues.

- The Karapoti Classic mountain biking event attracted 1335 participants
- Several army training exercises were carried out in the Valley View forest. The army came fully equipped for their exercises and left the area untarnished from their activities. Human waste was contained with Portaloo's while the grey water from their kitchen unit was contained and transported off-site
- Consents to enter the forest issued: 26 for Army/Police/driver training; 70 for 4WD events; 158 for clubs
- More sites of the rare plant *Brachyglottis kirkii* were located
- Alders and strawberry dogwoods were searched for and controlled over a large area of the Akatarawa River flats in the Hukinga. This work followed initial control work conducted on infestations of these two pest plant species in previous years
- A professional goat control operation in June culled 80 goats
- An aerial 1080 possum control operation was successfully completed on 6 September 2007. A post-operational residual trap catch (RTC) of 0.4% was achieved (target <5%)
- A toilet has now been installed at the new Orange Hut. A gantry was required to install the tank as hi-ab trucks could not access the site.

Annual expenditure: \$333,000



Park Area: 15,400 hectares



Army exercise



Goats with a "judas" goat



A motorised wheelbarrow also helped with the Orange Hut toilet installation



Forest gecko



Native snail on Tawa leaf



Thelymitra cyanea striped sun orchid



Coprosma rhamnoides berries

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

A mix of pasture, plantation forestry, wetlands and a small remnant of native forest, Battle Hill is the site of the last significant confrontation between Maori and early colonial forces in the region. The combination of flat, rolling and steeper hill country make it popular for walking, horse riding, mountain biking, camping and picnicking.

- We hosted nine Regional Outdoor Programme events, most of which were booked out. Other events included orienteering, harriers, cross country, Capital Coast Adventure motorcycle safaris, The Grand Traverse, pony and equestrian events and a buggy walk which had around 200 participants
- Once again we hosted *Outstanding in the Field*, a rural careers day for secondary school students. Run on behalf of Meat and Wool NZ, this event promotes a better understanding of careers available in the agricultural sector
- Over 160 campers used the park over the Christmas / New Year period
- Lambs were taken to a local day-care centre to educate the children about farm life and to give them an opportunity to bottle feed and touch the lambs
- Scouts from around the region gathered to celebrate 100 years of scouting in New Zealand which culminated with a campfire. Over 350 scouts and their families attended
- Teams of trappers from both the Mana Boat Club and the Mana Lions checked, cleared and re-baited their respective traps
- Bird monitoring in the bush reserve showed a similar number of birds to last year. Rodent monitoring was also completed with a pleasing rat tracking result of 0%, while the mouse tracking climbed to 65%
- The Bush Reserve was grid searched for pest plants during January and February. On the regenerating hillside near the camping area, large numbers of pest plants were found and controlled
- Signs were made and installed for the new Heritage Trail starting in the campground and following the main ridge north up Battle Hill. The signs provide information on Te Rangihaeata's battle with colonial troops in 1846 and encourage people to climb to the summit.

Annual expenditure: \$334,000



Park Area: 502 hectares



Equestrian event



Outstanding in the Field participants



Camping at Battle Hill



Day-care children feeding lambs



Scouts bonfire



Volunteer trappers



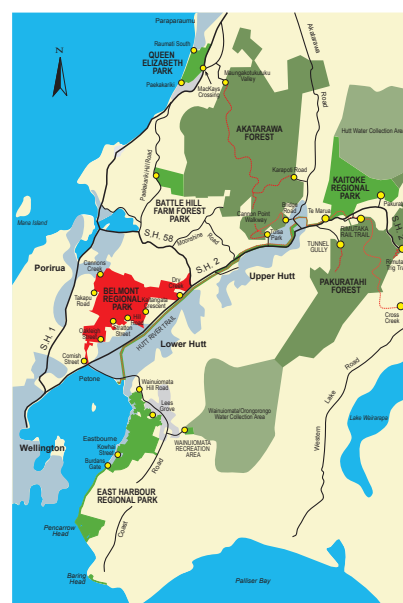
Heritage Trail signage

Belmont Regional Park

Based on a central plateau that is part of an ancient rolling peneplain, the park offers views over the Hutt Valley, Wellington and Porirua Harbours. Its wide open spaces and hidden valleys make it popular for walking and tramping, running, mountain biking and horse riding. The park features the historic Korokoro Dam, World War II ammunition bunkers and the original coach road from Lower Hutt to Pauatahanui. The 22km Puke Ariki / Haywards Korokoro Traverse takes in Boulder Hill (442m) and Belmont Trig (457m). The Friends of Belmont Regional Park remain a very active advocacy group, representing community views on planning & management issues.

- 11 Regional Outdoor Programme events were held in the park, six of which focussed on opportunities at several of the park's 12 entrances. 150 people walked up to the Belmont Trig as part of the *Summits for Ed* programme. A NZ Territorial Force exercise was also held within the park
- The Friends of Maara Roa planted 4,500 trees in the Cannons Creek bush restoration area. The Friends hold regular working bees in their restoration area to plant trees and control pests. They also ran or supported 5 Regional Outdoor Programme events
- Bird monitoring was completed and showed an increase in numbers, especially in grey warbler, blackbird and tui
- Intensive pest plant control of multiple species in the area surrounding Korokoro dam was carried out by contractors
- Professional goat control operations in September and December culled 37 goats
- Two photo-points were re-measured in early July. These showed an improvement in growth of palatable species that were being eaten out prior to goat control
- Monitoring of possum control programmes showed that we achieved 4% RTC in the treated area of Korokoro Valley and 2.7% RTC in Dry Creek. Our target is to keep possum numbers below 5% RTC to prevent damage to native ecosystems. The monitoring result for the untreated section of Korokoro Valley was 13.4% RTC. This area will be incorporated into the Korokoro Valley control programme next year
- A public consultation process was run to assist in determining the reserve status of Waitangirua Farm. A decision is likely by about the end of 2008
- Planning for a future Sustainable Land Management work programme on Waitangirua Farm was initiated
- The Belmont Road entrance was upgraded with new signage, gates and stile
- Gorse control, fence maintenance and track upgrade programmes were carried out across the farm area.

Annual expenditure: \$655,000



Park Area: 3,691 hectares



ROP participants in an Explore Belmont event



ROP participants at Dry Creek



Planting in Belmont near Cannons Creek



New signage, gate and stile



Tui (photo by Les Molloy)



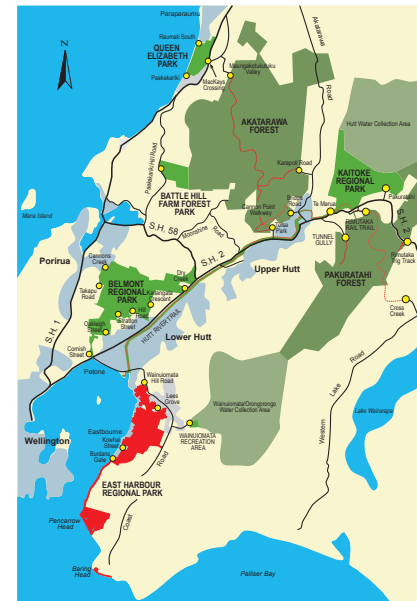
Controlling elaeagnus in the Korokoro area

East Harbour Regional Park

Beech/rata on the hills and lowland podocarp / broadleaf in the valleys of the Northern Forest provide the eastern backdrop to Wellington harbour and excellent walking, tramping and picnicking opportunities. The Parangarahu (formerly Pencarrow) Lakes Area contains the nationally significant freshwater Lakes Kohangapiripiri and Kohangatera, home to a wealth of native plants and wildlife. The Mainland Island Restoration Operation (MIRO) maintain an intensive pest control network in the Northern Forest.



Night Time Madness event



Park Area: 2,020 hectares in three separate blocks

Events

- Nine Regional Outdoor Programme events were held, including a second Lighthouse and Lakes trip to cater for demand. The Butterfly Creek Night-time Madness event attracted a record 318 participants. An “extreme” run was added which used the newly opened route between Days Bay and Eastbourne. The annual Pencarrow bike ride saw around 200 cyclists and the Crazyman event attracted 410 runners.

Parangarahu Lakes Area (formerly Pencarrow Lakes Block)

- Shingle build up over the boulder barrier boundary had let stock into the park, making it necessary to install a steel girder frame and fence netting to deter sheep and goats
- The first restoration planting at the enclosed site was completed successfully. This is to provide a seed source for future regeneration
- The section of track from the Kohangatera lookout to the Gollans Valley wetland boardwalk was constructed. The route sidles down a steep and often rocky spur, making this a challenging project
- A 115m boardwalk was constructed over the Gollans Stream wetland above Lake Kohangatera to complete a circuit around the entire Lakes Area. The Lakes Block Circuit was officially opened by Councillor Rex Kirton as part of a Regional Outdoors Programme event
- During the dry summer, Lake Kohangapiripiri water levels dropped significantly. The exposed area of lake bed became the target of 4WD vehicle users who caused considerable damage. This is an extremely fragile environment where any disturbance can have a long term effect. To counter this in future, we constructed a timber fence across the lake frontage to help deter 4WD vehicle access
- Gorse was controlled on the ecologically significant coastal escarpment between Lake Kohangatera and Lake Kohangapiripiri.



Before the track from the Kohangatera lookout to the wetlands was constructed... ..and after completion



Boardwalk over Gollans Stream wetland



Cr Rex Kirton & Ranger Gareth Cooper open the Lakes Block circuit

Northern Forest

- Rodent control within the Mainland Island site has achieved mixed results. Rat tracking dropped to a low of 6% in February 2007 but climbed again to 22% in May. Rat tracking outside the intensive control area has remained high at between 30% and 52%
- The percentage of fruit damaged by rodents has decreased since rodent numbers have fallen in the Mainland Island from 11.1% damaged in 2007 to 0.9% in 2008
- MIRO has begun introducing North Island robins into the Mainland Island area. The first release of 14 robins into the Gollans Stream area was on Sunday 22 June
- Multiple pest plant species have been controlled at a large number of sites with a focus on the more invasive species such as climbing asparagus (snakefeather), boneseed, old man's beard, elaeagnus, and Japanese honeysuckle
- A total of 15 three-metre long boardwalks were installed in the flood prone lower Butterfly Creek valley. Snaking through lush swamp forest, the boardwalks should limit further erosion and allow the bush under-storey to recover from trampling
- The old Ngaumatau track line was too steep for general use, so a new route was marked through the bush in preparation for construction. The track's environmental features and ease of access present good opportunities for interpretation in the future
- Three mountain bike information map panels were developed and installed on Main Ridge track, Rata Ridge track and Zig-Zag track
- To enhance the visitor experience on the Howard Road Track, a small access track was cut in from the main route and a park seat installed to overlook one of the finest views in Lower Hutt
- Six track counters were installed for the first time and a visitor survey was completed to give more robust indications of visit numbers and to assess satisfaction with the park.

Annual expenditure: \$305,000



New boardwalk in Butterfly Creek valley



Mountain bike information panel



View from Howard Rd track seat



MIRO robin release

Hutt River Trail

Running from Hikoikoi Reserve on the Petone foreshore to Birchville, Upper Hutt, the 29km Hutt River Trail provides easily accessible recreational opportunities. Linking to parks and sports fields and with tracks often on both sides of the river, this lengthy, flat and scenic terrain is not readily available in the western side of the Wellington region. Off-road links are planned to the Rimutaka Rail Trail and thus to the Wairarapa. Other stakeholders include the Rotary Clubs of the Hutt Valley, the Phoenix Trust, Upper Hutt and Hutt City Councils.



- Four Regional Outdoor Programme events, including the annual Bike the Trail (1,853 participants) and the Hutt Gravel Grab (246 people) were hosted. The Beginners Guide to Fly Fishing events were run for the first time and were extremely popular
- Two buggy walks were held, one in September and the other in December. Each event attracted around 55 parents and their babies
- A wide range of other events were held along the trail including the Hutt Valley Marathon Clinic fun run (700 runners), the third annual Rotary Centennial Cup Relay (17 high school teams), a vintage motorbikes event, a women's run/cycle/walk event (over 100 participants), the Hutt News 5km & 10 km fun run/walk (over 500 people), harrier and orienteering events, a Totara Park Scouts bonfire and cookout, a fundraiser for Te Omanga Hospice which saw 1000 rubber ducks float down the river between the Melling and Ewen bridges, part of the Crazyman event, the 4th annual Bike Jam, mountain bike orienteering events and school cross country and athletic events
- Bollards and a carpark were installed in Sladden Park to try to curb vandalism and undesirable behaviour
- A number of schools and corporate groups spent time planting along the river as well as conducting river-side clean ups
- Trail bike riders continued to be a major problem
- A track was installed under the Akatarawa Road bridge which helps to provide a continuous recreation route with no road crossings
- Once again there was a toxic algae outbreak in the Hutt River when there was low river flows. The outbreak lasted for approximately three months and appropriate warning signs were erected and maintained throughout the outbreak.

Annual expenditure: \$81,000



ROP Hutt Great Gravel Grab



ROP Hutt Great Gravel Grab



ROP participants learning to fly fish



ROP participants learning to fly fish



Buggy walk



ROP Bike the Trail



School planting day



Toxic algae warning sign

Kaitoke Regional Park

Easily accessible podocarp / broadleaf and beech forests and a matai / totara remnant near Te Marua contain an abundance of native birds. Fish are plentiful and there are extensive opportunities to swim, picnic and walk near the Hutt and Pakuratahi Rivers. Kayaking through the Hutt River Gorge is both scenic and challenging. There is a large, landscaped camping ground near the main entrance. Kaitoke Regional Park is a significant location for outdoor commercial filming, with the Lord of the Rings “Rivendell” site popular with visitors. Nearly half of metropolitan Wellington’s water is drawn from the Hutt River and treated within Kaitoke Regional Park.



Park Area: 2,861 hectares

- Events included seven Regional Outdoors Programme events as well as the St Josephs Scouts trolley derby (200 participants)
- An exceptionally long, hot summer saw the park at capacity, with \$44,000 of camping fees collected, compared to \$25,000 last year. A liquor-free policy was imposed on New Year’s Eve which dramatically reduced the number of alcohol related incidents
- School and corporate group planting events continue to improve the forest health and link the bush remnants at Te Marua. 2,500 plants were planted in the park over the last year
- Three weddings were held in the park and three different film companies were given concessions to film within the park
- A rare flowering mistletoe (a threatened species) was found on the southern end of the Ridge Track and was assessed to be growing well
- Bird monitoring was completed. The annual kereru counts in the campground saw a record 109 kereru counted in one morning, with 42 seen in a single stand of trees
- The park was closed for 10 days following the Mangaroa/Kaitoke 1080 operation from 7 September 2007 and was closed for an additional 5 days following the illegal movement of the poison to tracks and car parks
- 1km of new fencing was erected between the bush edge of the park and the land leased for farming. This has improved stock management and forest health as it has prevented cattle pushing up into the bush
- Due to increasing demand, the water supply system to the campground has been upgraded with new header tanks, pumps and water conserving taps. A new information kiosk has also been built in the campground
- Two information boards were installed at either end of the Kaitoke Hill and Pylon Loop tracks. These tracks have opened up a new recreation area within the Kaitoke Hill plantation forest for walking, mountain biking and horse riding. The tracks also link the Hutt River Trail and the Rimutaka Rail Trails
- Vandalism has been a problem, with the tagging of information kiosks, smashing of toilet bowls and urinal and sinks ripped from walls in the Pakuratahi Forks carpark. The kiosks have since been painted dark green and ranger patrols increased to help deter this sort of activity.

Annual expenditure: \$402,000



Buggy walk



St Josephs Scouts trolley derby



Summer fun in Kaitoke



Corporate planting



One of three weddings held in the Park



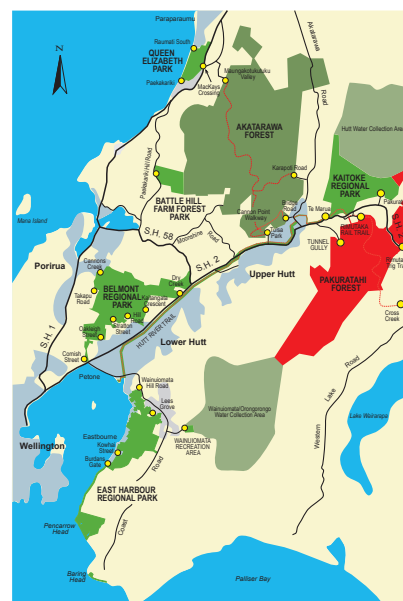
Rare red-flowered mistletoe

Pakuratahi Forest

Managed as a future water collection area, the forest comprises one large, steep river catchment. It forms an ecological link between the Hutt and Wainuiomata water collection areas and Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges. The wetland at Ladle Bend, beech stands in the upper catchment and the only snow tussock in Rimutaka Ranges are all regionally significant. Of national significance is the original railway line formation between Wellington & Wairarapa, now popular for biking, walking and picnicking. The area contains 775ha of exotic plantation forest.

- In addition to the very popular six Regional Outdoor Programme events, the Rimutaka Incline Fun Run attracted 700 participants
- A professional goat control operation in June culled 46 goats
- An infestation of prickly hakea (*Hakea sericea*) near Kaitoke Hill was controlled. Several hundred seedlings and small mature trees were either pulled or cut and treated
- The forest was closed for approximately 10 days following the Mangaroa/ Kaitoke 1080 operation in early September. Tunnel Gully was closed for an additional five days after bait was tampered with and moved to it
- A new seat was installed on the Rimutaka Trig Track offering excellent views out over the Wairarapa
- After discussion with the Rail Heritage and Historic Places Trusts, we installed a barrier to reduce the risk of falling from the Pakuratahi Truss Bridge on the Rimutaka Rail Trail
- Culvert pipes in Tunnel Gully were upgraded to cope with increasing water flows resulting from changes in upstream terrain
- Vandals have removed young trees and bollards and set alight mature trees and scrub. Vehicles spotted ripping up grass were pursued by rangers and police
- A large tree root blocking the upper loop of Tane's Track in Tunnel Gully has been covered with chip seal to make it easier for buggies to navigate.

Annual expenditure: \$264,000



Area: just over 6,888 hectares



ROP Kev the Wandering Kiwi



ROP Paws in the Park



ROP Rimutaka Rail Trail participants



ROP Rimutaka Rail Trail



Rimutaka Trig Track seat



Pakuratahi Truss Bridge before handrail... and after handrail installed



Tunnel Gully culvert pipes were upgraded



Results of a fire set by vandals in Tunnel Gully



Tree root filled in on Tane's Track to improve access

Queen Elizabeth Park

Containing the last remaining area of relatively unmodified dunes on the Kapiti coastline, Queen Elizabeth Park offers easily accessible opportunities for walking, cycling, horse riding, group picnics, sports events and festivals. During the 19th century there were significant Maori villages at Wainui and Whareroa, and the park is rich in the histories of Tangata Whenua and Europeans alike. During WWII it served as a US Marine encampment and has been a public park since 1953. Facilities include the Wellington Tramway Museum, camping at Paekakariki and commercial horse riding. The Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park are active on several fronts.

- In addition to the very popular seven Regional Outdoor Programme events, the park hosted the Tramway “Sunday Fundays”, the Victoria University Harriers annual running event which attracted over 300 runners and a NZ Equestrian Federation training day
- Local schools, Friends of the Park, staff and the wider community planted over 10,000 trees along the Wainui and Whareroa Streams, in the Remnant Bush and at the Rainbow Court park entrance. Various corporate groups planted spinifex on the coastal dunes and in the wetlands
- The Queen Elizabeth Park nursery is in full swing every Wednesday with a wide range of volunteers spending their day potting up seedlings
- The Hillary Challenge Team from Kapiti College fixed a section of the Wainui Steam track that had been eroding into the stream. An 8m long retaining wall was built to hold back the rising bush bank
- Bird monitoring was completed which showed an increase in wetland bird numbers
- The fish research project confirmed that there is moderate to severe degradation of the stream network, but considerable potential for the stream health to recover. We are working with the Friends of QEP on riparian fencing and revegetation to enhance the section of the Whareroa Stream in the park
- Night rabbit shooting and possum control in bush and dune remnants continued. The burrow fumigation trial was completed and it was decided not to continue with this method of rabbit control
- There was continuing control of pampas, boneseed, karo, honeysuckle, german ivy, tradescantia, willow, blackberry, gorse and thistle
- All the windows at one of the Whareroa beach toilets were broken and two of the toilet blocks at the Paekakariki entrance had various plumbing bits stolen
- The new United States Marine panels were finalised and installed. These panels updated and replaced the original panels dating from the early 1990s.

Annual expenditure: \$645,000



Park Area: 655 hectares



ROP Buggy walk



ROP Harakeke flax weaving



Planting on the dunes



Wainui stream planting



Nursery volunteers



Hillary Challenge team from Kapiti College



US Marines information panel

Wainuiomata Recreation Area

A peaceful and sheltered valley east of Wainuiomata, the Recreation Area is a popular spot for family outings, picnics and dog walking. There are numerous swimming holes in the Wainuiomata River and easy walking and mountain biking tracks along the valley floor.

Although the Recreation Area itself was once logged and most of the bush is now regenerating, it lies at the foot of one of the largest and most pristine lowland forests in the lower North Island (the Wainuiomata / Orongorongo Water Collection Area).

- One Regional Outdoor Programme event was held consisting of Kev the Wandering Kiwi (270 participants)
- Tradescantia was controlled on the river flats from the Lower Dam down to the main entrance gate by a professional contractor. The same area was swept for all other weeds by our own pest plants team
- The Wainuiomata Bush Fire Force held a training exercise in the Recreation Area
- A total of 10 environmental education signs were installed on the Sledge Track. The signs are to help members of the public walking in the area to identify tree species
- Deterring vandals from ripping up the grass in the area has been an ongoing issue. During July a temporary fence was erected, and in June more than 250 bollards were installed
- A new sign was installed at the front information kiosk in Wainuiomata, in conjunction with the Rimutaka Forest Park Trust Kiwi programme. The Kiwi release site is situated on DoC Land adjacent to the Recreation Area. The sign has a map and information attached regarding the Kiwi programme.



Area: 338 hectares



ROP Kev the Wandering Kiwi



Environmental education signs



A temporary fence was put in before...



more permanent bollards were installed



Predatory native wasp

Water Collection Areas

Hutt

Encompassing the headwaters of the Hutt River at the southern end of the Tararua Ranges, the Hutt WCA supplies half the Wellington urban region's drinking water. It contains extensive areas of unmodified silver beech, red beech, and valley floor podocarp forest, alpine tussock lands, alpine wet turf and sub-alpine sphagnum bog. One of the few areas in the region containing southern rata, the forest is home to a great variety of indigenous forest birds, including the rare kaka, kakariki and NZ falcon (karearea). Some hunting and tramping takes place here but the terrain is rugged and mountainous, broken by many streams and narrow, steep-sided ridges. The hilltops are extremely exposed and have a reputation for high winds, fog and sudden weather changes.

- Biannual rata digital photography determining the impact of possums on foliage cover showed that selected trees in the area are in good health. Vegetation die-back on them has decreased while the amount of foliage present has increased
- Bird monitoring showed that bird numbers have decreased, probably due to it being 4 years since the last 1080 operation
- A professional hunting operation in January culled 10 deer, 9 goats and 2 pigs
- Annual track maintenance of the access road was carried out.

Annual expenditure: \$9,000

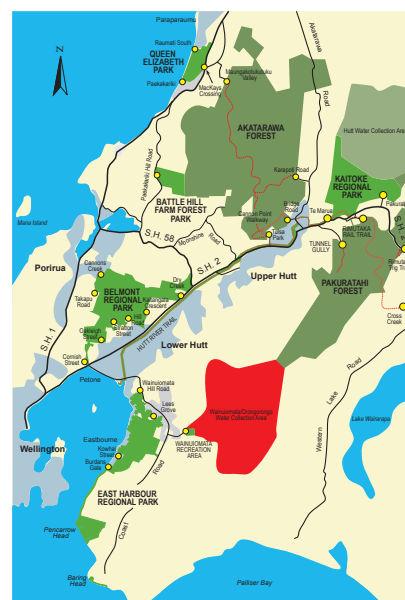
Wainuiomata/Orongorongo

The lush native forests and clear rivers of the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo catchment areas were recognised early on for their water supply potential. In 1878 an earth dam was constructed and a pipeline laid to Wellington. Today the Wainuiomata Water Treatment Plant supplies about 20% of the water used by the four cities in the region. The forests in the Water Collection Area include superb rata podocarp, sub-tropical emergent forest above a canopy of hinau, kamahi, rewa rewa and tree ferns. Some black beech is found on drier sites, and silver beech on the high ridge-tops.

- The walking tours continue to be popular, with almost all tours from October to June 2008 fully booked and feedback being very positive. A "thank you" barbecue and train ride was held for volunteer guides who provide invaluable assistance to rangers on the walks
- A further 150 Kanuka and Manuka were planted on the lower dam site
- There has been an increase in bird numbers in the Mainland Island
- Tawa fruit fall plots have been assessed. Levels of fruit predation are low –



Area: 8,743 hectares



Area: 7012 hectares. Managed access.

3% of fruit for possum damage and 4% for rats. Hinau fruit fall plots were re-measured in the Wainuiomata Catchment. No possum damage was found but there was 7% rodent damage

- We have continued to control rodents, possums, mustelids and hedgehogs within the Mainland Island. Rat tracking was kept low until May when the tracking rate increased to 43% from 10% in February, (rat tracking outside the Mainland Island stayed very high at between 95% and 99%). 116 possums, 33 stoats and 104 hedgehogs were trapped in the Mainland Island
- The Wainuiomata/Orongorongo hunting ballot was of limited success. Four deer, one pig and one goat were shot in Wainuiomata
- Professional hunting operations were carried out in July, September, December, January and June. A total of 84 pigs, 16 deer and 93 goats were culled. Despite this work, pigs appear to be present in greater numbers and are causing damage. There is also ongoing reinvasion of goats from the DoC property on the south eastern Orongorongo boundary
- With the Lower Dam now full, work was carried out to tidy up and upgrade the surrounding area
- The Wainuiomata site office was relocated to its new site near the Ranger's house. Landscaping, small alterations and improvements will be carried out on the building.



ROP Water Catchment walk



Planting on lower dam site



Lower Dam finally full



Wainui site office was relocated



Sky blue mushroom (*Entoloma* species)

Preparation for new parks

Whitireia Park

- Parks staff assisted GW Environmental Education staff and Whitireia Park Board members with spinifex plantings
- Staff have been working with GW Land Management to assess grazing practices. This will assist long-term management of grazing at the park and provide a benchmark for the current Park Board
- Patching and repairs to sealed road surfaces in the Park were carried out.

Annual expenditure: \$29,000

Lake Wairarapa

- An establishment group comprising of representatives of GW, local iwi and DoC developed a set of base principles for a long-term governance structure
- Local iwi began collating the cultural history of the lake as part of a Heritage study
- The pest plants team trialled alder control methods
- Alders were felled on the side of the Simmonds Lagoon at the Lake Domain to open up the views into the lagoon.

Annual expenditure: \$38,000



Spinifex planting in Whitireia Park



Spinifex planting in Whitireia Park



Water, air, earth and energy – elements in Greater Wellington’s logo combine to create and sustain life. Greater Wellington promotes **Quality for Life** by ensuring our environment is protected while meeting the economic, cultural and social needs of the community

For more information, contact:

Greater Wellington
142 Wakefield Street
PO Box 11646
Manners Street
Wellington 6142
T 04 384 5708
F 04 385 6960
www.gw.govt.nz

Published October 2008
GW/PF-G-08/182