



**Waitakere Ranges
Protection Society Inc**

news

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Issue 147 November 2010

Your President's Report



Aucklanders have voted in the local government triennial elections, and the Society is pleased with the make up of the Council and the Waitakere Ranges Local Board. Congratulations to Penny Hulse and Sandra Coney who were elected as Waitakere Ward Councillors. They are both very experienced politicians who have represented the west for many years and were both instrumental in getting the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Bill passed by their respective Councils. Penny has been chosen by Mayor Len Brown as his deputy. Sandra is Chair of the Parks and Heritage Forum (under the Regional Development & Operations Committee) on the new Council.

Two of the Society's committee members were elected to the Local Board. Congratulations to Denise Yates and Greg Presland who stood on the Future West ticket. Denise was elected Chair of the Board at the inaugural meeting. Both Greg and Denise have served as Waitakere City Councillors in the past, and while they have now resigned from our committee, we look forward to working with them over the next three years. And our thanks go to them for the work they have done for the ranges over many years.

Also elected on the Future West ticket was Neil Henderson. The other members of the board are Janet Clews (Deputy Chair), Judy Lawley and Mark Brickell. There will be much work to do now to ensure that the Local Board is well-positioned to be a strong voice for the community.

Council's decision on the Plan Changes 35, 36, 37 has been released and the Society is considering the grounds on which we might make appeals to the Environment Court. We have also made a submission to Auckland Council in opposition to the Pakinui Private Plan Change 40 which is a proposal for subdivision of 34 existing titles to the north of Waitakere Village to create an additional 65 properties. We have informed the Environment Court that we wish to register as a s.274 party to the appeal of the new tree rules in the amendment to the RMA which would greatly relax the protection of trees in urban areas.

The committee has had its last meeting of the year and on their behalf I would like to thank our members and friends for their support this year and wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy new year, and hope that you will have plenty of opportunities to enjoy the ranges over summer.

John Edgar
President

WRPS Newsletter Email List

A number of our members responded to this item in the last Newsletter. It's not too late if you'd like to join the trend!

So, if you are receiving this newsletter by post but would prefer to receive it (as a .pdf file) by email, please let us know by emailing us at wrps@waitakereranges.org.nz. You will have the added advantage of being able to view the photographs in full and glorious colour.

What's happening in the bush

Kotare (native kingfisher) are a distinctive sight, often spotted on power lines, near streams or the coast in the Ranges. Less well known is their woodpecker-like behaviour. We have been fortunate this November to have a pair of kotare making a nest hole in an upturned broken branch, the shard end of a storm break this winter, high in the pohutukawa outside our kitchen window. Two days of persistent drilling coated our pathway and compost bin with a fine layer of sawdust, leaving a cup size entrance hole in the branch. The birds are quiet at the moment, presumably laying or sitting. Based on previous years we'll hear when the chicks emerge, followed by weeks of growing rowdiness as the young grow and get more and more vocal in their food demands, until finally the adults call them from the nest hole, to take their places in the Ranges.



Photo: Tony Dunn

This is a kingfisher chick raised at our place successfully from an earlier year's brood – though it did take them a few days to learn to fly and they spent the time hanging out on our deck and by our front step - forcing the cats (we had two then) into house arrest! In the last couple of years the chicks have flown straight off so presumably the parents are learning a few tricks!

Elsewhere the nikau are pushing flowers from their pods and the cabbage trees are holding heavy flower heads up to the sky, laden this year, scenting the evenings.

Kath Dewar

WRPS Facebook Group

The membership of our Facebook Group has increased by almost 50% to 144 members. You can join it here: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/group.php?gid=156550153926&ref=ts> or by searching for "Waitakere Ranges Protection Society" on www.facebook.com

Heritage Area Coordinator's Report September – November 2010

Submissions / Advocacy:

District Plan Changes

I attended the two-day Hearing for the three Plan Changes 35, 36 and 37 where the Society's evidence was presented by Douglas Allen and James Hook. The decision was released by Waitakere City Council, just prior to amalgamation, and Council decided to continue with all three Plan Changes as originally proposed. They dismissed the officers' proposals to reduce the impacts in response to the 1000 submissions they received. WRPS has decided to appeal all three Plan Changes to the Environment Court and the notices of appeal are currently being drafted. We anticipate that a number of community groups and individuals in the Heritage Area who made submissions on the proposals will join our appeals as s.274 parties, which has no cost implications.

Henderson Valley / Opanuku LAP

I attended the Hearing on the draft LAP, which was delegated to a sub-committee of Council comprising Penny Hulse, Vanessa Neeson and Paul Mitchell. The Society's evidence was presented by Douglas Allen and James Hook. The Hearing was well attended by the community and the majority of submissions reflected WRPS' concerns about the Council proposals around sub-division for the large properties in the area which already have sub-division rights and increasing sub-division rights within the Heritage Area along the MUL ("softening"). We are still awaiting the decision.

WCC / ARC Notice of Requirement

I presented the Society's submission at the Hearing on this proposal to include land acquired relatively recently into the Regional Park before the amalgamation. We only had minor concerns and were generally supportive. The decision has been released and only minor changes have been made to the original proposal.

Waitakere Ward Local Reserves Management Plan

I attended the Hearing and presented the Society's evidence. We are still awaiting the decision to be released.

Te Henga Marae

I attended a public meeting, wrote a submission and then presented the Society's evidence at a Hearing on the Council's proposal to gazette the land already identified in the District Plan as a marae and papakainga as a Local Purposes Reserve. Both the public meeting and the Hearing were very well attended by the local community and there was a great deal of concern and anger expressed at the Council's procedures and approach to the issue. The Society fully supported the proposal to enable Te Kaware a Maki to return to their ancestral home at Te Henga, but expressed concern at the suitability of the site selected and purchased by Council. Our concern was related to the inability of the site to accommodate any discharge of wastewater due to the high water table and that trucking out effluent was not a sustainable long-term solution. The Commissioner has determined however that the concerns raised by the community, while important, were not relevant to the issue

upon which he was asked to decide and has recommended that the Local Purposes Reserve classification be granted for the site.

Tree Protection

The Society has joined, as a s.274 party, an application to the Environment Court for a declaration on the definition of “a group of trees” in the new RMA and how that relates to existing definitions in the current District Plan such as the “managed natural areas” for Waitakere. The application was made by the ARC, Waitakere City Council and North Shore City Council. If these definitions are confirmed by the Court to correctly identify “a group of trees” then the blanket tree protection rules will remain in force for areas, such as Titirangi and Laingholm, which are currently identified as Managed Natural Areas under the District Plan.

The Society has also joined a proposal by The Tree Council submitted to new Mayor Len Brown to develop a policy group to evaluate tree protection rules in the urban area and develop some new policy for Auckland Council. We await Mayor Brown’s response.

Friends of Regional Parks

I have joined this new group FOR Parks, formed to ensure that Regional Parks continue to get the resources and support that they need to thrive under the new Auckland Council. It is a regional group and I have volunteered to be the interim Secretary until the AGM is held in March 2011. The interim Chair is ex-ARC Chair of Parks Bill Burrill, Deputy-Chair is Bronwen Turner and Treasurer Ralph Lyon. Society members Bruce and Trixie Harvey are also on the Executive. You can visit the FOR Parks website at <http://www.forparks.org.nz/>

Consultation:

Kauri PTA

I have attended two Kauri Dieback field workshops run by Dr Nick Waipara at the Huia study site used by the late Dr Ross Beaver for his research, which continues. The first was a DoC and Regional Council staff workshop and the second was open to the public. Both were well attended and very informative.

Nick is running two further workshops at the Cascades on 15 December, all are welcome to attend. Please contact me for details.

I have also been giving a short presentation about Kauri Dieback Disease at every public opportunity, so please let me know if there is something happening in your community where I can come along and spread the word.

ARPASS Recreation Report

I reviewed this report on behalf of the Society and provided comments to the ARC. I had great concerns that this recreation-focused group had not consulted any conservation organizations regarding their proposals. They were suggesting that all parks should be made available for all types of recreation, regardless of their classification or primary purpose for being a park. Their proposals specifically targeted expansion of mountain biking, horse riding and multi-sport events into the Waitakere Ranges. The Society has taken a strong stance opposing these activities in the

Class 1 park, which is primarily for conservation. Our concerns relate to the potential for the spread of plant diseases and weeds, as well as conflicts with other users and the costs required to provide the infrastructure to support such activities when other areas are available for these uses.

ERMA Dung Beetles Application

The Society was informed about a proposal submitted to ERMA by the Dung Beetles Release Strategy Group to release dung beetles into the environment to control animal dung in pasture, particularly dairy. Eleven species of dung beetles are proposed to be released. Unfortunately we were informed about the proposal too late to make a submission, but we are keeping a close eye on the outcome since there are native dung beetles in the Waitakere Ranges.

Consents:

Karekare Surf Club

I attended the Hearing and presented the Society’s submission. Our main concern regarding the location of the wastewater disposal field was addressed via the peer review completed at our request and we withdrew our objection on these grounds. We also had concerns regarding the crossing of the Karekare Stream by construction vehicles and the continued alterations to the stream made by the Surf Club due to the erosion caused by their rock wall. We are awaiting the decision, however in the meantime a complaint has been laid with the Auckland Council’s enforcement department about the recent hand digging of a channel from the naturally formed lagoon to the sea in an attempt to drain it. This involved members of the Surf Club and others.

Lopdell House Redevelopment

I attended the Hearing at which John Edgar presented the Society’s submission. Our concerns focus on tree removal and the lack of controls relating to kauri PTA in the consent conditions.

Other:

Dreamers of the Day: A History of Auckland’s Regional Parks Book Launch

I attended this evening hosted by the ARC to launch Graeme Murdoch’s new book celebrating the history of the Regional Parks. It is published by Random House in hardback, with a RRP of \$60.

Display

I am getting minor repairs made to our display, which we hope to use at the Piha Mill Gala Day on 28 November.

EcoDay

I am organising for the Society to have a stall at this annual event to be held on Sunday 6th March 2011 at Olympic Park, New Lynn.

WRPS Information Email List

Are you on our email list? If not please email Mels on mels@waitakereranges.org.nz to be updated on taking action and important issues affecting the Ranges.

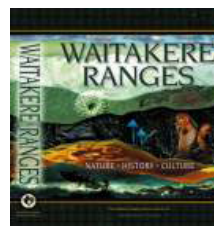
Mels Barton
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November 2010

Your Committee

**Committee meetings are held on the
second Wednesday of the month**

| | |
|-----------------|---|
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