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**Committee** Regional Sustainability Committee  
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## **Community Environmental Projects Annual report for 2008-2009**

### **1. Purpose**

To provide the Committee with a summary of the achievements and activities of Greater Wellington funded community environmental groups during the financial year ended 30 June 2009.

### **2. Significance of the decision**

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### **3. Background**

The Community Environmental Projects programme (Take Care) provides funding, staff support and specialist advice to community groups which volunteer their time and skills to restore the health of threatened ecosystems in the region. These include rivers, streams, wetlands, estuaries, coastal dunes and escarpments. The programme's primary focus is the restoration of threatened ecological sites but it also includes environmental education, and provides Greater Wellington with opportunities to connect with the community.

The Annual Plan performance indicator for the programme is that existing groups are maintained and five new groups are established and assisted to the satisfaction of the Council and within budget.

### **4. Take Care programme**

Greater Wellington has assisted groups at 35 project sites over the past year. Seventy five percent of these projects have arisen out of the contestable fund process and are co-ordinated by staff in the Environment Management division. A further 25% are selected by Greater Wellington staff in response to identified needs and, while partly funded from the Environmental Education

department's budget, their activities are coordinated by staff outside the Environment Management division. Three of these projects are in our regional parks (Battle Hill, Belmont and Queen Elizabeth) and there are two Friends of the River groups (Waikanae and Otaki) that are also funded in this way. Four sites in the Wairarapa have also been selected in this way and are looked after by Wairarapa based staff. This twofold means of selecting groups has been a feature of the care group programme since its inception. It was determined at the outset that there would be some areas where Greater Wellington would want to initiate a care group to address a specific environmental issue, in addition to responding to the restoration initiatives of the public.

Although five groups came to the end of their funding arrangement, there was no application round for new groups for the 2008-09 year because it was expected that the existing groups would fully utilise the available budget. However, four groups had their funding renewed.

The Friends of Owhiro Stream are making good progress restoring the stream from Brooklyn down to the Wellington south coast and have been funded for a further five years. Island Bay Coastcare, Millwood Community Group and the Silverstream Care group all had their funding extended for a further three years. Island Bay Coastcare are restoring the dunes at the western end of Island Bay beach, Millwood Community group are planting the margins of Hulls Creek near the Silverstream railway station and the Silverstream Care group are restoring a large area of Hulls Creek downstream of the Millwood project area.

One new care group was established during the year. A group of private landowners are restoring a section of the Whangaehu River to improve its water quality, biodiversity and amenity values. The river has been choked by large crack willow trees which have caused the build up of silt and created a flooding risk. Papawai-Mangarara Stream group, which had come to the end of their funding, did not re-apply for Take Care funding as they received funding from the Sustainable Management fund from the Ministry for the Environment.

#### **4.1 Regional distribution of groups**

Table 1 below shows the number of care groups by territorial authority. A map, showing care group locations, is appended to this report (see Attachment 2). The Kapiti Coast continues to have the largest number of care groups in the region with 38% of all currently funded groups. This reflects the greater number of applications that are made in this district. In addition to the three groups in Porirua, we also support the restoration of the wetlands at Pauatahanui inlet by Forest and Bird.

**Table 1: Regional distribution of care groups**

<b>Care group locations 2007- 08</b>		
Kapiti Coast	13	38%
Porirua	3	8%
Hutt Valley	5	14%
Wellington	8	23%
Wairarapa	6	17%
Total	35	100.00%

#### **4.2 Range of ecosystems**

Table 2 below shows the range of ecosystems being restored around the region. Sixty three per cent of the projects are focussed solely on the restoration of freshwater ecosystems (streams, rivers and wetlands) with the remaining 37% having a coastal focus. The three combination projects incorporate riparian, wetland and dune elements.

**Table 2: Ecosystems being restored by care groups**

<b>Ecosystems being restored in 2008- 09</b>		
Streams and rivers	20	57%
Wetlands	2	6%
Coastal dunes	7	20%
Coastal escarpments	1	3%
Estuaries	2	6%
Combination	3	8%
Total	35	100%

#### **5. Honda TreeFund**

The Honda TreeFund was created in 2004 as a way to offset car emissions. It ensures that for every new Honda sold, 10 native trees are funded and planted. The trees are planted in association with regional councils all over the country, providing a measurable way to absorb some of the carbon dioxide produced by motor vehicles. Honda customers are also invited to donate to the Honda TreeFund at the time of purchase and then join in the planting of the trees with their Honda dealer and regional council.

Monies allocated to Greater Wellington are split between the Environment Management division (40%) and the Water Supply, Parks and Forests division (60%). The following table (Table 3) shows the funding provided for trees in our region since 2004-2005. Honda trees make a big difference to our

ecosystem restoration capability. We use them to support and supplement the work of care groups and to provide restoration materials and plants for sites where we are working with corporate volunteers (such as those around Pauatahanui Inlet and at Moehau Stream).

**Table 3: Funding provided by Honda in the Wellington Region 2004 to 2009**

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Total Funding \$</b>
2004-05	47,960
2005-06	55,510
2006-07	59,196
2007-08	62,500
2008-09	53,350

Table 4 shows the restoration groups which received funding and how many trees were planted. Care group sites are highlighted with an asterisk.

**Table 4: Honda Tree sites 2008**

<b>Name of Location</b>	<b>No. of Plants</b>
Albermarle Stream, Wellington*	320
Makara Peak, Wellington	499
Oku reserve, Wellington*	850
Pigeon Bush, Wairarapa	50
Waikanae estuary, Kapiti*	500
Churton Park, Wellington*	375
Makara Estuary, Wellington*	345
Trelissick park, Wellington*	207
Eastbourne Dunes, Lower Hutt*	313
Waipahihi, Wellington*	479
Island Bay, Wellington*	250
Whangaehu, Wairarapa*	400
Makoura Stream, Wairarapa*	400
Onehunga Bay, Porirua*	707

The Oku Street Reserve, a coastal headland above Island Bay, was again the site for the Honda TreeFund community planting day for the Wellington area this year. A combination of Honda staff and customers, a large contingent of locals and Wellington City Council and Regional Council staff planted 1250 trees, (with 400 additional trees and shrubs donated by the Wellington City

Council), and enjoyed a barbeque lunch afterwards. Wellington Honda have requested a change of site for the day next year as Oku reserve has a steep access which makes it difficult for some of their customers to attend. We are currently looking at a new site for 2010.

## 6. Trees for Survival

The Trees for Survival Trust (TFS) is a national organisation that provides students with the opportunity to grow plants in schools and then plant them to protect soil and water values and promote biodiversity. Eleven schools in our region are growing plants under this scheme, which is affiliated with the Rotary Club and, since 2000, supported by Greater Wellington. The schools are listed in the table below. During the year, a document was drawn up to enable the stakeholders in the programme better understand their responsibilities. Several schools have not continued with programme as it requires a committed teacher within the school to run the programme. Teachers moving to other schools can create a gap and the school can no longer commit to the programme.

Greater Wellington's contribution to the TFS programme is to provide each school with a facilitator who organises seedlings for children to pot up, delivers potting mix and containers to the schools and organises planting days. In most cases the planting site is a local Take Care site. School children pot up the seedlings into 1 litre milk cartons and this year Fonterra provided 200 decommissioned milk crates to hold the plants until planting day.

**Table 5: Trees for Survival Schools in the Wellington Region**

School	Planting Site
1   Kenakena	Waikanae Estuary
2   Waikanae	Waikanae Estuary
3   Greytown	Memorial Park
4   Pukerua Bay	Gray Street reserve, Porirua
5   Hutt Valley High	Hutt River trail
6   Eponi	Waiwhetu Stream
7   Mana College	Onepoto Stream, Porirua
8   Porirua College	Maara Roa, Belmont RP
9   Newlands	Moonshine Rd
10   Wainuioru School	QE II Trust property
11   Douglas Park	Makoura Stream

## 7. Corporate volunteers

A total of 10 volunteer groups have assisted Take Care groups with either planting or weeding this year. This allows the care groups to accomplish more with their budget and gives much needed assistance, particularly where jobs for younger, stronger people need completing. The participating groups and where they worked are set out below.

**Table 6: Corporate planting days 2007 - 2008**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Site for planting</b>
National Bank Wellington	Moehau, Upper Hutt
BNZ Wellington	Waikanae Estuary
Accor Hotels Wellington	Moehau, Upper Hutt
Chapman Tripp	Island Bay, Wellington
Korean Church group	Owhiro, Wellington
Fire and Rescue ITO	Onehunga, Porirua
WELTEC	Moehau, Upper Hutt
Periodic detention workers	Millwood, Upper Hutt
Global Volunteers	Eastbourne, Lower Hutt
ANZ (technology)	Trelissick Park, Wellington

Staff from the Body Shop continue to hold monthly stream clean ups at their School Road site on the lower Kaiwharawhara Stream. We provide equipment to assist them.

## 8. Threatened species

With the successful restoration of many care group sites comes the opportunity to reintroduce nationally or locally threatened species. This has commenced with a concentration on coastal species. In the past year seed has been collected and passed to reputable nurseries to grow. We have established relationships with the Forest and Bird nursery in Karori and Otari-Wilton's Bush nursery which both grow some threatened species and are happy to supply us with some of the species needed for our programme. We will be able to plant some of these in the winter of 2010; however, more will become available in the following year.

We will continue to expand this programme in other areas as opportunities arise.

## **9. Education**

### **9.1 Restoration Day**

For the past seven years the work of volunteers involved in ecological restoration throughout the region has been celebrated by offering the groups a one day conference. The day is organised by the key agencies involved in community restoration projects - Greater Wellington, the Department of Conservation, The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society and territorial authorities – with the Department of Conservation and Greater Wellington alternating as the lead agency. This year Greater Wellington was the lead agency and the day was held the Te Wananga o Aotearoa in Porirua.

The theme for this year's Restoration Day on 9 May was "Ki Uta Ki Tai – From mountains to the sea – Total catchment management". After a short powhiri and a welcome from the Mayor of Porirua, Jenny Brash, Taku Parai, gave a Ngati Toa perspective on the effects of development on the Porirua Harbours. This was followed by Keith Calder, Porirua Harbour Strategy coordinator, and Peter Handford, a forestry and land management consultant, who gave their perspective on the challenges and solutions for sustainable development of the Porirua harbours' catchments.

A series of workshops covered aspects of restoration such as stream ecology, project planning, restoration ecology and climate change, pest animal monitoring and control, plant propagation and succession planting. A workshop on the Waitakere City Council's "Twin Streams" project was presented by Meredith Youngson and Dr Barry Wards presented Forest and Bird's concept of "networked corridors" in the Wellington region with the idea of integrating restoration projects throughout the region.

Participants were further offered a choice of fieldtrips in the afternoon and all were well attended. A busload ventured out to the Pauatahanui Wildlife Management Reserve, another group visited the Maara Roa restoration project in Belmont Regional Park and another group looked at the impacts of development and current restoration activities on the Porirua Stream.

Ninety-one per cent of participants surveyed rated the day as either highly effective or effective.

### **9.2 Dune workshops**

The contribution care groups can make to mitigate the effects of climate change on coastal communities was explored at two workshops hosted by Greater Wellington in April. These were part of a series being held nationally over a period of three years by the Dune Restoration Trust of New Zealand and funded by the Sustainable Management Fund of Ministry for the Environment.

The first workshop held at Greater Wellington was offered to all local authorities, Department of Conservation and Regional Council staff was well attended by 48 staff and Councillors from Wellington City Council, Kapiti Coast District Council, Hutt City Council, Porirua City Council, Masterton

District Council, Department of Conservation staff from Wellington, Kapiti and Wairarapa offices and Greater Wellington.

The second workshop, the following day, was open to the public and was held at the Otaki Surf Club. This day was attended by 63 people and offered very similar presentations to the previous day. A number of sites were visited in the afternoon from the Kapiti Coast to Wellington to enable people to see the work being carried out by various dune restoration groups.

## 10. Communication

Greater Wellington's web page continues to be the main source of information about the programme and the activities of groups. Several groups have their own web sites and some also produce and circulate newsletters. The activities and achievements of care groups frequently feature in local newspapers around the region.

## 11. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*

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**Attachment 1: Summary of care group activities 2008-2009**

**Attachment 2: Map showing care group sites 2009**