



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

JUNE /JULY 2011

GREEN SHOOTS



Are you improving and restoring our region's rivers, lakes, wetlands, dunes and coasts, and protecting and enhancing our history for future generations?

Maybe you are developing, maintaining and promoting outdoor recreation facilities, or you're a business or resource consent holder going the extra mile to reduce the impact of your activities?

The Encore Awards honour individuals, community groups, businesses and landowners whose sustained commitment to environmental restoration, nature and conservation is making the region a better place to live.

The awards are a partnership between Greater Wellington Regional Council, the Department of Conservation's Wellington Hawke's Bay Conservancy and the Wellington Hawke's Bay Conservation Board.

Applications are now open and close on 26 August 2011

See www.gw.govt.nz/encoreawards for award categories and nomination forms

**For more information:
encore@doc.govt.nz, 04 830 4270**

How many can YOU plant?



Rising to the challenge at Queen Elizabeth Park – (l-r) Gabriel O'Connell and Thijs Odijk of Paekakariki School with Greater Wellington Ranger Stefan Hope

We need people! There are tens of thousands of plants that must get in the ground in regional parks this winter, so we're hoping that people will take up the challenge to really go for it at this year's planting days. And if you're a regular attendee, how about inviting someone new to join in?

**For a list of community planting days around the region, see:
www.gw.govt.nz/events**

Take the office to the great outdoors for a corporate planting day. Phone 04 830 4282 or email catherine.wylde@gw.govt.nz

Subscribe to Green Shoots e-newsletter & win!!!

By subscribing, you'll go in a draw to WIN one of six small day packs, courtesy of Dwrights Outdoors. Plus you'll be saving trees! Simply send us an email with your name, phone number and address:

Email parks@gw.govt.nz, subject line: Green Shoots



Whitireia's new face

Meet Simon Griffin, Greater Wellington's newest park ranger

Good progress has already been made since Greater Wellington took over day-to-day management of Whitireia Park earlier this year, and current projects will be keeping Simon very busy.

“We're continuing the upgrade of the inland track to Te Onepoto Bay, which will be great news for the considerable numbers of people who use it.



Simon says he's looking forward to working with the Whitireia Park Restoration Group on clearing and planting projects, and working with Ngāti Toa Rangatira and the wider Porirua community.

As well as being Greater Wellington's man on the spot at Whitireia Park, Simon will also be supporting the Queen Elizabeth Park Ranger.

And for those interested in a quick bio: After completion of a Bachelor of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management at Lincoln University, Simon worked for Auckland Regional Council, Greater Wellington from 2001 to 2005 (as a Western Mobile Ranger and also on Parks' work gangs – so he's not strictly speaking a new face), and offshore oil and gas companies interspersed with construction work.

More Whitireia news

Whitireia Park Board

Representation on the Whitireia Park Board has changed – the board now consists of three Ngāti Toa Rangatira representatives (Manu Katene, Reina Solomon and Taku Parai) and three Greater Wellington Councillors (Barbara Donaldson, Jenny Brash and Nigel Wilson).

Gorse control

There's been pleasing progress in controlling gorse at park, following last year's devastating fire. The aerial spraying operation in December was so successful that follow-up spraying, which we thought would be required in autumn this year, wasn't needed. The area will be checked again in early spring to assess whether a further aerial spraying operation is needed.

A bright future for Baring Head

How's it going with the newest Friends group? *Green Shoots* catches up with the Friends of Baring Head Trust



Friends of Baring Head Trust Chair Joy Baird, Lower Hutt City Mayor Ray Wallace, Greater Wellington Chair Fran Wilde and DOC Wellington Hawke's Bay Conservator Alan McKenzie

It's been six months since the Friends of Baring Head Trust was formed, following the June 2010 purchase of the Baring Head property by Greater Wellington and its funding partners. And those six months have been busy – the Friends have been working hard to set up their administrative and membership structures and there was of course the official opening of Baring Head on 13 February this year.

Joy Baird, Chair of the Friends, says she was delighted with the work Greater Wellington had done between the purchase of Baring Head and the opening day. “There were new tracks and the signage looked great. I was extremely pleased to see such a great turnout from the public, Greater Wellington Councillors and officers, and many of the region's mayors.”

Joy says the Friends are keen to make an impact on the ground but planning for Baring Head must be a careful process and many activities will need to wait until the site's management plan is completed.

“One of the projects that we're keen to get underway in the meantime is the repair of the old pump house on the Wainuiomata River side of Baring Head. We have a conservation historian who has developed a management plan for the pump house, and we're busy drafting a funding application to help with the project.”

The Friends' list of activities includes launching a membership drive and working on a Memorandum of Understanding with Greater Wellington. “We're also making contact with a range of organisations including recreational and environmental groups – it's important that we build up a network of people with an interest in Baring Head and who can help us achieve our objectives for the property for the benefit of the community,” says Joy.

Interested in joining the Friends of Baring Head Trust? Email Colin Ryder at ryderej@xtra.co.nz

Have your say on Baring Head's future

What are your opinions and ideas on the future of the Baring Head?

Have your say in Greater Wellington's online forum – the feedback will help determine the content of a draft management plan for Baring Head. The forum closes on 31 July.

<http://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz>

GW reviews Parks Volunteer Programme

Many thanks to those who participated in Greater Wellington's review of the Parks Volunteer Programme. Your feedback is very much appreciated.

The purpose of the review, which has included interviews with volunteers and a workshop involving some volunteers and Greater Wellington staff, is to examine what Greater Wellington and volunteers do now in regional parks, how that fits in with the Parks Network Strategy, and identify issues and opportunities.

The review is an especially important exercise given that the current programme has been in existence for 10 years without a comprehensive review, and that the regional park network has expanded.

Information from the review will assist in shaping Greater Wellington's relationship with volunteer groups.



This workshop with volunteers and Greater Wellington staff was part of the Parks Volunteer Programme review

Heritage precinct studies

The idea of a heritage precinct in Queen Elizabeth Park has been around in the community for a while, and is now the subject of a feasibility study.

The study has looked at what makes a heritage precinct successful in other parts of New Zealand and whether Queen Elizabeth Park has the success factors. It also involves discussing heritage precinct concepts with interested community groups.

Findings from the study, including various heritage precinct options, will be presented to Greater Wellington's Social and Cultural Wellbeing Committee in July.

Examples of heritage precincts around the country are Founders Heritage Park in Nelson and Ferrymead Heritage Park in Christchurch.

Formalising GW's relationship with Friends groups

The first Memorandum of Understanding between a Friends group and Greater Wellington has just been signed...



Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park Chair John Lancashire and Greater Wellington Councillor Nigel Wilson sign a Memorandum of Understanding

This year's Queen Elizabeth Park Arbor Day planting on 1 June culminated with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park and Greater Wellington.

Signed by Cr Nigel Wilson (Chair of Greater Wellington's Social and Cultural Wellbeing Committee) and the Friends' Chair John Lancashire, the MOU formalises the relationship between the Friends and Greater Wellington by clarifying roles and expectations.

What would we do without you?

Volunteers are an essential part of Greater Wellington's summer outdoors programme, leading walks, sharing their expertise and being generally fantastic

"A standout this year was the great support from the Friends of Baring Head at the opening of the Baring Head site – they were very positive and excited about this new addition to East Harbour Regional Park," says Greater Wellington's Parks Marketing and Design Manager Amanda Cox.

"The Friends of Belmont Regional Park supported the programme in events such as Creek to Peak, sharing their historical and botanical knowledge – participants were really interested in what they had to say." (See photo above of the Friends' Mary McIntyre with Creek to Peak participants earlier this year.)



Other groups that are involved in events – including the Friends of Maara Roa, Cross Country Vehicle Club, MIRO, the Fell Museum in Featherston, Kohinui Marae in the Wairarapa – were knowledgeable and enthusiastic, says Amanda. "Their passion for their projects makes experiences at the regional parks very special."

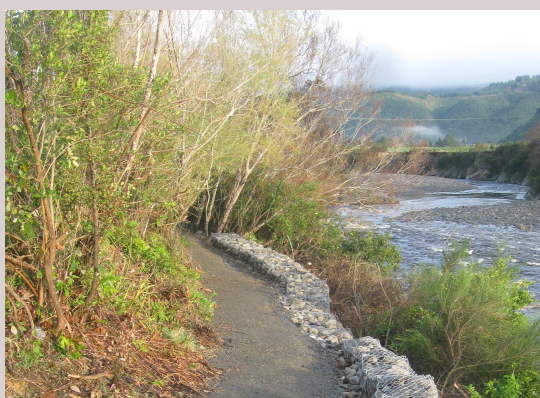
Hutt River trail extended

**Planning a visit to the Hutt River Trail?
Now there's more to enjoy!**

700m has been added to the Hutt River Trail, making it a continuous 32km from Petone to Te Marua.

The new addition allows cyclists and pedestrians to avoid the narrow shoulder on SH2 between Te Marua and Gemstone Drive in Birchville, giving safer access to Te Marua (where they can go on to Tunnel Gully) and the Rimutaka Rail Trail.

“The gap at the end of the trail was an issue that interested parties, such as Hutt Rotary Clubs, were keen to address – but filling the gap meant going through private land,” says Greater Wellington’s River Ranger Thane Walls.



This extension to the Hutt River Trail will allow users safer access to Te Marua and the Rimutaka Rail Trail

“However, thanks to Hutt Rotary Clubs’ effort and persistence behind the scenes, and an agreement between the landowner and Upper Hutt City Council to accommodate the new path, the eastern side of the Hutt River Trail is complete.”

Funding for the project came from NZ Transport Agency and the Licensing Trust. Upper Hutt City Council managed the project with assistance from Hutt Rotary Clubs.

The Hutt River Trail concept was developed in 1991 by Greater Wellington and Hutt Rotary Clubs and has proven to be immensely popular over the years.

For a map of the Hutt River Trail, visit www.gw.govt.nz/huttrivertrail

A great outlook for Otaki

Otaki Estuary has a new viewing platform...



Taking in the view from Otaki Estuary’s new viewing platform

The idea for a viewing platform at the estuary was actually raised around 10 years ago and an initial design was drawn up. The idea was revived in 2009 when the Friends of Otaki River gained funding from the Department of Conservation for a restoration project in the estuary.

The viewing platform’s official opening took place in May this year, attended by about 80 people including members of the Friends, Otaki MP Nathan Guy, Kapiti Mayor Jenny Rowan, Greater Wellington’s Kapiti Councillor Nigel Wilson, Greater Wellington staff and the wider Kapiti community.

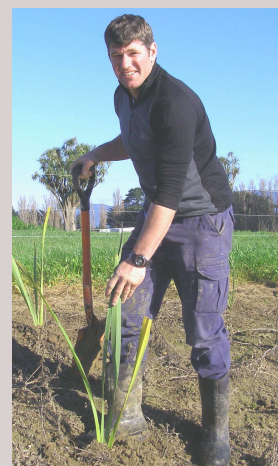
At the opening ceremony, Cr Wilson said that the ecological restoration of the area so far has seen it flourish, transforming a threatened eco-system to a dynamic and productive environment.

The Friends are working on restoring the Otaki Estuary, in conjunction with Greater Wellington’s Flood Protection, Biosecurity and Biodiversity departments.

Partnership for planting on private land

An exciting project got under way on private land around part of the old Ruamahanga River Cut-Off in south Wairarapa earlier this month. (The Ruamahanga Cut-off became a 6km backwater of Lake Wairarapa after the river was diverted in a land development scheme in the 1970s.)

In a three way partnership between the landowners, Greater Wellington and the Department of Conservation, money was raised to clear willows, fence and plant 800m of the cut-off in natives. A mix of Greater Wellington and Department of Conservation staff, iwi and local farmers joined the landowner (Ed Handyside – the chap in the photo) to plant this area before lunching at nearby Kohunui Marae.



For more information, contact Greater Wellington:

Wellington
PO Box 11646

Upper Hutt
PO Box 40847

T 04 384 5708
F 04 385 6960

T 04 526 4133
F 04 526 4171

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www.gw.govt.nz
info@gw.govt.nz