

# Young talent

Local students had the chance to share what they love about the Waitakere Ranges in the Waitakere Ranges Postcard Competition in June.

The competition, organised by the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society and the Corban Estate Arts Centre, attracted 56 entries from six Waitakere City schools - Massey High School, Kelston Intermediate, Western Heights Primary, Arahoe Primary and Henderson Valley Primary. The quality of the creativity was outstanding and the passion for the Ranges self-evident.



A chosen design - by Jeremy Roberts, Henderson Valley Primary School

From the entries John Edgar, ARC Councillor, Sandra Coney and Mayor Bob Harvey chose 5 to be printed as postcards.

The chosen designs are by Jeremy Roberts, Danielle Williams, Jessica Hulme, Yimia Lo and Ye in Shin. A special Mayor's Award was made

to Mei Jie Hu for her design. All the designs were shown during July at the Corban Estate Art Centre.

**Sets of five postcards, one of each chosen design, are just \$5 from Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, P O Box 15668, New Lynn, Waitakere City.**

Sender:  
**The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society  
PO Box 15668  
New Lynn  
Waitakere City**

# Get ready for Spring!

The Society has a new supply of T-shirts available in all sizes. The T-shirts are printed front and back and are NZ made in striking turquoise cotton. Order now in time for Spring!



The Hon Judith Tizard with a T-shirt!

T-shirts cost just \$30 each (incl p&p). Please send payment with your order, stating size :S, M, L, or XL to **WRPS, P O Box 15668, New Lynn.**

## Wanted - old photographs!

A request from Bruce and Trixie Harvey who are working on the Waitakere Ranges book for the Society:

Could any members with pre-1940s photographs of any part of the ranges, family picnics, groups, or any other type of activity, consider offering them for publication in the book?



Bruce & Trixie Harvey, at work on the book

We need pictures like these to illustrate some of our historical essays. Any photos will be returned in good order and the source acknowledged in the book. If you can help please contact Bruce or Trixie on 817 3651 or [brutrix@xtra.co.nz](mailto:brutrix@xtra.co.nz).

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Waitakere Ranges  
Protection Society Inc

# news

P O Box 15668, New Lynn, Waitakere City  
[www.waitakereranges.org.nz](http://www.waitakereranges.org.nz)

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Erangi Point, Te Henga, Mary Taylor

## Your West Coast Needs You!

Proposals for a Marine Park on the West Coast of the Auckland region, potentially including some selected 'no-take' areas, are still open for submissions. Some of the fishing lobby are vehemently opposed to any further protection of our coastline and will have made numerous submissions against the proposals. Some people are claiming there is widespread opposition to more protection - we need to prove there is more support for it. **If you would like to see greater protection of our fragile marine habitats PLEASE get a copy of the proposals and make a submission.** You can get the proposals from Forest & Bird by calling 09 303 3514 or online at [www.forestandbird.org.nz](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz)

**Submissions close on 30th September 2003**

## Welcome to the 30th Birthday Newsletter!

This issue brings you up to date with the work to improve protection for both the Waitakere Ranges and the West Coast of the Auckland Region. And, for those of you unable to join us at our 30th Birthday Party, we've included an update, some pictures from the afternoon and some special memories from the formation of the Society in 1973.

We also profile Committee member Melissa Marler and are delighted to announce the results of the hugely popular Waitakere Ranges Postcard Competition.

Best wishes



Kath  
editor@waitakereranges.org.nz

## Permanent Protection for the Waitakere Ranges Future of Waitakere Ranges landscape at stake

Over 250 people involved in the future of New Zealand's landscapes met over a two day conference on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> July. Landscape architects, planners, judges, developers, conservation groups, academics, artists and politicians debated in depth and with some passion why landscape is important to us all and whether enough is being done to protect it.

The conference demonstrated landscape is more than just the view. It has a multi-layered meaning, which includes our emotional, cultural and spiritual attachment to the land as well as its history, its habitats and its biodiversity. Research by Simon Swaffield and his colleagues at Lincoln University showed New Zealanders are passionate about pastoral landscapes as well as wild and uninhabited ones. The research shed new light on the recent public concerns about coastal development and growing subdivision in areas such as the Waitakere Ranges foothills. **Continued inside...**

## Your President's Report

Such a busy time in the last few weeks has us gasping for breath. So much achieved, and still so much more to do. How to keep up with the demands of a rapidly changing world and stay focussed on real conservation values like protecting the ranges?

The debate for permanent protection is in public now, in a way as never before. The Waitakere Ranges Protection Project is now firmly on the Waitakere City Council agenda and they are about to embark on three months of public consultation to identify any problems and the solutions to them. There is a ground swell of public opinion throughout New Zealand as the nation begins to appreciate the astonishing rate at which we are losing our iconic landscapes to development.

Four articles in the Herald at the end of July alone about loss of landscape in New Zealand, and two substantial articles in the Listener in the same month, on South Island high country land tenure and how increased tourist numbers at Milford Sound are starting to sound alarms as the visitors begin to destroy the very scene they came to see.

Then two days of intense debate at the New Zealand Landscape Conference where 20 speakers talked about the loss of outstanding landscapes in New Zealand and how we might Reclaim our Heritage.

And to top-off the month, 120 people filled the Waitakere Village Hall on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July to celebrate, 30 years to the day, the formation of The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society. We did The Society proud, friends and members met after many years, and we proudly acknowledged fifteen of our most valued members for their outstanding contribution to conservation in the Waitakere Ranges with Certificates of Honour. Our Patron, Professor Dick Bellamy proposed the toast to the Society and wished us another 30 great years. I certainly hope our vision is very well established by then, and I for one am sitting in my deck chair enjoying the view!



John Edgar  
President

## 71 Turanga Road paid for!

Thanks to the generous support of our members and the success of our art auction, which raised over \$30,000, the last payments have been made for 71 Turanga Road. Once the conveyancing and covenant work is complete we will gift the land to the Auckland Regional Council for inclusion in the Park. Congratulations! Surplus funds and new donations will go into our reserves fund.

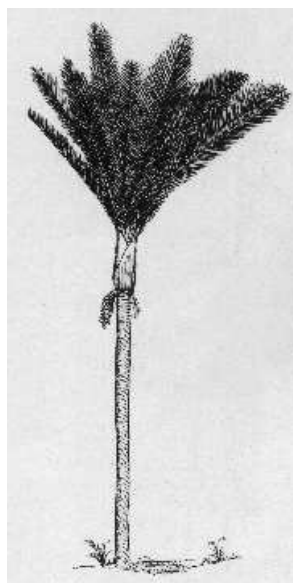


Image courtesy of Alan Esler, 2002 and ARC

## Canyoning continues

Despite an extensive submission by the Society, highlighting very real threats to biodiversity, and widespread local opposition, the Auckland Regional Council has granted consents to two commercial canyoning companies to use Cowan Stream and Glen Esk stream. The applications were both granted for a period of 4 years for the daily and annual numbers sought and with photo-point monitoring only. Councillor Sandra Coney and Councillor Paul Walbran opposed the granting of the consents. The consents waive a requirement for a professional ecological monitoring plan for mosses suggested in the draft conditions prepared by staff, instead only requiring the applicant to cooperate in the event that a study of the mosses be carried out by someone else. The Society is extremely disappointed in this decision and is seeking advice on the next step. You can access the Society's submission online at [www.waitakereranges.org.nz](http://www.waitakereranges.org.nz)

## Geoff Park back out west!

On 12-14<sup>th</sup> September the Going West Books and Writers Festival takes Wild New Zealand as its theme. For those members who missed him at the Society's AGM earlier this year, the keynote speaker is Geoff Park, author of the acclaimed Nga Uruora. The festival is a celebration of wild nature in the written word and features writers from the Waitakere Ranges and elsewhere in Aotearoa. For the full programme and booking details contact Barbara Cade at Waitakere City Council on 826 8000 ext 8780 or [www.waitakere.govt.nz](http://www.waitakere.govt.nz)

## Meet your committee: Melissa Marler



Melissa was born in Auckland and trained as an Occupational Therapist in Wellington. Her work took her overseas and, after an 18 month spell back in NZ, she found herself retraining in design, in Milan, in the late eighties. Melissa then moved to the UK, where she married an Englishman, had a family and settled in the Suffolk countryside, in Snape, designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

This particular landscape, known as "the Sandlings", is an extensive lowland, coastal strip characterized by sandy soils and heathland vegetation. This land was historically poor being largely Common Land, farmed by peasant farmers. Grazing sheep and goats traditionally maintained this semi-natural habitat, giving rise to large expanses of lowland heath, until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> C. This type of heathland is now extremely rare and its flora and fauna (adder, sand lizard, Dartford warbler, nightjar, antlion, mixed age heather stands, endemic lichens and mosses, native forests and acid grassland) are in serious decline. Heathland is an internationally protected habitat.

Melissa developed a strong interest and love of heathland, as well as for the many other special local habitats - fen wetlands, estuaries, shingle coastlines, salt marsh and reed beds. Her fascination and enjoyment led to receipt of a BSc (hons) degree in Conservation Management, from the University of East Anglia, in Norfolk, in 2002. Melissa's thesis was on an invasive moss (*Campylopus introflexus*) which is threatening lowland heaths in Europe and beginning to threaten some native plant species in the UK. Melissa was awarded top marks and the Barclay's Cup for best BSc conservation student.

In August 2002 Melissa returned to NZ, hoping to put her ecological and conservation principles into practice, and immediately joined WRPS. She has also recently started working for an ecological restoration group as the environmental education coordinator for the Whau catchment. Melissa's special interest is in the conservation of landscape types and ecological processes within these landscapes. She sees conservation as conserving natural ecosystem processes, not simply protecting a few species or small sites - as being about planning and living in a way that enables natural processes to operate across large areas. The effects of air, water, land pollution, erosion, climate change, sea level change, ground water depletion, creeping development (reducing buffering), invasive species, disease, genetic impoverishment, and even seemingly harmless human activities, will ruin protected fragments, unless wider land use and life style issues are addressed. Conservation involves a major shift in human thinking at all levels and challenges us to reexamine how we approach our way of life, conservation, and the way we use and care for the land and water, globally, nationally, regionally, and locally.

## Your Committee:

Your committee are working hard on your behalf to protect the Waitakere Ranges. Given the huge tasks of the year ahead we could, however, do with some extra help. We need:

- A Secretary to help with correspondence, take minutes and organise meetings
- A volunteer coordinator to contact supporters when there are shared tasks to be done

**If you, or someone you know, could help please call John on 8128 555.** Many thanks.

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# Wetlands healthier after willow clearance

Kayaks are again a more frequent sight on the Waitakere River now that willow is being successfully cleared from the Te Henga wetlands. Covering about 80 hectares, the regionally significant wetland lies between Waitakere City and Rodney District and has a number of owners, including private individuals, councils and organizations such as Forest and Bird, Fish and Game and the Department of Conservation. It is an important habitat for a number of bird species, including the Australasian bittern, fernbird and banded rail.

The area has long been threatened by crack and grey willow, which have blocked the river and wetland, causing flooding and destroying habitats for native plants and animals. Environmental weeds (such as Mexican waterlily and alligator weed) and fish (such as koi carp and rudd) have also threatened the wetland environment. Waitakere and Rodney councils have worked together to reduce flooding at the wetlands for many years, but have funded willow eradication and replanting specifically since 1994. The project received an extra boost last year when the Auckland Regional Council came on board with additional funding, which enabled the project focus to be broadened to include environmental weeds.

Waitakere City Council and the Waitakere RiverCare Group (which won an ARC 'E' Award this year for their environmental work) have also worked together to grow and plant native plants to replace the willow, improving the health of the waterways. Enough willow has now been cleared to restore waterflow from Bethells Bridge to the river mouth. Next year, work will focus on clearing the last of the willow blockages above Jordan's Causeway and targeting new finds of grey willow.

Report by Kerry Bodmin

# Lone Kauri Restoration Trust Update

On 28th July the Lone Kauri Restoration group formed the Lone Kauri Trust for Forest Restoration and Education. The Trust's objective is "to facilitate forest restoration and education in the South Waitakere Ranges" (draft). The Trust structure has been adopted to help funding, strategic decision making and the project's longevity.

The Trust has 525 baitstations out and have been focussed on installing new baitstations in the area between Zion Ridge and Lone Kauri Road during the short winter days. They hope to complete areas below Farm Road, and in the Upper Pararaha by the end of September. In spring the Trust volunteers will refresh all baitstations to ensure maximum bird breeding success and continue the regular bird surveys conducted in conjunction with the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society. In addition three vegetation monitoring plots have been established, two in the Trust's area, and one outside it. Stoat trapping will resume in Summer. The Trust plan to intensively pest manage one hectare to reduce even mice, which have a 10m home range, providing a nursery for young lizards and invertebrates, that mice predate on.

The Trustees also plan to extend the baitstation grid down Lone Kauri Rd to the beach and perhaps across to La Trobe Track. This will extend the shared boundary with the La Trobe Forest Restoration Group. The Trustees are keen to hear from people who would like to help with pest control or bird monitoring work. If you'd like to get involved contact Mike Nixon on m.Nixon@auckland.ac.nz

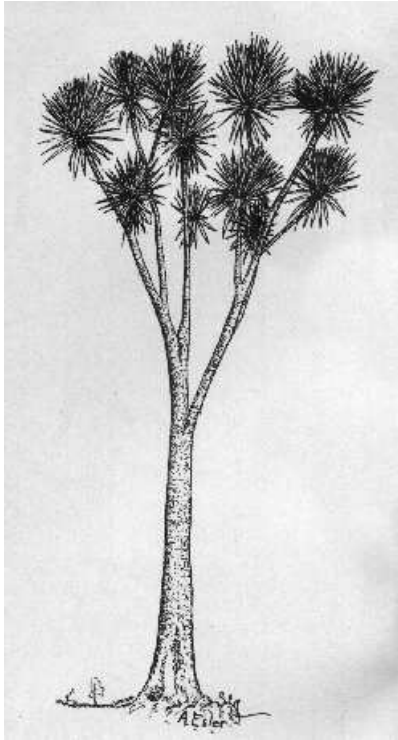


Image courtesy of Alan Esler, 2002 and ARC

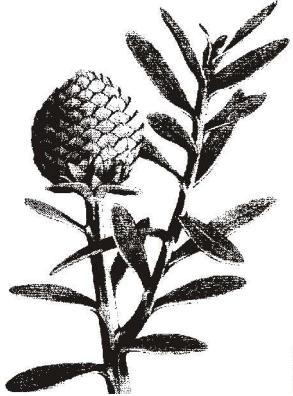
# Permanent Protection for the Waitakere Ranges

## Future of Waitakere Ranges landscape at stake

Presentations at the Landscape Conference highlighted how the growing desire for lifestyle blocks, population and tourism growth are putting our land under more pressure than ever. Gary Taylor, Chairman of the Environmental Defence Society, explained how in the last 2.5 years alone there have applications for 800 new lots in the Waitakere Ranges, either approved or under consideration.

Whilst New Zealand's National Park landscapes were seen to be well protected, many speakers at the conference showed how other treasured places, such as the South Island High Country, the Bay of Islands and the Waitakere Ranges are left vulnerable to the case-by-case approach generated by the Resource Management Act.

The conference revealed a strong desire among many landscape professionals for more central policy on landscape protection and for more community involvement in the future for the landscapes they live in. There was much interest in presentations on landowner-public partnerships in which landowners are supported to resist the pressure to subdivide and, instead, restore the natural qualities of their land. This is seen as something which could have real benefit in the Waitakere Ranges where there are several large private blocks. Many attendees were eager to rise to the challenge issued by Te Warena Taua, CEO of Te Kawerau a Maki, Tangata Whenua of the Waitakere Ranges, to learn more about Maori land management and resource conservation methods. The Environmental Defence Society is planning a series of workshops in follow up to the Conference. These will be run around the country to establish the best approach for improved protection in the future.



The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society was a minor sponsor of the event whilst Waitakere City Council was a major sponsor. The Society is working closely with Council to explore the best way to guarantee the future of the Waitakere Ranges. The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society hopes the Ranges, from the Metropolitan Urban Limit to the North and East, the Manukau Harbour to the South and the Tasman Sea, can be designated a Heritage Area. The Heritage Area could potentially give permanence to the current District Plan, make discretionary activities prohibited and create structured relationships with private landowners to foster conservation and restoration on their properties. The Society looks forward to working with Council during the public consultation which has been scheduled for the next 3 months. We are also grateful to our local MPs for their support. Should legislation be required to secure permanent protection for the Ranges, through, for example, a Local Government Bill, they have pledged their support.

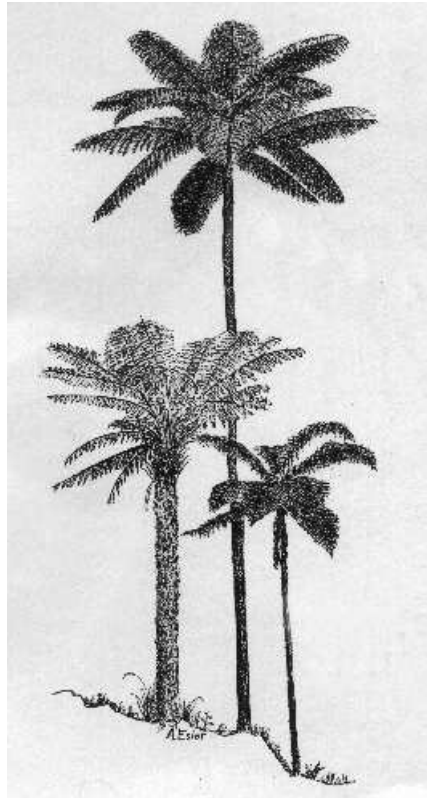


Image courtesy of Alan Esler, 2002 and ARC

Few doubt the Ranges are unique. Many seem to agree we need to keep them for ever. Now we need to work out the best way to do this. As the Honourable Lynn Pillay said at the Society's Birthday Party, "No one wants Pauanui at Piha,"

If you have suggestions of comments please contact the Society on 8128 555 or email jedgar@iconz.co.nz



Everyone at the party. Photographer: Tony Dunn.

# 30 years' work to save the Ranges

Over 120 friends and supporters of the gathered in Waitakere Hall on Sunday 27th August to celebrate the Society's 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday. The Society was formed in the same hall, 30 years ago to the day in 1973. It was founded at a meeting of locals, angry at plans to locate a rubbish tip in the Te Henga Valley. Having defeated the tip proposal the Society went on to become respected and passionate advocates for the Waitakere Ranges.

Guests such as Don Binney and Warwick Brown shared their memories of the formation of the Society and Councillors Penny Hulse (WCC) and Bill Burrill (ARC) shared their admiration for the work of the Society and their hopes for future conservation of the Ranges. Local MPs Lynne Pillay and David Cunliffe pledged support in Parliament if it would help meet the Society's goal of permanent protection for the Ranges.

The Society awarded personalised certificates of honour, for outstanding work to protect the Waitakere Ranges, and there was a sense of achievement and determination to ensure permanent protection becomes a reality.

# Waitakere Ranges Protection Society 30th Birthday Party, 27th August 2003



Founding member and current committee member Colleen Pilcher cuts the cake with young members Sarah Marler and Alicia Taylor. Photographer: Tony Dunn.

## WRPS Honours awarded to:

- Douglas Allan
- Juliet Batten
- Dick Bellamy
- Don Binney
- Warwick Brown
- Jonathan Hunt
- John Lewis
- Dave McKay
- John Morton
- Marjorie Newhook
- Colleen Pilcher
- Tony Randerson
- Jeff Scholes
- Gary Taylor
- Bob Ussher

A quarry blast shakes the land and rock dust rises  
 But a public notice sends out sharper shock waves  
 Rubbish will fill a bushy valley, and bury a quiet waterfall  
 While Kauri rickers stand helplessly above,  
 And through the bittern's swampland to the children's lagoon,  
 A toxic leachate will pollute its way downstream.

Outmoded dumps and promises of football fields  
 Have no appeal to pioneer farming families  
 Or city refugees or veteran trampers  
 Or artists, writers, musicians in secret studios  
 Or the summer bach visitors  
 Escaping city madness

The local meeting hall fills and pockets empty  
 A petition door knocking, 7000 names  
 Ideas turn into songs, posters, newsletters and laughter.  
 Midnight old burns and letters steam with indignation  
 And around the world we seek alternatives.

A formal hearing, but passion does not move the minds  
 Of councillors who sit in judgement of their plan,  
 Inevitable defeat, but next we challenge water rights  
 Again we state our case; more technical this time  
 Three judges listen, and decide  
 No water right, No rubbish tip  
 The rocks, the swamp, the water, the wildlife win  
 The valley, the people, the Waitakeres win

We move beyond one valley to defend them all  
 From profiteering progress, pipelines, paving, pylons,  
 pests, pollution, pines, privatised parkland, punctured  
 panoramas, promotion, purple Piha eyesores, and the odd  
 politician.

After thirty years of recycled issues, and cumulative disasters  
 The end's in sight  
 The whole wild coast and all the scenic valleys a lasting legacy  
 A heritage forever.



Tug-Of-War, 1973



One of many protests, 1973

## More memories from 1973

**Juliet Batten remembers:** Jeff Scholes, our first President, had excellent contacts in the advertising industry, and went off to town to get advice. He returned to tell us that we must no longer use the word 'swamp' for the area that was threatened with pollution, but must refer to it as the 'Te Henga marsh.' (the term 'wetland' was not yet in use.) His adviser, Bob Harvey, was the man who later became mayor .

With Bob's help we produced effective posters and slogans. Dave Harre later added his advice, and we dreamed up media stunts and various ways to keep the battle alive. The Beggar's Bag Theatre group performed 'The Saga of Mr Natural and the Waitakere tip' in the streets of Henderson. A 'Scenic Rubbish Drive' was held, to clean up rubbish along the Scenic Drive, and highlight a problem that would increase should the tip go ahead. We staged a 'Tipnic' at the beach, with local bulldozer driver Roger Crabbe high on the seat of his big yellow machine, while the rest of us pulled on the rope attached to it, in a symbolic tug-of-war with the Council. The TV crew loved it, especially as the local people 'won' with a dramatic mass tumble backwards as the bulldozer finally yielded.

**Mary Woodward remembers:** Merv Halcrow and David Harre remember well the tug o'war that took place on the beach between Roger Crabbe and his bulldozer, representing the bureaucracy, and the assembled man- and woman- power, representing the democratic opposition. "We" won of course.

I undertook a membership drive as Jeff Scholes did also among his friends at the university. Among our first members were Professor John Morton, and Dr. Lucy Cranwell-Smith, who had been a great friend of my grandfather, Pa Bethell, Aunt Gert Bethell and all the family at Te Henga. Both John and Lucy were soon honoured as patrons of the society. Many years later I joined the committee as secretary and there was Colleen Pilcher, there from the start and still active. She has been the backbone of the society ever since.

(More memories will follow in the Spring Edition.)



Patron Dick Bellamy and President John Edgar raise a toast to the Society