

Yes! Please send me the following Waitakere Ranges Protection Society goodies...

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Total at \$30 each (incl P&P) \$_____

Please send your order to Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, P O Box 15668, New Lynn, Waitakere City. Please enclose your payment with your order. Thank you for your support.



The Hon Judith Tizard with a T-shirt!

Stylish summer conservation!

Now is the ideal time to order your Waitakere Ranges Protection Society T-shirt for summer. The T-shirts are printed front and back and are NZ made in striking turquoise cotton.

T-shirts cost just \$30 each (incl p&p).

Please send payment with your order, stating size: S, M, L, or XL

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

More choice of cards!

Now you can support the Society with your correspondence in even more ways. You can choose from:

Three sets of sophisticated botanical design cards, with envelopes, featuring the precious plant life of Spragg Bush, Or

A set of bright postcards featuring winning entries in the recent Waitakere Ranges Postcard Competition, including this one by Danielle Williams, of Arahoe Primary.



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Waitakere Ranges
Protection Society Inc

news

P O Box 15668, New Lynn, Waitakere City
www.waitakereranges.org.nz

Issue 120 - November 2003

Welcome to your summer newsletter!

It's been a busy and exciting year for the Society and your executive committee would like to wish you all the best for the summer season.

This edition includes:

- An important update from John Edgar
- A focus on the work to achieve our long term goal of permanent protection for the Ranges
- News and project updates
- A profile of committee member Mels Barton
- A look at pigs as pests
- And great cards and T-shirts for you to order in time for Christmas!

Best wishes

Kath
editor@waitakereranges.org.nz



Your President's Report



In the 3 months since our last newsletter, the committee has been very active. As well as progressing our extensive agenda, we have been focusing on the Waitakere Ranges

Protection Project that has been initiated by the Waitakere City Council. In the 30 years since the Society was formed, we have advocated constantly for such a project, and many of you will have been involved in our attempts to bring permanent protection to the whole of the ranges.

We congratulate Waitakere City Council on making this a priority of its environmental program. This is an opportunity for residents of the ranges and the greater Auckland region to express their feelings to Council on this very important issue. This project has the support of Mayor Bob Harvey and a majority of city councillors, especially our Waitakere Ward Councillors Carolynne Stone, Penny Hulse and Denise Yates. The project is also supported by our local MPs Hon. David Cunliffe and Hon. Lynne Pillay, ARC Councillors Sandra Coney and Paul Walbran, iwi representatives, Rodney District Council, and other stakeholders.

Committee members have attended all the consultation meetings held to date in the ranges' communities, and I am pleased to report considerable understanding of the issues surrounding landscape protection and strong support for better protection.



Postcard design by
Jeremy Roberts,
Henderson Valley
Primary School

When the first round of consultation is complete in November, Council will convene focus groups from the various communities to discuss the findings of the consultation, and to consider possible solutions.

The Society will be involved in these meetings, and **I urge you to put your name forward to Waitakere City Council** and get involved in these crucial discussions. **This is our best chance to achieve what we have worked towards for 30 years**, and we may not have such an opportunity again. **For more information call Arlene Fredericks at Waitakere City Council on 836 8000 ext 8401 or email arlene.fredericks@waitakere.govt.nz**

Your President's Report continued...

Council has initiated various other projects to inform the debate, the most important of which is a review of structure planning as a tool for subdivision in the foothills. The Society has opposed this provision of the District plan since the plan was notified in 1995. We have appealed the decision to allow structure plans in Oratia, Birdwood and Swanson. However the Oratia Structure Plan is now in place and is not part of the review. Birdwood and Swanson Structure Plans are both under appeal in the Environment Court, and hearing dates are yet to be set. If we cannot halt subdivision in the foothills, our vision for the future of the ranges will be severely compromised and the foothills will rapidly become urbanised. In a hundred years or so, they would resemble suburbs like Remuera. If this happens the ranges will have died *the death of a thousand cuts* Morgan Williams predicted.

It seems a cruel irony that the ranges, having survived the onslaughts of the last hundred years and Auckland's insatiable expansion, and regenerated into a diverse and unique landscape that is a nationally recognised icon, are now, in the 21st century, under their greatest threat since logging began. Our battle is one of long-term public good over short-term private gain, and we must now work harder than ever to see that we do not lose this great opportunity to save the Waitakere Ranges for the future of all New Zealanders.

John Edgar, President

Heritage Festival - Saturday 15th November

The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society is taking a stall at the Heritage Festival at the Corban Estate Arts Centre in Henderson on Saturday 15th November.

The Festival is a fundraising event for the West Auckland Hospice and a celebration of the Heritage of West



Auckland. Entry is free and the Festival is open from 10am to 4pm - **we'd love to see you there!**

The Arataki Volunteer Pest Control Operation

The area in the vicinity of the Arataki Visitors Centre and Nature Trail is one of the most highly visited areas in the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park. Local rangers decided it was the perfect place to conduct animal pest control on some of the nasties which reside in the Waitakeres. They include possums, rodents and mustelids (stoats, ferrets and weasels).

As a result a pest control project has been set up and is run by a group of keen volunteers who participate by either checking trap lines, filling/installing bait stations or occasionally building tunnels for trapping. The major aim of the project is to reduce animal pest numbers which will result in improved forest health and habitat quality. Effective pest control will help increase bird, insect, reptile, frog and invertebrate numbers.



If you are interested in being involved in this project on a casual or regular basis please contact Jonathan Gould on ph: 817-0099

Council enforcement applauded

In what is thought to be a New Zealand first, a Waitakere City man has been sent to jail for clearing protected native bush and undertaking earthworks, without resource consent and while subject to a court order to stop the work. The man had been previously convicted of a similar offence. The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society applauds Waitakere City Council for its work to enforce the new District Plan.



Apology

The poem which appeared in Issue 119 of this newsletter was by Colleen Pilcher. My apologies this appeared unattributed.

Meet your committee: Mels Barton

Mels was born in Nottingham, England in 1966 to artistic parents - her father an art teacher and her mother a fashion designer. Being deliberately contrary, Mels decided science was her thing, so left home for Hull University in Yorkshire, in 1984, to study geology and physical geography. On graduating Mels was offered a PhD grant and, as this seemed easier than getting a job, moved to Birmingham University's tidal waters research group led by Dr John West. This is where Mels met her partner Eric Darbyshire (a physicist and oceanographer) and for 3 years they studied the intimate details of mud transport in the Tamar Estuary in Cornwall together. However Mels, never one to make life easy, spent her final 2 years at the Plymouth Marine Lab with Dr Reg Uncles. So she and Eric soon became as familiar with the M5 motorway as they were with the Tamar!



Photo courtesy of Tony Dunn

Mels was recruited in 1990 by the National Rivers Authority, one of their few graduate trainees. She spent the next 9 years working in the water quality department of the NRA, and its successor, the Environment Agency. Her varied roles included 6 months as a pollution control officer in Swansea, where she successfully prosecuted McAlpines 3 times! She also spent 4 years as negotiator between the NRA/EA and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water where she was responsible for getting the best environmental outcomes from the 500 million pound improvement programme driven by European Union directives. This programme resulted in the largest clean up of sewage discharges ever seen in the UK and removed crude sewage from all Welsh beaches. Mels spent 3 years as Welsh consents manager before emigrating with Eric to New Zealand in 1999. They started an environmental consultancy and set up home in Titirangi where they spent weekends walking in the Waitakere Ranges.

After only a year in New Zealand, Eric was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and his condition deteriorated so fast fieldwork became impossible. A new career was necessary and having played with the Internet and its predecessor, JANET, since the early '80s, this seemed a logical step. Mels and Eric now run two successful businesses - Subliminal, which promotes web sites and drives targeted traffic to them and Wombats Web design company for small businesses. Mels joined the WRPS committee in 2003, to help protect the outstanding landscape and ecology she and Eric came to New Zealand to enjoy. She specialises in water issues and is currently representing the Society in negotiations regarding the consent renewals for the water supply dams in the Ranges. She and Eric are also helping to redevelop and promote the Society's web site.

Your Committee:

Your committee are working hard on your behalf to protect the Waitakere Ranges. Given the huge tasks at hand we could 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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Waitakere Ranges
Protection Society Inc

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www.waitakereranges.org.nz

Waitakere Ranges book at design stage!



The Waitakere Ranges book, which Bruce and Trixie Harvey have been editing, is now moving into the design stages. All the manuscripts have been received, and images are being collated and passed to our designer, Paul Nicolai. The Natural and Human History sections are virtually complete and there remains some work to do on the Arts and Cultural Section which should be finalised by December. We have had generous financial contributions from various sources and will acknowledge these when the details are finalised. We hope to be able to offer a special pre-publication price to members of the Society early in the New Year and hope to go to print by mid-year. We are grateful for expert assistance with this project from Society member Peter Dowling, of Reed Publishing.

Community group plantings

It has been with great pleasure that the Society has marked its 30th Birthday by supporting four community plantings in the Ranges over the winter.



Image courtesy of Alan Esler, 2002 And ARC

Members of the Society and the Executive Committee lent a hand at plantings organised by both Waitakere Rivercare and the Friends of Whatipu. The Society was also pleased to be able to arrange for a grant of eco-sourced pohutukawa trees from Project Crimson to help with revegetation programmes at Kare Kare and Piha. Thanks to all involved.

We can look forward to watching these plantings grow over the next 30 years!

Dam action!

Dams across rivers prevent the natural flow of water downstream. Not only do they prevent the flow you see in the river channel from reaching the sea, but they also stop the flow you don't see occurring through the ground, which also contributes to the volume of flow within the river channel especially in dry weather.

This has a devastating effect on wildlife within the river, especially close to the dam where the river may be totally dry, but also throughout the entire catchment by preventing natural flood flows and reducing the volume of water naturally present. Those creatures able to move downstream away from the greatest impacts may do so, but in many areas the only animals surviving are those very tolerant to stress, low water levels and large temperature fluctuations. The effects often degrade the ecology of the entire catchment downstream of the dam.

The volume of water required within a stream or river to maintain acceptable habitat for the ecology (which includes fish, invertebrates and plants) of the river or stream is known as the **Residual Flow**. The residual flow required for each species will be different, so in order to calculate how much flow should be released from a dam the most flow-sensitive species should be used. In this way the needs of all species will be met and the ecology of the river preserved. There is a cost associated with releasing flow from any dam, since this reduces the volume of water available for human use within the reservoir. Calculation of an appropriate residual flow must therefore take into account the costs and benefits of both human and ecological needs and values.

Mels Barton

Mels is currently representing the Society in its negotiations with Water Care Services over consent renewals for the water supply dams in the Ranges.



Image courtesy of NIWA

Memories from the Society in 1973

Juliet Batten remembers: From the start, ours was a committee with a difference. Previous tip proposals had galvanised rural communities who simply wanted to move the tip on to somewhere else. But this community had recently gone through expansion, with the 10 acre block subdivision in the Bethells Valley. Alternative life-stylers, professional people such as geologists, a musician, laboratory technician, accountant and artist joined with city dwellers with a love of the Waitakeres - a cell biologist, lawyer and media person. All were prepared to defend vigorously the wilderness values they had come to enjoy. 'The Sophisticated Protesters' was the way Thursday Magazine chose to describe us in its title to an article on the committee.

From the start we adopted a broad approach. Rather than shunt the problem elsewhere, we asked questions such as:

- Why was Auckland generating such a large volume of rubbish?
- How could this rubbish be reduced at source?
- What is the thinking that leads the city to push its waste into the wilderness?
- What other threats might this kind of thinking lead to?
- What is the northern limit of the Waitakere Ranges? (Council quibbled that the Te Henga tip site wasn't really in the Ranges)

My brief was to research alternative means of rubbish disposal and to produce a report for the Council. The US Environmental Protection Agency sent us a mass of material, and my report introduced ideas such as high compression baling and recycling. Later, when I took our petition to the Parliamentary Select Committee and tabled the report, I learned they thought my PhD was in waste disposal - it was in fact in English!

The Council hearing took place and we had collected enough submissions - over 500 - to keep it going for days. Sometimes it got quite colourful. One man turned up with a flask of 'tip liquor' collected from the Whitford tip and invited the Councillors to have a drink. Then he sent shivers around the room by plonking a rusty old can marked 'Cyanide' on the desk, claiming he had found it at Whitford. An impassioned woman stated she was concerned about 'all that affluence' going down the Waitakere River to the sea. With a sense of disbelief we heard the Council's decision that the tip would still go ahead.

The battle quickly shifted gear, with the filing of an Appeal and fundraising to pay for this. The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, as we were now called, became a watch-dog, poised to fight on many fronts. A sewage treatment plant was being spoken of for Te Henga. Routing of power pylons was proposed over the Manukau harbour to Laingholm/Cornwallis and through the Waitakeres to Auckland. A large subdivision of the cliffs between Te Henga and Muriwai was on the cards. The chairman of the ARA made headlines with his proposal to build a coastal road from Piha to Whatipu.

Eventually the rubbish tip battle was won, not at the Appeal, but when the Water Board turned down the Council's application for a water right. The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society then moved into an educative, proactive role, organising tree planting, land purchase, rubbish clearing and environmental awareness, as well as keeping a close eye on inappropriate development proposals and making submissions on the District Schemes. From the first noisy meeting in the Waitakere Hall, the founders of the Society never dreamed the tip proposal would bring so many benefits to the Waitakeres.



One of many protests, 1973

Permanent protection for the Waitakere Ranges

30 years' work

Since the Society was formed, in 1973, it has lobbied for better protection for the whole of the Ranges. That vision may well now become a reality, but is dependent upon your support.

The Waitakere Ranges Project

Over the last six weeks, Waitakere City Council, in partnership with iwi, Rodney District Council, the ARC and the region's MPs, has run a series of eighteen workshops looking at the need for permanent protection. The workshops have been attended by residents from throughout West Auckland. Representatives of the Society have been present at all of the meetings.

The workshops have been a key part of the Waitakere Ranges Project. Council has also conducted telephone research seeking input from the wider region. The results of the telephone research should be published shortly.

The goal of the workshops was to discover what the problems are and to see if more can be done to protect the ranges now and in the future. At the workshops, Council has sought feedback on the four major issues it has identified to date.

These four issues are:

- Development
- Landscape
- Weed and Animal Pests
- Visitors

The Society's view of the workshops What we need you to do!

John Edgar, President of the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, says "The response to the simple but important questions being asked, has been overwhelmingly in favour of permanent protection for the whole of the Ranges. Development is seen clearly as the greatest threat to the visual landscape and to the environment. People with overseas experience are offering excellent understanding of international landscape protection models all of which contain some elements of direct importance to the Waitakere Ranges project.

Opposition to the project is extremely low, in both numbers of people and quality of arguments against permanent protection. These are the same people who opposed elements of the District Plan over the past few years. Their arguments for short-term private gain to overrule long-term public good are hollow and self-serving."

Key issues which have been raised include a strong desire for certainty for the Ranges, the discovery of 670 privately owned vacant sections in the Ranges, which could potentially be developed, and dissatisfaction at the threat of urban sprawl in the foothills.

While progress to date is encouraging, the process is still in its early stages. As the timeline below shows, the next stage will be a series of Focus Groups to help in the development of Policy. There are two important things you can do RIGHT NOW to help the Society secure permanent protection for the Waitakere Ranges:

1) Give Council your feedback to the Ranges Protection Project Discussion Paper.

You can do this by fax, email or by post. To get a copy of the Discussion Paper and a feedback form, call Arlene Fredericks at Waitakere City Council on 836 8000 ext 8401 or email arlene.fredericks@waitakere.govt.nz

2) Take part in the focus groups.

The next stage of the process will be critical. It is important that people who are passionate about the Ranges take part. A series of Focus Groups will be run between late November and January. If you could take part, or to find out more, please call Arlene Fredericks at Waitakere City Council on 836 8000 ext 8401 or email arlene.fredericks@waitakere.govt.nz

Pigs are pests!

Regular visitors into the Ranges are reporting increased sightings of damage caused by pigs. Problems caused by pigs include erosion damage, even to quite remote gullies, and young nikau palms uprooted by foraging, disrupting natural revegetation. Both native snails and King Ferns, which were once numerous in the Ranges, are favoured food of pigs. The recent damage in the Scenic Drive area and on the Odlins Track is quite noticeable. Pig numbers in the Ranges were reduced to low levels in the 1980s, but ARC believe they are now rising and ask visitors to notify them if they see pigs or pig hunters in the Ranges by calling 366 2000.



Auckland's Biodiversity

The Society is one of over twenty agencies taking part in a series of Auckland Biodiversity Forums. The Forum's aim is to bring greater cohesion to biodiversity efforts in the region, improving co-ordination between the different Councils, national work, the work of not-for-profit agencies, research and education institutes. The first meeting, held in September, focussed on the goals, issues and opportunities for better regional coordination. The next meeting, at the end of November, will look at ways to progress the Forum and to agree priorities.

New accountability for biosecurity

The Society was pleased with the Government's move, in August of this year, to streamline accountability for biosecurity, placing MAF firmly in a lead role. Pest invasions, such as the Painted Apple Moth, represent a significant threat to the Waitakere Ranges, especially given their proximity to Auckland. The Society expects the changes to mean increased vigilance and faster response times to new species invasion. This should reduce the need to resort to extensive pesticide use.

Find out more:

Waitakere City Website:
www.waitakere.govt.nz/havsay/index.asp#ranges

Waitakere Ranges Protection Society
www.waitakereranges.org.nz

Waitakere City's Timeline for the Waitakere Ranges Project

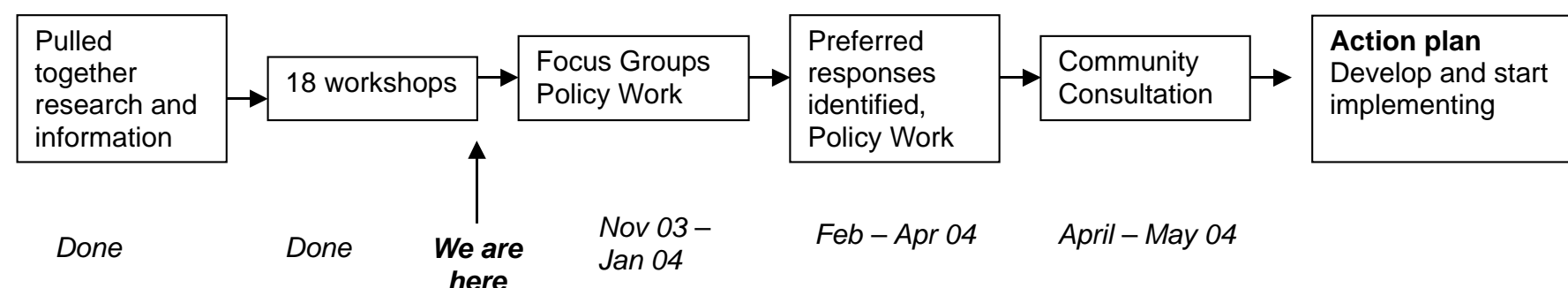


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