

The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Incorporated



The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc. is a registered charitable entity in terms of the Charities Act 2005. Registration No. CC46103

news

Issue 153

May 2012

PO Box 15668, New Lynn, Auckland 0640
www.waitakereranges.org.nz
wrps@waitakereranges.org.nz

Your President's Report



Thanks to members and friends who attended our AGM in March. The Annual and Financial reports are printed in this newsletter. The newly elected committee members have a wide range of expertise and we look forward to the challenges of the year ahead. The address to the meeting by Councillor Sandra Coney on "The changing landscape of Piha" used historic and recent images to explore the way that human settlement has changed the outstanding natural landscape of Piha.

To date this year has been busy for the Society, with a number of public submissions and Environment Court mediation on three appeals. Our Heritage Area Coordinator, Saffron Toms, has been involved in advising the committee on various matters as well as drafting and ensuring that we meet the deadlines for lodging submissions. We have made submissions to Auckland Council on the Long Term (10-year) Plan and the proposed dog bylaws, and to MAF and DOC on the protection of Maui's and Hector's dolphins. Preparation of these documents has brought Saffron into contact with key people in these organisations together with

advocates working on associated campaigns.

The Society has been in Environment Court mediation with Auckland Council and other parties on Plan Change 35 (Oratia village), 36 (Non-Residential activities in the ranges) and 37 (Titirangi village). These are progressing well and I will report further in the next newsletter. I attended a workshop organised by the Environmental Defence Society which included the Auckland Council and the Property Council of New Zealand to discuss the Property Council's application to the Environment Court for declarations concerning tree protection rules in the Auckland Council district plan. All these matters are *sub judice* and therefore I cannot discuss them further at this stage.

The Society welcomes the decision by Auckland Council to close 27 kilometres of walking tracks in the ranges for a year (in the first instance) in order to protect areas where there is no sign of kauri dieback disease. On other tracks, boot cleaning stations with Trigene disinfectant spray and scrubbing brushes are available to all trampers and we hope that all people using the tracks will comply with this simple procedure. I walked the Piha Valley, Centennial and Home tracks three weeks ago while the bush was still relatively dry. The Home track goes through extensive young kauri regeneration on the west facing ridges where there are a large number of older trees showing well-advanced symptoms of dieback, as evidenced by the gum bleeding from the lower trunks, loss of bark and in many cases a complete loss of leaves and many dead branches. It was most disturbing to see, and made me realise just how potentially dangerous this disease is.

As always thanks to members who have renewed their annual subscriptions and to those who gave a donation. Your support is essential if we are to continue to be an active and effective voice for the Waitakere Ranges.

John Edgar ONZM
President

THE WAITAKERE RANGES PROTECTION SOCIETY INC. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday 26 March, 2012
Annual Report of the Executive Committee

by John Edgar, President WRPS

I am pleased to present the 38th Annual Report of the Executive Committee of The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Incorporated.

The past year has been a very important period of transition for both the Auckland region and the Society as the new Auckland Council endeavours to make the amalgamation of the previous Councils successful. While this process will obviously require some time, it is the Society's role to ensure that the Waitakere Ranges are protected from adverse effects on the outstanding environment, landscape and scenic values, and consequently we have been keeping a very careful watch on the Council planning processes.

We made submissions on the draft Auckland Spatial Plan in 2011 which will guide the future growth and development of the Auckland region for the next 20-30 years. Last week we made submissions on the Council's Long Term Plan 2012-2022. However, the most important of the new plans will be the Unitary Plan which will bring together all the previous district plans and it is due out later this year with public submissions in 2013.

As an appellant, the Society is currently engaged in Environment Court mediation with Auckland Council and other parties over Plan Change 35 (Oratia and Waiatarua), 36 (Economic Wellbeing in the ranges), and 37 (Titirangi Village). These Plan Changes were the legacy of Waitakere City Council. Good progress is being made on all three matters. Other appeals that are progressing are Pakinui Private Plan Change 40, the Swanson Structure Plan, the Lockington and Lyon subdivision in Henderson Valley, and the Dean subdivision in Holdens Road.

We are keeping a watching brief on the new tree rules that came into effect on 1 January as a result of the simplifying and streamlining of the RMA in 2010. These provisions apply to trees in urban areas, and consequently include Titirangi and Laingholm. We were party to an appeal to the Environment Court in 2011 by Auckland Council, which sought a declaration on the provisions for general protection of individual trees and groups of trees in the former Waitakere City and North Shore City districts plans. The decision by the court retained the blanket tree protection rules. However this decision has subsequently been appealed to the Environment Court by the Property Council of New Zealand which has filed an application for declarations

concerning general tree protection provisions in the Auckland Council District Plan.

Kauri dieback disease is spreading at an alarming rate, and remains the greatest threat to the ecology of the ranges. Research has shown that between 8% and 11% of kauri trees in the ranges are now affected by the pathogen *Phytophthora* taxon Agathis (PTA). The Society welcomes the recommendation this month by the Auckland Council Parks Forum to close 27 kilometres of walking tracks in the Ranges in order to quarantine areas where kauri trees have shown no sign of dieback. The track closures will be reviewed in a year's time. Research continues to find more about the way the disease is spread, and to find a cure.

Council has been culling pigs from the Ranges as they are considered to be a vector for the spread of PTA. We are also pleased that possums are being culled from Karekare South through the Pararaha valley to Whatipu. This follows successful control programmes in the Parau-Cornwallis-Huia-Whatipu area in 2010 and in the Piha-Anawhata-Bethells area in 2011. These are the first widespread control programmes in the ranges since Operation Forest Save in 1999.

Our Oral History project progresses well. Between 2004 and 2011 we interviewed 17 people who played key roles in the Society and in the conservation of the ranges. To continue the work, we successfully applied for funding from Lotteries Environment and Heritage Fund for the next ten interviews by our oral historian, Anna Fomison. Anna has recently attended oral history workshops and has made good contacts with other practitioners. We welcome suggestions of other people we should interview.

The committee has decided that the history of the Society currently being written by Bruce and Trixie Harvey will be published in conjunction with our 40th anniversary in 2013. We are still to decide what form that publication will take and how it will be funded. Special thanks must go to Bruce and Trixie for taking on this project *pro bono*. Bruce and Trixie also edited the Waitakere Ranges book, and there are now less than 120 books in stock, and at the present sales rate these should last another few years.

During the year our Heritage Area Coordinator, Mels Barton resigned and for a few months we were without a coordinator. We would like to acknowledge the work

she did for the Society over many years as a committee member, secretary and Heritage Area Coordinator. In February we appointed Saffron Toms as Heritage Area Coordinator. Saffron has an MA(Hons) in Geography from University of Auckland. She stood as the Green Party candidate in New Lynn electorate last year, and is currently their spokesperson in West Auckland. She will work closely with the committee, the Council and the community on matters relating to the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area. This position is funded by a grant from the ASB Community Trust supplemented by tagged donations from members, for which we are very grateful.

The Society relies on professional consultants to prepare submissions and evidence for us on a range of matters. The *pro bono publico* contribution of our legal counsel Douglas Allan and Joanna van den Bergen from Ellis Gould Ltd., our resource management consultant Gary Taylor and the Environmental Defence Society is invaluable. Thanks also to James Hook at Meridian Planning who has advised the executive and represented the Society on various resource consent and planning matters. And once again our thanks go to Jenny Taylor who has maintained our membership database and coordinated mail-outs for many years.

The executive committee meets on the first Tuesday of the month. New committee members Paul Walbran and Nardia Yozin have made an excellent contribution to the executive. I would like to ask the outgoing committee to stand up. These people are your elected executive who have given the Society so much of their time over the past year. It has been a pleasure to work with you all and I would like this meeting to join with me in showing our appreciation for your efforts on our behalf. Kath Dewar, who is not here tonight, is standing down from the committee after 10 years. Kath has worked hard for the Society and for some years she was Vice-President, secretary, and editor of the newsletter. Her strategic thinking was always appreciated and we will miss her input at committee meetings.

Special thanks go to our vice-president Anna Fomison and treasurer Sandra Jones. Sandra has also edited and produced our quarterly newsletter but we would like to find someone to either assist her or to take on this task as she has already plenty to do as the treasurer. The Society currently has two Patrons, Emeritus Professor Dick Bellamy and the Rt. Hon. Jonathan Hunt. It has been my honour to be President and to chair the executive committee for the past 14 years. I want to thank Society members and my family and friends for their support which has enabled me to better serve the Society.

As you will hear in the financial report, the Society remains in a strong financial position. The majority of the reserves have accumulated from sales of the Waitakere Ranges book and these funds are currently tagged for future publications.

During the year four long-time members of the Society died and our condolences go to the families and friends of Vic May, Martin van der Wal, Joy Lewis and Len Castle.

The Society, together with a number of local community groups, is most concerned at the proposal by Auckland Council to devolve aspects of the governance of the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park to the Local Board in what is being referred to as co-governance. We are strongly opposed to this proposal as we believe that it will lead to adverse environmental effects, and that it will have an adverse effect on the wellbeing of the small communities in the ranges. We are working to ensure that the governance of the Regional Park remains with the Council.

Looking ahead, in 2013 we will celebrate the Society's 40th anniversary. Some current members were there when the Society was founded in 1973, and to them and the many others who have joined since we would like to express our thanks for your support over the years. The Society has a history that we can be proud of, and our role in the protection and conservation of the ranges is just as important now as it has been in the past. The Heritage Area Act has noticeably reduced the number of non-complying subdivision applications, and has given more certainty to landowners about how the ranges will change in the years ahead.

Over the years the Society has earned the respect of the communities, politicians and professionals with whom we work and we have also developed a resilience that allows us to be effective advocates for the ranges. Our task is rarely easy, and often the demands on committee members are quite daunting, but it is our love for the ranges and the support of our members that encourages us and we are confident that the Society is in a strong position to face the challenges that lie ahead.

John Edgar
President
The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc.

Introducing your new Heritage Area Coordinator – Saffron Toms



Greenpeace, Saffron worked in retail and management. In 2007, after various adventures, such as studying naturopathy for a year, taking on the palliative care of her Grandmother in her last months and being an activist on the Climbing team for Greenpeace, Saffron returned to Auckland University to complete her degrees.

In 2011, Saffron again ran as the Candidate for the Green Party in the New Lynn Electorate. She continues to be actively involved and is currently the Membership Secretary and Co-Spokesperson for West Auckland Greens, as well as Policy Networker for the Party. In her spare time she enjoys walks in the Ranges, singing and gardening and spending time with her large, extended family.

WRPS: Saffron joined WRPS early in 2011 and was appointed the new Heritage Area Coordinator by the Committee in February of this year. Since then Saffron has worked on a number of submissions for the Society, including on the Council's Long Term Plan and to MAF and DOC on the plight of the critically endangered Maui's dolphin. She has also worked on the Society's facebook page, among other things. As is customary for the HAC role, Saffron will report on her work in our quarterly newsletters.

Contact Saffron – Heritage Area Coordinator

saffrontoms@gmail.com | 021322803

Saffron was born in Waiatarua in 1976 and grew up in Coromandel and Titirangi. Saffron gained a Bachelors degree in Philosophy and Geography and then a Masters degree in Geography with first class honours focusing on coastal residential development patterns in New Zealand.

Having worked as a head tutor of Stage 3 geography research students, Saffron is passionate about non-representational theory, whereby students are encouraged to focus on the networks and relations that perform places into being. Focussing on the relationships, networks and actions that shape our realities illuminates possibilities for change, enabling students to move beyond simply accepting and re-presenting the world as they read it in books to presenting a picture of the world in progress, constantly being performed into being.

After returning from her O.E. in November 1997, Saffron began University where she became politically active. In 2002 she ran as the Green Party candidate in the New Lynn Electorate at age 25. Also volunteering for organisations such as the Auckland Women's Centre and



Heart-leaved orchid, pixie cap (*Acianthus sinclairii*). A small, delicate, but perfectly formed orchid, common on tracksides in the Waitakere forests at this time of year.

Photo: Sandra Jones, Titirangi Beach Reserve, 3 June 2009

Heritage Area Coordinator's Report February – May 2012

The first few weeks of working for WRPS were mostly taken up with familiarising myself with the issues and resources and I wrote a very short submission on the proposed new dog bylaws.

Draft Long Term Plan Submission: I compiled a detailed submission on the Draft Long Term Plan for Auckland, highlighting the lack of funding for key bio-security initiatives in the Ranges, including the need for increased funding for research and management plans for Kauri Dieback disease, as well as for pest and weed control. Whilst we commended Council on its objectives to be a 'sustainable' city, we cautioned against using the term lightly. Among other things, we also submitted against the vision, still present in the Council document, for a 'co-governance' model for the Ranges as we regard the Boards to be too transitory and under-resourced to be able to make long term commitments to sustainable management strategies for the Ranges. Preparing the submission enabled me to make and strengthen key contacts in key organisations.

Submissions to MAF and DOC on the plight of Maui's dolphins: In particular, the Society advocated for a complete ban on the use of recreational and commercial set nets throughout the whole known habitats of the dolphins. Of the 12 verified human-

induced Maui's dolphin deaths in the last decade, 2 have occurred in the Manukau Harbour as a result of a gill net set by amateurs. Importantly, it was also specified that immediate comprehensive observer coverage be enacted as according to figures from Forest and Bird, observer coverage over the last fishing year (2010/11) was as low as 0.0 percent.

Kauri Dieback Disease: The Society is currently working on a response to an application to hold a large-scale running event the length of the Hillary Trail next year. We believe that such an event poses a serious threat to the health of the ecosystems in the Ranges, particularly in light of the presence of the pathogen *Phytophthora* taxon Agathis (PTA) which is killing our keystone species the NZ Kauri (*Agathis australis*).



I have been working on the new **facebook** page, set up by Nardia Yozin earlier in the year. Since March we have risen the 'fanbase' from approximately 5 to almost 60. But we can always do with more fans – so join us on facebook and share your concerns, your photos of the Ranges, etc.

Search for "The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc" on facebook and click "like". Thanks in advance!

Track closures: Council closes areas for protection from Kauri Dieback Disease

The Society would like to commend Auckland Council on the closure of 7 tracks, or sections of tracks, for the purposes of protecting PTA-free areas from the spread of the disease. Thirteen "kauri protection zones", comprising 27kms of tracks, are to be established in the Ranges and will be closed from 1st July, 2012, to be reviewed in a year's time.

This is also part of a response to widespread community concern that the spread of the disease has not been halted. "We are adopting a precautionary approach to protect this iconic species, which defines the Auckland region," says Councillor Sandra Coney, chair of the Parks, Recreation and Heritage Forum. "The aim is to stop spread but also to protect unaffected areas for the future recovery of kauri in the ranges."

This precautionary approach is important while researchers work to gain more information about the disease in the hope of finding a cure or a vaccine.

Kauri Protection Zones in the Ranges are in Anawhata,

Waiatarua, Piha, Karekare, Huia, Parau and Cascade Kauri areas.

The tracks, or sections of tracks that are to be closed are:

- **Cascade Kauri:** Robinsons Ridge Track
- **Anawhata:** Chateau Mosquito, RGB Track
- **Waiatarua:** Walker Kauri Track, Dreamlands Track, Taumata Track
- **Piha:** Lucy Cranwell Track
- **Karekare:** La Trobe Track
- **Huia:** Nuggets Track, Bob Gordon Track (Mt Donald McLean)
- **Parau:** Crusher Pipeline Track, Nihotupu Ridge Track, Summit Track (between Nihotupu Ridge and Hamiltons Farley Track), Farley Track, Manchester Unity Block (between Victory Road and Big Muddy Creek).

All users of the Park are urged to stay out of quarantined areas, to stick to the tracks and to carefully and thoroughly clean footwear at the cleaning stations provided.

The La Trobe Mainland Island Project

This note is an account of the report on the La Trobe Mainland Island Project, Karekare, presented by Peter King to the August 2011 Pest Liaison Group meeting in Auckland.

(summarised by Dr Graeme Ramsay)

During the past few years, Peter King, with the support of the Auckland Council Biosecurity Department, Warren Agnew, Tony and Glenda Randerson, and the Karekare Ratepayers Association, has been developing the La Trobe Mainland Island at Karekare and monitoring the consequences of reducing the effects of rats and possums in this area on some of the species in the ecosystem.

Rats were poisoned with Brodifacoum which was later replaced with Diphacinone (Ratabate) plus Feracol to control possums as well. When Feracol was not used, because of unavailability, possums damaged the bait stations, eating the Ratabate (apparently without any ill effects) so that the effectiveness of the Ratabate on the rat population was diminished. Therefore Brodifacoum was again used, replacing the Ratabate.

The effect of the poison baits on the rat population was monitored by using rat tracking techniques. These showed that there was a great reduction in rat numbers, the tracking index being reduced to 5% or lower compared with 80% or greater in unbaited areas. Possum numbers were low and had been ever since the successful Project Forest Save possum poisoning campaign of the Auckland Regional Council in 1998. However their presence in the La Trobe Mainland Island area was confirmed by using chew cards attached to trees and Black Trakka tracking cards. They were not detected in the baited areas after Brodifacoum was re-employed.

The effect of the reduced predator numbers on birds, some insect and invertebrate species and Hochstetter's frog populations was monitored and was usually very marked. Birds were monitored by carrying out 5 minute bird counts at 40 sites in each of the predator and non-predator controlled areas. Two main types of vegetation were present broadleaf/podocarp forest and kanuka forest. The counts were undertaken mainly in the broadleaf/podocarp forest, and in the kanuka forest of the poisoned area only later in the project. Eight bird

species were counted - riroriro (grey warbler), tauhou (waxeye), tui, piropiro (tomtit), kereru (wood pigeon), piwakawaka (fantail), pipiwharau (shining cuckoo) and blackbird. Apart from blackbirds, which were present deep in the forest, other introduced bird species such as greenfinches, chaffinches, thrushes, starlings and mynahs were present mainly in the forest margins. Tomtits preferred the kanuka rather than the broadleaf/podocarp forest. Tui and waxeyes were the most abundant species.

The numbers of birds varied according to the season and abundance of food. The availability of insects and other invertebrates as food for insectivorous birds would have been adversely affected by the presence of the introduced vespid wasps with which they would have competed for this food source. Native birds are of course very important in the dispersal of seeds of the forest plants and large numbers of seedlings were appearing in predator reduced areas. The abundance of most of the bird species that were monitored in the baited area was significantly greater than in the non-baited areas; however tomtit numbers were only a little greater.

Selected arthropod species were also monitored. Ground weta (*Hemiandrus* / *Zealandosandrus* species), carabid beetles, the large Auckland cave weta (*Gymnoplectron acanthocera*) and large prowling spiders (*Uliodon*) increased significantly in abundance in the baited areas. The abundance of carabid beetles increased significantly in both predator controlled baited and non-predator controlled unbaited areas, which suggests firstly that they were not predated by rats and secondly, that their habitat was probably improved by the reduced number of rats in particular.

Two Hochstetter's frog surveys were carried out and showed that frogs were abundant in streams in both the predator controlled and non-controlled areas, and the presence of young ones confirmed that they were breeding. This suggests that the frogs were unlikely to be affected by the predator baiting.

The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Incorporated
Statement of Financial Position as at 31st January 2012

	<i>2012</i>	<i>2011</i>
	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
ASB Bank – 00 Account (Operating)	-	885
ASB Bank – 03 Account (Waitakere Book)	-	4,824
ASB Bank – FastSaver (N&J Smith Fund interest)	1,677	566
ASB Bank – Short Term Deposits	128,169	214,761
Kiwibank - 00 Account (H.A.C.)	5,240	8,569
Kiwibank - 01 Account (Operating)	5,370	1,053
Kiwibank - 02 Account (Waitakere Book)	2,448	1,118
Kiwibank - Short Term Deposits	96,496	6,000
GST Refund Due	106	1,013
Accounts Receivable	46	-
Accrued Income	6,809	-
Stock on Hand – Finished Goods	<u>3,460</u>	<u>4,325</u>
Total Current Assets	249,821	243,114
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Fixed Assets as per Schedule	<u>3,132</u>	<u>4,150</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	252,953	247,264
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	2,200	2,202
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>2,200</u>	<u>2,202</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>250,753</u>	<u>245,062</u>
Represented by:		
TRUSTEES FUNDS		
Retained Earnings	<u>250,753</u>	<u>245,062</u>
TOTAL TRUSTEES FUNDS	<u>250,753</u>	<u>245,062</u>

Copies of the Audited Financial Statements are available on request from the Treasurer Ph: 817 2788
Auditor: McGregor Bailey, Chartered Accountants

NOTES:

BANK ACCOUNTS:

Operating account: Balance: \$5,370 + \$10,115 held in Short Term Deposits.

Reserves (land acquisition) account: Short Term Deposits totalling \$50,866.

Waitakere book account: Balance: \$2,448 + \$143,685 held in Short Term Deposits.
This is being accumulated to cover the costs of a possible reprint (or second edition) of the *Waitakere Ranges* book in the next few years.

H.A.C. (Heritage Area Coordinator) account: Balance: \$5,240 (ASB Community Trust Grant)

Fast Saver Account -Neil & Jean Smith Fund: The original donation (\$20,000) is held as capital and the interest earned (current balance \$1,677) is employed for special projects.

Stock on hand: Value \$3,460. This consists primarily of residual copies of our book *Waitakere Ranges*.

Accrued income: \$6,809. This represents the anticipated income from Term Deposits in the next financial year.

Fixed Assets: Value \$3,132. This represents equipment purchased in 2009 from NZ Lottery Grants Board and ASB Community Trust grants (laptop computer, data projector and screen, digital recorder, mobile display unit).

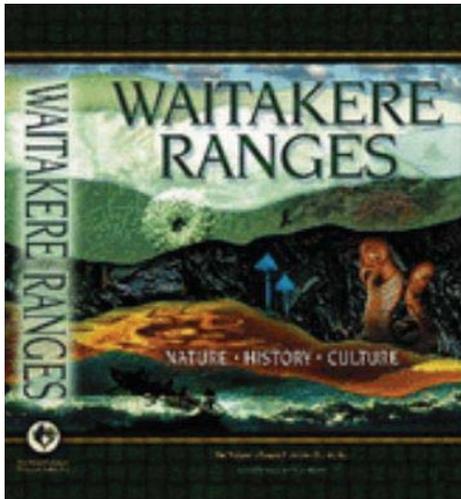
Total Trustees Funds: Combines \$245,062 carried forward from previous years, with \$5,691 excess income over expenditure in the current year. The majority of this money (\$216,999) is held in tagged funds – the Reserves fund for land acquisition, the Neil and Jean Smith fund, and the Book fund tagged for future publications.

YOUR COMMITTEE

President:	John Edgar Phone: 812 8555	john@johnedgar.co.nz
Vice-President:	Anna Fomison Phone: 838 9665	amfomison@gmail.com
Secretary:	Lynda Williams Phone: 810 9442	witch2@ihug.co.nz
Treasurer & Newsletter Editor:	Sandra Jones Phone: 817 2788	kemsdale@ihug.co.nz
Committee Members:	Trixie Harvey Graeme Ramsay Tim O'Shea Paul Walbran Nardia Yozin	brutrix@xtra.co.nz gwrmsay@orcon.net.nz tim.o@ihug.co.nz paul@mgparts.co.nz nardiayozin@gmail.com



Committee meetings are held monthly, from February to November, on the second Tuesday of the month.



1st Edition almost sold out!

Members' price, \$85.00 (incl. P&P)

Pay online or by cheque (see below)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone or email (in case of queries): _____

Payment instructions:

Online: (1) Email your order information to the Treasurer at kemsdale@ihug.co.nz

(2) Make online payment to Kiwibank Acc/ No. 38-9010-0379887-02

Cheque: Please send your order and cheque to: The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc., PO Box 15668, New Lynn, Auckland 0640



The Waitakere Ranges Protection
Society Inc.

PO Box 15668, New Lynn
Auckland 0640