



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

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Your President's Report



Spring is always a wonderful time in the ranges, starting with new growth on the trees, the bursts of colour of flowering trees, increase in insect and bird activity, and the warmer days that remind us of the bush walks, family picnics and long evenings to come.

Our new website (www.waitakereranges.org.nz) has already received many visits from members and the public. It is an easy way to join the Society, buy some of the merchandise that we have for sale, find information and read the latest news about the ranges.

Over the past year the Society has been actively involved in Council's Local Area Plan (LAP) for Te Henga. A draft LAP document is currently available for public submission and we are generally supportive of the plan but have made comments on various matters. One of our keys concerns is the rehabilitation of and public access to the Te Henga quarry when quarrying operations cease in 2015.

This summer Auckland Council is planning to open a new public walking track to Karekare beach. This has been necessitated by the formation over the past few years of a large lagoon making the previous track from the car park to the beach difficult due to the depth of water in the stream and lagoon.

As a submitter and further submitter on many topics, the Society is currently fully engaged with the hearings on the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan. This is a huge undertaking involving our legal and planning team in many hours of work attending mediation and preparing submissions and evidence for the hearings. Council has

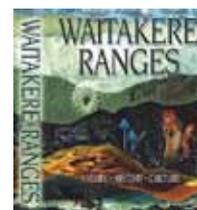
appointed independent commissioners to hear the submissions over the next two years. This is a tight timeframe, however it is expected that the Unitary Plan will become operative in 2016. The plan will be the largest and most complex in New Zealand and will be the guiding planning document for Auckland for the next 30 years.

We were very sad to hear that Jean Smith passed away in June. Jean and her late husband Neil had been members for many years and some years ago when they moved to a smaller home, they sold their extensive art collection, and from the proceeds donated \$20,000 to the Society to be spent as we wished. We decided to invest the capital as the "Neil and Jean Smith Fund" and use the interest to fund projects. It is also with great sadness that we note that Bob Ussher died in October. Bob had been a strong supporter of the Society for many years and was always engaged with Waitakere Ranges issues. His phone calls, letters, questions and suggestions will be greatly missed. (Read his obituary in this newsletter).

Thanks to all our members and friends for their support over the past year, and on behalf of the committee I would like to wish you and your family a happy Christmas and New Year, a wonderful and relaxing summer and we hope that you get to walk in the ranges and enjoy the west coast beaches.

John Edgar, President

The Society's 2006 book receives Major Award from Canterbury Historical Society



WAITAKERE RANGES
Nature, History, Culture

The JM Sharrard Award for excellence in Local or Regional History has been in abeyance for a decade, but the Canterbury Historical Society has recently revived it, awarding 3 major awards and several commendations for the period 2006-2009. The 647 entrants were all local history books that had been registered with the National

Library, during the period 2006-9. The judges said that “Waitakere Ranges” maintained a high standard of research and writing and also carved a new path in local and regional histories by including with traditional history, accounts of the natural history and land, and social history with its section on the artists and writers of the Waitakere Ranges. The prize of \$500 has been forwarded to the Society.

Editors Bruce and Trixie Harvey said that they were delighted that the book had been chosen for an award. The quality of the research and writing was due to the various expert authors and specialists who had contributed to the book, and they could all regard the award as a compliment to their efforts. The Society is pleased and proud of the book, which despite being 8 years old and the original print run being almost sold out, is still attracting sales to admirers of the lovely Waitakere Ranges.

If you would like to order a copy of the book, the details are at the back of this newsletter.

Heritage Area Coordinator's Report

The Waitakere Ranges Local Board has just passed its first year in office, with the benefits of a sympathetic Board for the Ranges becoming clear, despite some challenges.

The Board have just adopted their first Three Year Local Board Plan which sets the general theme and allocates budgets for the next electoral triennium. In the Plan we see the priorities of the Board reflecting the values and pressure points of our area.

There are budgets for weed control on public and private property, responding to Kauri DieBack Disease with the creation of a new ‘Kauri DieBack Community Co-ordinator’ role and for a Kauri Carnival, and for Maui’s dolphin education. There’s funding for the development of ‘gateways’ to coastal and ranges areas as part of a Visitor Management approach. The Board have allocated money to develop ‘Bush living’ and ‘Heritage Area Design’ guidelines, and a ‘new residents’ info pack’ so our residents and infrastructure providers can co-exist in a sympathetic way, supporting the character and nature of our area. There are funds to progress the development of a Heritage survey of the area, as well as to celebrate the 100th anniversary of World War 1. There’s funding to address West Coast lagoon water quality and to restore Piha Reserves, and for Tangiwai Reserve and Armour Bay. There are also budgets for environmental stewardship through further Project Twin Streams work, Sustainable Neighbourhoods programmes, Ecomatters and Keep Waitakere Beautiful.

Budgets for implementing Local Area Plans and implementing recommendations from the planned heritage survey report will be determined annually, though there is a budget already dedicated for mentoring small businesses to achieve the sustainable economic development objectives of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act.

We congratulate the Local Board on its successful adoption of the Three Year Plan, despite sweeping budget cuts overseen from the Governing Body (Councillors) in their efforts to keep rates down.

Having a sympathetic Board makes the work of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Co-ordinator easier, as our two organisations are in philosophical alignment. However, the wider interests of the Council at large tend to overwhelm local imperatives, meaning the Local Board has had to bat extra hard to retain funds for identified priorities.

This disjuncture between local aspirations and city wide pressures is also being expressed in the Unitary Plan, which has become a lawyer’s playground, incredibly time consuming, inaccessible for lay-people, and which opens up all the old challenges to the integrity of the Waitakere Ranges and the Heritage Area Act for us to fight all over again.

Meanwhile the existing challenges of Kauri DieBack, visitor pressures and how to retain the natural values and character of our area remain.

Kauri DieBack Disease

Auckland Council continues to investigate solutions to Kauri DieBack disease, but progress in addressing the disease is slow. Laboratory trials of Phosphite as a treatment to Kauri DieBack have been followed with field trials in the Huia Catchment. This treatment showed positive effects when applied to the trunks or soil, but was not so effective when applied to foliage. The next step is to complete the field treatment trials and then to move on to other sites on private and public land, including larger trees, and to explore the feasibility of Phosphite treatment as a containment and preventative tool.

Meanwhile, track closures to avoid the spread of disease are not always well respected by track walkers, and phytosanitary measures such as the stations to scrub and disinfect walking gear, are not always used. The disease continues to wreak havoc on our native sentinels.

Te Henga/Bethells Quarry

After many years of disturbance and social and environmental impacts arising from the Te Henga Quarry operations, the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, other groups and the community have welcomed the opportunity to plan for its post-quarry future.

Activities and uses proposed for the quarry after its rehabilitation include passive and low key options such as walking and picnicking, wetland and wildlife habitat restoration, and maybe even use as a film set.

Our Society has concerns about the proposals for off-leash dog walking and mountain bike riding because of the ecological values of the site, with its important links to the wider Waitakeres and Cascades areas, with their endangered flora and fauna.

We believe the future uses of the quarry should be limited to those compatible with the surrounding parkland and Heritage Area. We are concerned about the impacts of mountain bikes on other users, and the limited ability to accommodate and contain mountain bikes in the area without conflicts to others and to the environment.

We also feel it would be inappropriate to allow dog walking in the area due to the presence of kokako and

other special birds.

We do, however, support the identification of other more suitable areas for mountain bike riding and dog walking, where these environmental values aren't at risk – but not in the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area.

In keeping with the objectives of the Society and the purposes of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act, we support a low key, passive approach to activities in areas where ecological values are to the fore. We are guided by these principles in our response to both future uses of the quarry and in the development of the Te Henga-Bethells Local Area Plan. We seek to retain and protect the quiet, natural, unbuilt character of the Ranges environment by controlling activities, managing visitor pressure and ensuring infrastructure is fit for the setting and doesn't introduce new impacts or inappropriate impacts into this precious place.

How did Te Aute Ridge get its name?

The LAP process for Te Henga-Bethells has revealed some interesting botanical history in the area. There are at least three known important historical botanical sites, and inevitably more. They include old taro plantings, but there are also indications of a te aute grove at the top of Te Aute Ridge Road. Te aute is the paper mulberry or tapa bark tree. It's an invasive plant in many countries so reintroduction is probably not an option, but it's nice to know the link between the name and the tree.

Christine Rose, Heritage Area Coordinator

Changes to our 'Life Membership' rules

When you receive your subscription renewal notice in February 2015 you will note that the one-off fee for Life membership of the Society has been changed from \$150 to \$250, but that the "introduce a new member" requirement has been dropped.

Robert (Bob) Arthur Ussher October 1929 - October 2014

Bob Ussher was a well-known figure and a descendant of one of the pioneer families of the Waitakere Ranges. He had tramped every inch of the Ranges and knew every bend in its tracks, and its plants and wildlife. An engineer and designer, Bob spent his working life at Fletcher Construction but his heart was definitely in the outdoors and in the Ranges in particular. Bob joined the infant Waitakere Ranges Protection Society at its formation in 1973. By 1974 he was on the committee, by 1975, its vice president. He remained a member of the Society for the rest of his life, serving again on the committee in 1977, and again as vice president from 1978 to 1982. Returning to the committee in 1991 till 1995, when the Society was lacking candidates for the principal offices, Bob offered his experience taking on the responsibilities of president and vice president as they rotated among the committee members. In later years, he often wrote letters to the committee, clarifying a point in the history of particular

tracks or land acquisitions.

His love of hiking and tramping led him into other organisations too. He was on the advisory committee for the Forest Parks, a life member and past president of the Alpine Sports Club, and the Associated Mountain Clubs. He was also a member of the Auckland Conservation Board, and the New Zealand Walkways Commission. Bob has always attended AGMs of the Society and his presence will be sorely missed. The Society offers its condolences to his family, and salutes the service of one of its founder members and loyal supporters.

Trixie Harvey, WRPS committee member

Waitakere Ranges Conservation Network

This is an initiative by members of various groups involved in conservation in the Waitakere Ranges, to facilitate networking and cooperation between groups and individuals for their mutual benefit. Members of WRPS committee, Trixie Harvey and Sandra Jones were members on the steering committee that organised an initial seminar/workshop to introduce the network. This was held on October 19th at Arataki Centre and was attended by about 60 people, some of whom were from already active conservation organisations, some were interested individuals involved in trapping and weeding, and some were representatives of the Auckland Council and the Local Board. Facilitator Annette Lees was engaged to run the workshop.

After introductory talks by steering committee members Robert Woolf (of Waitakere Forest and Bird) and Wayne Mackenzie (Friends of Whatipu), Annette asked participants to briefly introduce themselves and their organisation, and indicate where they were operating on a large map. A break for afternoon tea was followed by participants breaking into small groups to discuss what they wanted from the network, and what and where there were the gaps both geographic and in resources that they or their group needed to operate more efficiently. The groups then reported on their discussions and Annette recorded the main points.

The main conclusions were as follows: a new organisation was not needed, but a network which made it easier to communicate between groups, and to let individuals know about groups that might help them would be valuable. Information about what was happening and where, sharing techniques at a practical level, and informing the public about weeds and pests and how they could help, would also be a desirable outcome. A number of participants volunteered to join the steering committee. To conclude, the chair of the Local Board Sandra Coney gave her perspective on the need for cooperation, and the commitment of the Board to achieving results in ridding the Ranges of plant and animal pests.

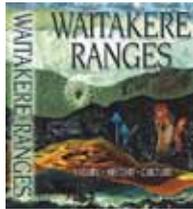
Since the workshop, the new committee has met and a facebook page has been initiated, which we urge members to visit. A new email address for the network has been formed (infowrcn@gmail.com) and the committee is preparing an email list of participants to circulate. It is hoped to hold another workshop in the new year to refine communication and get behind some new initiatives.



Saving the Ranges
by Bruce and Trixie Harvey
Price: \$35.00 + \$5.00 p&p



WRPS mug \$35.00 + \$5.00 p&p



Waitakere Ranges: Nature, History, Culture
Edited by Bruce and Trixie Harvey
Price (including p&p):
For WRPS members: \$85.00
For non-WRPS members: \$95

Payment instructions:

Online:

Email your order information to:
treasurer@waitakereranges.org.nz
and make your payment to:
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Committee meetings are held monthly, from February to November, on the second Wednesday of the month.



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