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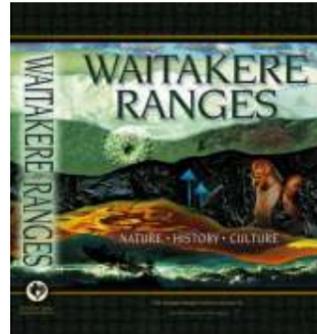
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Hand-painted Ranges mugs

These stunning mugs uniquely designed for the Society by Karekare potter Lynda Harris, are individually crafted and beautifully painted to show the bush covered ranges and a view to the sea with a splendid kereru admiring karaka berries. The mugs cost \$35 each, including P&P and \$10 from each sale goes to the Society. These would make a superb gift - for you or a friend! The mugs are made to order so please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.



Please send your order to Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, PO Box 15668, New Lynn, Waitakere City, 0640.

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PO Box 15668
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Waitakere City, 0640**



Waitakere Ranges
Protection Society Inc

news

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

Issue 137 May 2008

Your President's Report



As I sit in my home in the kauri forest at Karekare to write this report, the rains have finally come after a long, dry summer, and the bush responds with a mist that rises from the canopy like a nurturing blanket. In past years I have noticed that

the warm autumnal rains often bring a spurt of new growth in the forest, like a false spring, as every tree in the forest breathes a sigh of relief.

We can breathe a sigh of relief too. In this year when the Society turns 35, we have much to celebrate. Our long battle to secure permanent protection for the Waitakere Ranges was won when the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Bill passed its third reading in Parliament on April 2 and was granted Royal Assent on April 8. It is now The Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act. The aspirations of the many people who have advocated for this for so long are now enshrined in this landmark legislation that recognises the outstanding ecological and landscape values of the ranges and provides for people to live, work and play in this special natural environment while protecting the attributes that we all know are vulnerable given the pressures of growth associated with New Zealand's largest city. Even opponents of the legislation have said that they want to see the ranges protected.

The Society will hold a birthday party on June 15 to celebrate the Act at the Waitakere Village Hall, where some of our earliest gatherings were held. Invitations will go out soon, and please feel free to invite family and friends who have been associated with the Society over the last 35 years.

The newly elected committee looks forward to meeting you at the celebration as we acknowledge where we have come from, take stock of where we are, and start planning a bright new future for the ranges.

John Edgar

Welcome to your Autumn newsletter!

Your May WRPS Newsletter is all about celebration!

It contains our invitation to you to join us to celebrate our 35th birthday party and to celebrate the passing of the Heritage Area Act. We share our news about our gift of land to the ARC, our plans for a commemorative public artwork, the 2008 AGM report, the Financial Report and excerpts from the Bruce Hayward's AGM talk, taken from the Structure of the Land (Waitakere Ranges Book) plus other news and information.

Any queries, comments or contributions please contact Anna
editor@waitakereranges.org.nz

Best wishes for a healthy and warm winter
The Executive Committee



WAITAKERE RANGES PROTECTION SOCIETY CELEBRATES

WRPS gives priceless land to ARC

To celebrate the 35th Birthday of the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society and the new Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act, the Society has just gifted two parcels of land near Big Muddy Creek to the Auckland Regional Council to be incorporated into the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park.

The 11 acres of land were purchased in 1996 by the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society in conjunction with the Auckland Regional Council, ASB Community Trust, Forest and Bird and the Parks and Wilderness Trust

Although the current capital value of the land is \$700,000, Waitakere Ranges Protection Society President John Edgar said

“the value of this land is insignificant when compared to the priceless treasure that is the Ranges and the Society is happy that it will now be protected in perpetuity. As far as we're concerned the land is priceless. “



Mural to celebrate the Ranges

The Society recently announced it will sponsor a significant new mural for the heart of Henderson, in celebration of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area becoming law.

“The Society's founders, including Gary Taylor and Jonathan Hunt, were the first people to call for permanent protection of private as well as public land in the Ranges, 30 years ago. In recent years, Waitakere Ranges Protection Society members have worked hard to inspire and support communities and Councils to make this happen. We want to do something vibrant and lasting to celebrate the achievement,” says Society President and sculptor John Edgar.

The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society has always used art as well as science to argue for better protection of the Ranges. It has always had artists and scientists, as well as other lovers of the Ranges, in its membership and executive team.

The Society created the highly successful Ranges of Inspiration exhibition with Corban Estate Arts Centre in 2003. The acclaimed Waitakere Ranges book, published by the Society in May 2006, features the artists and writers of the Ranges as well as the work of local botanists, entymologists and ornithologists. The mural follows in this arts tradition.

“We see a mural in Henderson, one of the urban gateways to the Ranges, as a fitting way to mark the creation of the Heritage Area. We hope to bring a splash of the fragility and drama of the Ranges to life right in the heart of town,” says Mr Edgar.

For more information contact John.

CELEBRATE WITH US
35th Birthday Party!
Sunday 15th June,
3pm
Waitakere Hall
Waitakere Village

Please join us to celebrate our 35 years and the realisation of our vision to gain permanent protection with legislation.

Our Birthday Party will be a time for recollections, good company and, of course, cake!

Some of the founding members of the Society will share their stories and we will have a display of old photographs.

Koha
finger food and/or a bottle of wine

If you have any memories or pictures of conservation work in the Waitakere Ranges that you'd like to share at the party, please call Anna on 09 838 9665 or email amfomison@gmail.com

Your Committee

Committee meetings are held on second Wednesday of the month

President:

John Edgar 09 8128 555
jedgar@iconz.co.nz

Vice-President:

Anna Fomison
09 838 9665
amfomison@gmail.com

Secretary:

Mels Barton
816 8337
mels@wombatsenvironmental.co.nz

Treasurer:

Sandra Jones
09 817 2788
S.jones@auckland.ac.nz

Committee:

Kath Dewar
Kathdewar@paradise.net.nz

Trixie Harvey
brutrix@xtra.co.nz

Mike Nixon
mike.nixon@wstconnect.co.nz

Graeme Ramsay
graemer@ww.co.nz

Lynda Williams
witch2@ihug.co.nz

Greg Presland
walaw@paradise.net.nz

Denise Yates
denisejohuia@xtra.co.nz

Tim O'Shea
tim.o@ihug.co.nz

Carole Shone
818 0618

Jacquie Reed
j.reed@niwa.co.nz



Whatipu from Te Ahuahu Photo courtesy John Edgar

Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc.

Statement of Financial Position As at 31st January 2008

2007

CURRENT ASSETS		
8,387	ASB Bank – 00 Account	3,516
143	ASB Bank – 01 Account	143
28,866	ASB Bank _ 03 Account	6,201
	ASB Bank _FastSaver	21,173
87,503	ASB Bank_Short Term Dep	153,751
124,899 TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		184,784
LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		
	2,575 GST Account	543
2,575 TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		543
122,324 NET ASSETS		184,241

Represented by;

FUNDS EMPLOYED		
72,205	Accumulated Funds	122,324
50,119	Net Surplus (Deficit)	61,917
122,324 TOTAL EQUITY		184,241
122,324 TOTAL FUNDS EMPLOYED		184,241



Waitakere Ranges Protection Society
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New Lynn
Waiatkere City, 0640
www.waitakereranges.org.nz



Folds in flow-banded daciforming The Watchman, Karekare. Photo courtesy Bruce Hayward.

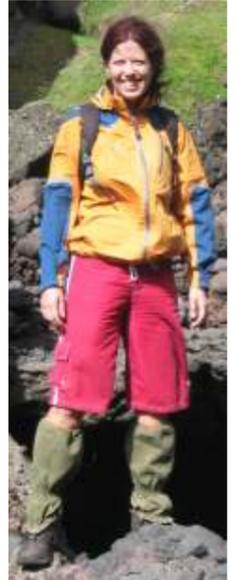
If you view the Waitakeres from a distance you can still clearly see the remains of the gently tilted plain which now forms its summit ridges. In the time since then, erosion has eaten away and removed a large quantity of softer Waitemata Sandstones that overlay Auckland city, but the harder conglomerate and flows of the Waitakeres have been more resistant to erosion and are still upstanding, although greatly dissected.

In the last two to three million years, the world's climate has entered a period of alternating warm and cold cycles (known as the Ice Ages) of 40,000 and later 100,000 years' duration. Although the Waitakeres did not have permanent ice or glaciers, they were greatly impacted by the changing sea levels that resulted. During each cold ice age interval, a large proportion of the earth's water was frozen on land as ice and consequently sea level dropped. When temperatures warmed up between successive ice ages, the ice melted and sea level returned to near the present level or slightly higher.

During several of these warm periods when sea level may have been slightly higher than now, black sand was washed up on the shore around the northern end of the Waitakeres and was subsequently blown inland to form a thick mantle of dune sands (Kaihu Group), which can be seen today still capping the coastal hills between Te Henga and Muriwai. Remnants of a similar deposit are also present on Cornwallis Peninsula.

The Last Ice Age had its peak about 18,000 years ago when sea level was approximately 130m lower than now. After this as the climate warmed, sea level rose, reaching its present height about 7000 years ago. In the few thousand years since then, the sloping ridges all around the Waitakeres' coast have been eroded back by the waves to form cliffs. At the same time all the major valley mouths have filled up with silt brought down by the streams and with sand thrown up on the beaches, to form flat valley floors. Other coastline changes are still occurring, as demonstrated by the growth of a two kilometre wide sand flat at Whatipu during the last century and its current advance northwards along the coast.

Celebrate with US



YOUR COMMITTEE 2008

From left to right

Trixie Harvey, Graeme Ramsay, Carol Shone, Denise Yates, Mike Nixon, Mels Barton, Anna Fomison, Greg Presland, Lynda Williams, John Edgar, Sandra Jones, Kath Dewar. Top right insert Jacquie Reed. Below Tim O'Shea. **Photo courtesy Tony Dunn**

WELCOME TIM

The latest addition to the WRPS committee is Tim O'Shea. Tim works for Microsoft New Zealand as their



Multinational Account Manager, and is responsible for looking after major IT companies such as HP, IBM, Dell, Toshiba, Sony, Lenovo, Acer, Asus and Sun.

Tim, his wife Vicki and their three daughters live in Henderson Valley, in the foothills of the Ranges, in a home that is set in a beautiful, peaceful, natural bush environment. It is his love of the Ranges and Foothills, and appreciation of its unique and precious environment that got him involved with the Henderson Valley Residents Association (HVRA) from its inception in 2001

As Chair of the HVRA, Tim took a very active role in the "Ranges Coalition", a working party which came together to bolster support for the Heritage Area Bill, counter the SPAN group's vociferous and self-interested attempts to

railroad the legislation, lobby Waitakere City Councillors to include the Foothills in the boundaries of the proposed Heritage Area, and ensure its onward passage to Parliament.

On 20 April 2005 Tim chaired the public meeting at Henderson High School which was hosted by local community groups including WRPS to rally support for the Bill. Up to 800 people attended this enormously successful meeting, which many saw as the turning point in the Heritage Area campaign.

As Chair of the HVRA, Tim worked closely again with WRPS to bring together local residents' groups to successfully fight the abolition of the Waitakere Ward under the Local Government Ward Review.

After a couple of years "away from the fray" during which Tim took the opportunity to have a break from community "activism and volunteering" and get settled in to his new role at Microsoft, Tim decided that it was "time to join his friends at WRPS and help them carry on their great work".



Our 34th AGM - Optimism and hope

The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society held its 34th AGM in a mood of cautious optimism on Monday 31 March. Since its inception the Society has advocated for permanent protection for the private and public land in the Ranges. Although this vision was not a reality at the time of the AGM it became a reality following the AGM when Parliament passed the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Bill at its third reading adding hope to the Society's mood of optimism.

The AGM was attended by over seventy members and thank those of you who attended. It was good to see you. All of the existing executive committee were returned, with Tim O'Shea, a former President of the Henderson Valley Residents' Association and a passionate Heritage Area campaigner added to the executive team. Waitakere Ranges Protection Society President John Edgar completed his tenth year in the role and was re-elected. The executive team also includes Dr Mels Barton as Secretary, Anna Fomison as Vice President and Treasurer, Sandra Jones. Kath Dewar stepped down as Secretary but retains a position on the executive.

Once the AGM business was completed, the meeting was treated to a lively presentation, by Dr Bruce Hayward, on the history of the Waitakere Ranges geology and the huge, offshore volcano that created them, up to 22 million years ago. Dr Hayward is a geologist who has spent his life researching the terrestrial and marine geology of New Zealand and who has a special interest in the Auckland region and the Waitakere Ranges. He mapped the volcanic geology of the ranges for his PhD, and spent several years with historian Jack Diamond documenting the archeological record of Maori and European occupation in the Ranges. He is the author of four chapters in the celebrated Waitakere Ranges book.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2008

Monday March 31 2008

Annual Report of the Executive Committee

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

The past year has seen some very positive progress for the Society. When we met a year ago, the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Bill had had its first reading in parliament and we were awaiting the select committee report back to the house. The Bill passed its second reading on the 19th September with the support of the Labour Party, the Green Party, Maori Party and Progressive Party and Taito Philip Field. On 12th March this year the Bill passed through the committee stage, leaving the third reading set down for 2 April, and if passed will be enacted within a week or two. The National Party opposed the Bill at every stage and have pledged that they will repeal it if they become Government. Local MP for Waitakere and sponsor of the bill, Lynne Pillay, is unable to be with us tonight but sent the following message from Wellington.

"I'm sorry I can't attend the meeting tonight as I have a Select Committee meeting in Wellington. Best wishes to all - if this meeting was a week later you would in all likelihood be popping the corks celebrating the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Bill becoming law! Thank you so much for the work you have all done (over decades!) to protect, enhance and celebrate the Ranges. We all look forward to an added level of protection which will provide more certainty to residents and decision makers and all who love this beautiful land."

The Waitakere Ranges book launched in May 2006 has been very well received and sales have been excellent. From a print run of 3000, we now have less than 270 books in stock and are getting quotes on a second edition. The book was submitted for the Montana Book Awards but failed to win in the environmental section. It was some consolation that the winner was Audrey Eagle's *Complete Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand* with its exquisite botanical paintings.

The ongoing saga of the Swanson Structure Plan is still not concluded. To briefly reiterate, the appeals of the Waitakere City District Plan Variation 88 and 89 went to the Environment Court in November 2005 and an interim decision was released by the court in June 2006 which addressed the court's jurisdiction to consider prohibited activity status for subdivision. A second interim decision was released in September 2006 giving land owners in the structure plan area an opportunity to submit on prohibited activity status for subdivision on their land if their land was not given rights by the proposed Swanson Structure Plan.



Dike feeding lava pillow in the cliffs of Pillow Lava Bay, south of Muriwai.

Photo courtesy Bruce Hayward

In a few places magma rose to the surface and flowed out on the volcano slopes, producing lava flows under the sea, and these often have a characteristic pillow-like form, hence their name pillow lavas. Excellent examples of pillow lava flows are present in the coastal cliffs of Maori and Collins Bay and at the south end of Te Henga Beach. The magma which fed the flows rose up through the underlying rocks along sheet like fractures. When the magma stopped flowing, that which was still in the fracture cooled and solidified to form a dike of hard, jointed andesite, examples of which can be seen in many places in the western Waitakeres.



Lava bomb, Lion Rock.

Photo Courtesy Bruce W. Hayward

About 16 million years ago, as volcanic activity was drawing to a close, the Waitakere Volcano was pushed up out of the sea by enormous forces deep in the earth. Two lines of volcanic vents began erupting on its uplifted eastern flanks. The remnants of one line of vents now lie in the vicinity of the Scenic Drive and remains of the second, more active, line of vents can now be seen along the Waitakeres' west coast.

Some of these are eroded volcanic necks, like Lion Rock at Piha, composed of scoria, volcanic bombs and lava flows that had collapsed back into its throat. Others are explosion craters filled with lava flows, like those forming the cliffs of O'Neills Bay, Whites Beach, and Taranaki Bay. A large explosion crater at Karekare is partly filled by a dome of extruded viscous dacite lava, the remnants of which now form The Watchman.

These two lines of vents poured extensive lava flows (Lone Kauri Formation) over the surrounding uplifted land. Today these eroded and deeply weathered flows form a cap along the ridges of the Waitakere Ranges and can be seen as the weathered red and purple clays in many of the cuttings on the Piha Road.



Andesite dike intrudes Piha Conglomerate Farley Pt, Karekare. Photo courtesy Bruce Hayward.



Muriwai
Photo courtesy Bruce Hayward

The ancient Waitakere Volcano was similar in nature to our modern volcanoes of Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro, except that it grew to five or six times the size of all three of these volcanoes combined, and was in the middle of the ocean.

The modern Waitakere Ranges are the uplifted and greatly eroded remnants of just the eastern slopes of the huge Waitakere Volcano. Out to the west of the Waitakeres, beneath the continental shelf and slope, geophysicists have used seismic reflection profiling to detect and map the former extent of these old volcanic rocks.

Now all that remains out there is the flattened-off stump of a once majestic volcano, its glory removed by millions of years of erosion by the incessantly pounding waves of the Tasman Sea.

Most of the western and central Waitakere Ranges today consist of weakly layered volcanic conglomerate and breccia that had been swept down the sides of the growing volcano in undersea lahars of mud, rock and water and came to rest on its upper submarine slopes. Occasionally large sections of the upper parts of the volcano collapsed and slumped down the submarine slopes.

Examples of these slump deposits can be seen in the cliffs at Whatipu and Pararaha, where large tilted and folded blocks (tens of metres across) sit in a chaotic matrix of breccia and grit. As the slumps moved downslope the larger blocks were dropped out and finer material continued moving as giant undersea lahars which flowed 30–50km eastwards into the Waitemata Basin that lay over Auckland, before coming to rest on the sea floor .

Today we see some of these thick beds of volcanic breccia and grit, uplifted and exposed in the cliffs beside the Parnell Baths and in the in the cliffs around the Waitemata and north Manukau harbours. The eastern and northern Waitakere Ranges, from Titirangi to the Cascades and across to Muriwai are made of finer grained volcanic sedimentary rocks. These volcanic grits and sandstones (Nihotupu Formation) accumulated on the lower submarine slopes of the Waitakere Volcano and interfinger with the Waitemata Sandstones that built up on the floor of the adjacent Waitemata Basin.



Rounded domes of Piha Conglomerate, Whatipu.
Photo courtesy Bruce Hayward

Annual Report of the Executive Committee Continued

Following a number of procedural decisions from the court, and the public notification by Waitakere City of the amendments to the Plan, the Society was represented by Douglas Allan and Gary Taylor at a three-week hearing in May 2007. The court has indicated that a final decision will be released in July this year.

The Waitakere City triennial elections were held in September 2007 with the new electoral representation giving better boundaries to the Waitakere Ward, but with only two councillors rather than the previous three. Waitakere Ward councillor and deputy mayor Carolynne Stone did not stand for re-election, and Penny Hulse and Paul Mitchell were elected. Subsequently Penny was unanimously voted deputy mayor and we congratulate her and acknowledge her many years as a Waitakere ward councillor, her strong support for the communities and her advocacy for protection of the ranges.

The Society made submissions on the new ARC bylaws for the Regional Park and to the Regional Park Management Plan and we are generally pleased with the outcomes. The best result here was the complete banning of mountain biking in the park. However the Plan comes up for review in two years and this will no doubt be challenged then. We now have serious concerns with the ARC Auckland Plus publications which promote the economic benefits to be gained by increasing visitor numbers to the Auckland hinterland, especially the Waitakere Ranges. Despite our opposition to the renewal of the two canyoning licenses at Karekare and Piha, both applicants were granted a further four years but with tighter operational conditions than previously. Our opposition to the Piha café was unsuccessful and the consent was granted. The decision has being appealed by Preserve Piha Heritage. Watercare Services advised us in September that due to operational difficulties they would be delayed in meeting resource consent conditions for the compensation flows from the WR dams. We have written to the ARC as the consent authority; they have advised that we consult directly with Watercare Services.

In March 2007 the Society made a submission on WC Plan Change 22 which seeks to create a Whenuapai Airport Special Area in the District Plan. About two thousand submissions were received, most in opposition, but to date no hearing has been held. In April the Society will be making a submission to the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance.



Paratahi surf Photo courtesy John Edgar



Karekare Photo courtesy John Edgar

We note that the water quality at Lake Wainamu has improved remarkably in the past year with the ARC removing exotic fish in very large numbers. We continue to monitor developments at the Te Henga quarry. We maintain that more effort is required from the territorial authorities on weed and pest eradication programs throughout the ranges. We support the proposed marine mammal sanctuary on the west coast, and we continue to be concerned with the granting of exploration licences for seabed iron sand mining on the west coast.

Our Oral History project that began with the interview of our Patron Professor Dick Bellamy by Waitakere City librarian Robyn Mason in 2005 is now being continued by committee member Carole Shone. In 2006 we received a grant from the Lottery Environment and Heritage Committee and five early Society members, Gary Taylor, Jessica Beever, Don Binney, Juliet Batten and Colleen Pilcher were interviewed by Carole and the tape recordings and transcripts have been lodged with the Waitakere and Turnbull Libraries.

We received a grant from the ASB of \$17,207 for the purchase of equipment which has allowed us to upgrade our display material for events and festivals, and also purchase a laptop computer, data projector and screen.

In order to retain our charitable status the Society is preparing to register with the Charities Commission before July as required by the Act.

Throughout the year the Society relies on professional consultants to prepare submissions and evidence for us on a range of matters. The *pro bono* contribution of our legal counsel Douglas Allan and resource management consultant Gary Taylor is invaluable. We acknowledge the work that James Hook has done for us on various resource consent matters. We thank McGregor Bailey Ltd who have been our honorary auditors for the past four years, and also to Jenny Taylor who has maintained our membership database for many years.

The outgoing committee have worked hard over the past year to ensure the objectives of the Society are realised to the highest standards. The fact that all committee members are standing again this year is evidence to me of their commitment to the goals of the Society and to the very good working relationships that we have forged, where friendship, humour and strong debate make our committee meetings enjoyable. Members of the Society are welcome to attend our monthly meetings and we encourage feedback on matters of concern in your communities. 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 and an honour 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.

Special thanks go to our vice-president Anna Fomison, treasurer Sandra Jones, and secretary Kath Dewar. Kath has taken on a large part of the workload that I previously did, such as writing submissions, networking with other environmental groups, and keeping our membership informed of issues.

Kath has decided not to stand this year as secretary, but is willing to remain on the committee. Anna is editor of our quarterly newsletter which contributes greatly to our advocacy and together with Mels Barton she coordinates our presence at events and festivals. Our website continues to be maintained by Mike Nixon. It has been my pleasure to be Society president and chair of the executive committee for the past ten years, and I have enjoyed it very much. I want to thank committee members and my family for their support which has enabled me to better serve the Society.

We congratulate Bruce and Trixie Harvey, editors of the WR Book, on their Queens Service Medal awards. In September we were pleased to receive recognition of our contribution to sustainability, when the Society was highly commended in the Sustainable Urban Communities section of the ARC Sustainable Environmental Awards.

We want to thank all the members and friends who have supported us over the past year. Generous donations to the Society continue to come in. This financial support is very much appreciated, and is in fact essential for us to maintain our core activities. We chose not to raise our membership subscription rate again this year, and this was recognised by many members who paid their subscription and added a donation. We must acknowledge a most generous donation from Mrs Jean Smith, who wrote that Neil and Jean Smith's art collection which included work by Don Binney, Nigel Brown, Stanley Palmer and Ann Robinson had been sold and she was donating \$20,000 to the Society. When I phoned to thank her, Jean was very modest and asked for no special recognition of this, however I did get her permission

to deposit the funds in to a special bank account which we have named the Neil and Jean Smith Fund, and we intend to retain the capital and use the interest to fund various projects. We hope that other donors might be encouraged to add to this capital over the years.

The Society extends its condolences to the family of Sir Edmund Hillary whose passing away touched the hearts of people around the world. Sir Ed was not a member of the Society, but he was an ardent supporter of the Heritage Area concept and in 1998 signed Jack Colmar's declaration writing "I heartily support the establishment of the Waitakere Heritage Area. It is a magnificent piece of forest and Auckland is fortunate to have it so close."

At the AGM a year ago, I said we hoped that when we meet for our AGM in 2008 the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Bill had been enacted. While this has not yet happened, it is tantalisingly close. Already Waitakere City are discussing how the Act will be implemented, starting with the provision for each community in the ranges to have a Local Area Plan, which will enshrine the aspirations of each community in the District Plan. This process will take some years to complete, but will ultimately give greater certainty to landowners and residents of the ranges.

The work of the Society will definitely change with the passing of the Bill, and we believe that we can be more proactive as we put our time and energy into the more positive aspects of conservation and protection. 2008 will go down in the history of the ranges as the year when they finally gained the permanent protection that they have long needed. We want to take this opportunity to thank all the members and friends of the Society who have worked together over the last 35 years to achieve the long-term protection of this exceptional forest. Each person can take great pride in their contribution, and we as a Society can be proud that a vision articulated in the 1970's by our first members was never relinquished, and now 35 years later we have achieved what we set out to do so long ago. We feel very honoured to have been part of this wonderful achievement and we look forward to the coming years as we work to ensure the long-term wellbeing of the Waitakere Ranges and its communities.

John Edgar
President
Waitakere Ranges Protection Society



Whatipu Photo courtesy John Edgar



THE STRUCTURE OF THE LAND

Reproduced with kind permission of the author, Dr Bruce Hayward and editors of the book *Waitakere Ranges*, Bruce and Trixie Harvey

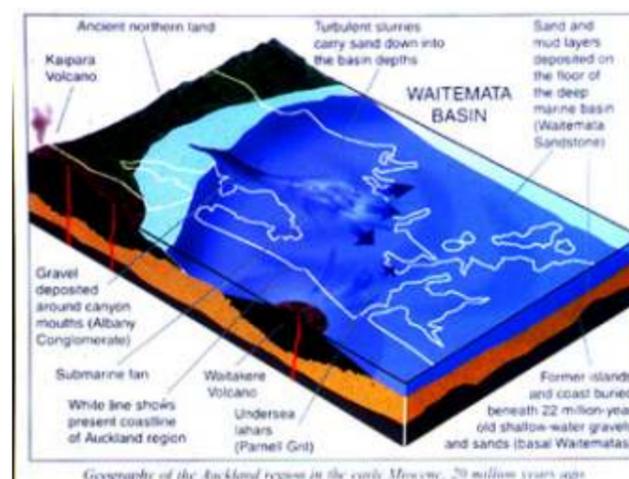
Bruce Hayward's fascinating AGM talk and slide show was based on "The Structure of the Land" a chapter published in the *Waitakere Ranges* book reproduced below.

Waitakere Ranges' origins date back to the early Miocene period, between 22 and 15 million years ago. At that time the whole Auckland region was under the sea. The layered sandstone and mudstone (Waitemata Sandstones) that now forms the cliffs around most of the Waitemata Harbour accumulated at this time as sand and mud on the floor of a deep sea depression, called the Waitemata Basin. This basin stretched from Wellsford in the north to Hamilton in the south. To the north was a large hilly island that covered most of what is now Northland.

Gravel, sand and mud that eroded from these ancient Northland hills were fed via rivers and streams to the northern coast of the Waitemata Basin. Large quantities of sediment that accumulated along the coastal shelf periodically became unstable and flowed down the slope into the basin in a turbulent slurry of sand, mud and water. This sediment was funnelled down submarine canyons, and on reaching the gentler slopes of the basin floor spread out to form submarine fans of sediment, rather like a delta at the mouth of a river.

As the slurries of sediment flowed down into the basin, the larger grains dropped out first, followed by progressively finer and finer grains. Thus these slurries, called turbidity currents, were responsible for depositing the 10cm–3m thick layers of sandstone. These layers grade upwards from coarse or medium sand at their base to fine sand and mud at their top. Between sandstone layers there are usually 5–20cm thick layers of soft, grey mudstone. These accumulated very slowly on the sea floor as mud settled out of suspension from the overlying sea water. Each sandstone layer was deposited in only a matter of hours, whereas the thinner mudstone layers accumulated during the hundreds of years between each successive sediment slurry.

These Waitemata Sandstones lie at depth beneath the Waitakere Ranges and can be seen at the surface forming the lower eastern foothills of the Waitakere Ranges between Glen Eden and Swanson, and also in the cliffs of the north Manukau Harbour from Mill Bay eastwards.



The Waitemata Basin was bordered to the west by an actively growing undersea volcano, that we now call the ancient Waitakere Volcano. It was active for six to seven million years and built a volcano, 50km in diameter and 3000–4000m high on the floor of the sea. It was centred 20km west of the present-day Waitakere Ranges, and actively grew with periodic eruptions of lava, pumice and ash spewing onto the ocean floor. Eventually its top pierced the waves to form one or more active volcanic islands. Marine erosion of the volcanic island would have been ongoing and its shape would be continually changing as parts eroded away and new parts were erupted

