



Waitakere Ranges
Protection Society Inc

news

PO Box 15668, New Lynn, Waitakere 0640
www.waitakereranges.org.nz

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The year is off to a flying start for the Society as we try to cope with a growing workload and the demands on our committee members

whose volunteer time is limited by other work and family commitments in the deepening financial recession that affects us all. Our ability to deal with this is greatly helped by the grant we received from the ASB Community Trust to pay Mels Barton to do some of the work directly related to the Heritage Area.

In January we welcomed the decision on the Swanson Structure Plan appeals from the Environment Court which vindicated the Society's long-held position that the area could accommodate very little new subdivision and development and that prohibited activity status on subdivision under 4 ha would give all landowners certainty about the future character of the area. This matter has been on our agenda for over eight years, and it is satisfying to reach this point with such a good decision for the foothills of the ranges. Once again I acknowledge the huge contribution from Douglas Allan and Gary Taylor who presented the case for the Society. A short synopsis on the massive 380 page decision is on page 4 of this newsletter.



The walk at Maori Bay in January with geologist Bruce Hayward was well attended and thoroughly enjoyable even in the rain. Bruce's enthusiasm for the geology and geography of the Waitakere Ranges is most

exciting and I highly recommend that all members and friends come on the next geology walk at Karekare on 22 March. See page 10 for more information.

The Society is concerned at Waitakere City Council's proposal to sell six undeveloped bush-covered lots on the corner of Falls and Te Henga Roads. Local residents are also worried, and as these sections are within the Heritage Area and are contiguous with the Regional Park, we are urging Council to reconsider the sale.

The Waitakere Ranges Management Plan is to be reviewed by the ARC this year, and there are several issues that the Society is concerned with, not the least being the pressure already being put on the ARC to permit more invasive adventure activities such as mountain biking, canyoning, powerboat racing, orienteering and marathons, all of which have considerable environmental impacts. We will advise you when the time comes to make submissions.

Waitakere City Council is considering withdrawing Plan Change 22 which would have created a Whenuapai Airport Special Area pending a decision in March by cabinet on the future use of the airport for defence purposes. The Society opposed Plan Change 22 on environmental and planning grounds and we appreciate the work to date by Gary Taylor and James Hook.

Your continued support for the Society's work is always greatly appreciated and I look forward to seeing you at the AGM on the 30th March. Our speaker this year will be Philip Simpson, author of two well-known books on Cabbage and Pohutukawa/Rata trees. I know his talk on threats to our iconic trees will be of great interest to members of the Society given the spread of *Phytophthora* taxon Agathis, the microscopic fungus-like plant pathogen that is killing kauri trees in the ranges. For more information see AGM notice on page 12.

John Edgar

Introducing your Committee – John Edgar WRPS President

Congratulations John on being made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to art, in particular sculpture in the New Year Honours list 2009.

John was born in Auckland in 1950 and graduated from the University of New South Wales, Sydney in 1972 with a BSc first class honours in chemistry. For five years he worked as a research chemist in Christchurch, with his work published internationally.



Since 1977 John has been practicing as an artist and exhibiting nationally and internationally. His work investigates human interaction with resources in the modern world, and is recognised for its understanding of the ancient craft of stone working combined with a strong and timeless aesthetic.

Flagstone 1996

John has lived at Karekare on the west coast of Auckland with partner, glass artist Ann Robinson, since 1988.



He has been involved in four major public art projects in Waitakere City. In 2001 he designed the McLeod's Crossing footbridge (left) which spans the Oratia Stream between the Aquatic Centre and Falls Park in Henderson. In 2004, together with painter John Hadwen, he designed the artificial climbing wall in the then new Trusts Stadium in Central Park Drive, Henderson, and in 2006 and 2008 he made two basalt sculptures for the new Civic Centre in Waitakere City.

In 2004 he completed the sculpture *Transformer* - a two-part sculpture commissioned by Auckland City for the Auckland Domain. The two Coromandel granite sculptures weigh three and five tonnes respectively, and have an embedded digital code in red granite.

For the past eight years, John has been a trustee of the Corban Estate Arts Centre in Henderson and has contributed to the successful development of the old winery buildings into community galleries and artists' studios. He is committed to the establishment of a major arts quarter at the Corban Estate over the next ten years, which will include a performing arts centre, a Pacific Island Cultural Centre, and an arts and cultural museum



Transformer 2004 Auckland Domain Sculpture Walk

He is currently making sculptures for a major solo exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, as part of the Year of the Homecoming in 2009. The sculptures will be made from some of the eight tonnes of Scottish stones he collected in 2005 from historic quarries throughout Scotland. The exhibition will investigate the elements of Scottish history and culture that have become part of New Zealand's heritage.

John has been on the committee of WRPS since 1996 and has been president since 1998.

In 2009 he was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for his services to art, in particular sculpture. His work is held in private and public collections both in New Zealand and overseas.



Element 1993 -Making Amends Show, Collection MCDougall Art Gallery



It's been relatively quiet in the Ranges over the Xmas holiday period. I hope you all had as good a break as I did. Here's a brief summary of the things I've been working on:

Submissions / Advocacy

Dorothy Road Reserve Pumping Station - WCC

One of our members alerted to us to a proposal by Ecowater Solutions to build a concrete road through the small and narrow reserve in Dorothy Rd, Laingholm to reach their sewage pumping station down on the foreshore. There is no formal access to this site currently and it has been serviced via laying a pipe through the bush from the road or by boat from the Manukau Harbour. To date this has only caused a problem once when the power failed and a standby generator was not installed in time to prevent a spill of raw sewage into the harbour. However, WCC's proposal will destroy the entire reserve and remove many mature native trees due to the narrow, strip-like nature of the reserve. We are negotiating with Council to try to find a better solution for the long term that will not destroy the reserve but will enable easier access to the site.

Emissions Trading Scheme - WCC

I have commented on the excellent submission written by Greg Presland on this proposed legislation. Thanks Greg!

151 Marine Parade North, Piha - WCC

A consent application for a 3-storey dwelling in Piha has been received by Council. I took a look at the plans and have a few concerns. We will encourage Council to notify the consent.

Letters were sent regarding:

- Possums in foothills, specifically Green Bay, emerging from the city and spreading into the Ranges. Waitakere Community Board and ARC

Letters were received regarding:

- Our concerns re the spread of PTA and what action the new Government plans to take on the issue National Party

Consultation

Release of Grass Carp in Lake Wainamu ARC
The ARC's application to DoC has now been approved.

Public Transport in the Ranges

I responded to a questionnaire on this topic and the likely impacts and effectiveness of such a service from Wilderness Magazine.

Networking / Advocacy

- I have been talking to individual members about their concerns and ideas as well as organising a stall for WRPS at EcoDay on Sunday 8 March at Olympic Park.

The Society is deeply saddened by the recent death of Geoff Moon. Geoff was an ardent supporter of our work. Over many years he gave us numerous donations of beautiful images and postcards for fund raisers, and often attended our AGM, most recently in 2007 on his 92nd birthday. He will always be remembered for the exquisite photographs of our native bird life. Our condolences go to his family and friends.

Welcome to your first WRPS Newsletter
2009

Thanks to all those you have contributed articles for this Newsletter: John Edgar, Mels Barton, Lynda Williams, Nick Waipara (ACC) and thanks to the proofreaders, Mels and Sandra.

- Introducing your committee member John Edgar.2
- Mels' Report – Heritage Area Coordinator's Report, Dec 2008 – Feb 2009 – page 3.
- Great Victory in the Foothills – page 4
- RMA amendments – page 4
- Would you like to support WRPS
- WRPS Special Report PTA – page 5
Report from ARC Nick Waipara – page 5
WCC Workshop notes Lynda Williams– pp 6,7
Kauri Dieback Fact sheet – page 8
- Proposed sale of bush blocks on Falls Rd – page 9
- On Yer Bike – page 9
- WRPS Summer Field trips–page 10
- WPRS Annual General Meeting details.page 12

Heritage Area Coordinator's Report, December 2008 February 2009 continued

Education

- I organised a field trip to Muriwai led by geologist Bruce Hayward, which was very popular with 66 people attending on a drizzly day. Bruce's passion and enthusiasm was infectious and everyone raved about what a wonderful time they'd had. Hopefully we can have another trip before summer is over.

Fundraising

- I attended a workshop at the ARC on their Coastal Enhancement Fund to see if any of the 4 projects we'd thought would be useful were likely to get funded. The feedback was very useful as 3 of the 4 projects are not suitable for funding and the 4th may be part of some work already proposed by ARC. This project concerns the weed infestation of pampas at Whatipu and I'll be investigating the next steps we need to take.

Membership

- I've been working with Jenny Taylor to review the Society's membership database, how we request subscriptions for this year and bringing the welcome letter for new members up to date.

Great victory in the foothills!

The very lengthy Environment Court proceedings regarding the extent of development to be permitted in part of the eastern foothills of the Waitakere Ranges have concluded. The Court found substantially in favour of our Society's position and has allowed fewer new lots than proposed by Council or sought by development interests. This is a major victory for our Society and for the Swanson Foothills Society.

The outcome is pleasing in major respects.

First, it allowed only 52 new lots in the area. This compares with the 137 original lots proposed by Council and the 198 lots proposed by developers. In limiting the numbers of new lots to 52, the Court said " ... we consider that the existing fine balance between rural and urban in the Swanson Foothills is in real danger of being upset to its detriment by further subdivision and development."

Secondly, it made subdivision beyond that allocation a Prohibited Activity. That means that no further subdivision is allowed during the life of the Council plan. It brings the subdivision rules more in line with those in the rest of the Waitakere Ranges. It was very pleasing to see the Society's argument that robust protection was needed to prevent any further whittling away of the landscape qualities of the foothills.

The Society's case was led by Douglas Allan with Gary Taylor as our advocate. We were supported by the Auckland Regional Council which called expert landscape evidence from Stephen Brown whose evidence was largely preferred by the Court over that of other experts. We are grateful for the Auckland Regional Council's support.

It is worth noting that under the proposed amendments to the RMA we would not have been able to bring this appeal without the leave of the Environment Court. We have yet to see the criteria that the Court will apply when leave is sought. Depending on what they are, we may have had a quite different outcome in these proceedings. We will be presenting submissions to the Select Committee opposing the amendment.

John Edgar comments... Resource Management Act Amendments

The Government has announced a package of around 100 amendments to the *Resource Management Act* as part of its Phase 1 reforms. They are mostly concerned with process matters and a number of them are of no concern to our Society. Phase 2 round is to follow later in the year and this may involve more substantive changes including amendments to Part II of the Act. These will need careful attention.

But there are a number of concerns we have about the changes just announced. The key concern we have is the proposal to limit appeals on district plan matters only to points of law unless you have the leave of the Environment Court. This would mean that unless leave was given, we would not be able to challenge the merits of council's decisions on district plan matters as quite a lot of our litigation is in fact just that. We have more often than not had the Court allow less development than council proposed. For example, in the Swanson Structure Plan case we might not have been able to challenge the numbers of lots and get the reductions we did (see story on the Swanson decision below).

Other aspects would combine to make public interest advocacy more difficult including the new requirement for security for costs which might scare off legitimate public interest groups. The Government is also proposing a very significant increase in Court filing fees. Cross-submissions on district plans will be done away with. And a special fast track for major projects will be introduced.

Our Society will be presenting submissions to the Select Committee on the Bill when it is published. An analysis of the Bill will be available soon on the Environmental Defence Society's website www.eds.org.nz.

John Edgar

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUPPORT OUR WORK???

If you would like to contribute your time and energy to WRPS, there are a couple of ways to be involved that we need currently.

Do you know of a Chartered Accountant who might be willing to undertake our financial audit on a pro bono – or even a low fee – basis in February/March next year? It is becoming more and more difficult for charitable organisations to find qualified voluntary auditors. Our honorary Auditor (Martin Bailey of McGregor Bailey Ltd), who has generously audited our accounts on a no-fee basis for the last few years, has advised that he will be unable to do the WRPS Audit in future because the Institute of Chartered Accountants has a no-Audits policy for any firms that are not primarily auditors. The full fee for an Audit can be up to \$3000 or more and not less than \$2000, which is a considerable drain on voluntary organisation's budgets.

Do you want to come and hang out with us on our WRPS stall? We especially would appreciate assistance on our stall at Festivals and Shows. This is an important aspect of our Society's work and they are always fun occasions where you get a chance to talk about WRPS to anyone who is interested. It's a great way to meet people.

Please email the Secretary Mels Barton on mels@waitakereranges.org.nz if you are interested in assisting in anything.

WRPS SPECIAL Report – *Phytophthora taxon Agathis*



We have compiled the following Report and summaries for our WRPS members on the latest information about the disease that is killing our kauri trees.

WRPS has gathered together information from both the ARC and the Waitakere City Council and we comment on what is being done in research into PTA and the spread of it.

ARC Kauri PTA Fact Sheet

Kauri Dieback Update February 2009

A special report written for WRPS Newsletter by Nick Waipara

Waitakere City Council's workshop "Kauri Die Back" Tuesday 17 February 2009

Report by Lynda Williams (WRPS Committee Member)

Comment by Lynda Williams

A collaborative response to address kauri dieback is now underway that includes MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, the Department of Conservation, Auckland Regional Council, Northland Regional Council, Environment Waikato and Environment Bay of Plenty. All departments are now working together as one team to ensure the integrity of kauri ecosystems remains, to protect high value kauri areas and iconic kauri trees. This team is called the Kauri Dieback Joint Agency Response Team 0800 NZ KAURI (695 2874) or www.kauridieback.co.nz



Kauri Dieback Update February 2009

Nick Waipara (ACC)

Background

Phytophthora taxon Agathis, commonly known as PTA, the microscopic fungus-like plant pathogen (a disease causing agent) that has been found infecting kauri trees across the Auckland region, including the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park. It has been proposed by researchers that this disease if left unchecked is a serious disease threat to Kauri and its dependant ecosystem.

In October 2008 PTA was declared an Unwanted Organism under the Biosecurity Act. PTA is believed to be a soil-borne species spread by soil and soil water movement, plant to plant transmission through underground root-to-root contact, and human and animal vectors.

What is being done nationally?



A collaborative national response to kauri dieback is underway that includes MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, the Department of Conservation, Auckland Regional Council, Northland Regional Council, Environment Waikato and Environment Bay of

Plenty. The agencies are all working together as one agency to protect high value kauri areas and iconic kauri trees

The Kauri Dieback Response Team is currently:

- assessing the risk posed by the organism to individual trees and their ecosystem.

- Determining methods and their feasibility to limit the spread of the pathogen through the application of appropriate measures.
- Collecting further information to inform a response decision (how widespread and what we can do about it). Research funding has been allocated to undertake urgent studies on how to manage this disease.
- A new website has been created to give regular update and provide information www.kauridieback.co.nz

What is being done locally?

On parks response

A project to survey Kauri tree health along and near tracks has been underway in both the Waitakeres and Hunuas (the two largest areas of Kauri in the Auckland region). The Waitakeres work began in the Cascades last year, moving to Piha, and then onto the Huia area. Alison Davis (Senior Conservation Ranger) reports this is going really well. They are cataloguing symptoms carefully, GPSing locations and will go back in the Autumn to do testing when PTA more active. The cataloguing of symptoms will help identify PTA by visual assessment. This survey will be completed this month but has unfortunately identified more sick trees in the Cascades part of the park. The good news is that so far PTA has not been identified in the Hunuas but more survey work is needed before giving the "all clear"

- PTA phytosanitary control measures have been put in place for recreational events happening on park. Photo-point monitoring of kauri trees on the event course have been undertaken.
- Phytosanitary supplies delivered to guiding concessionaires in December/January. Concessionaires also briefed on PTA control measures.
- Warning signs are in place across the park at entrances to tracks with kauri.

Kauri Dieback Update February 2009 Nick Waipara (ACC) ... continued from previous page

Off parks (private land) response

As part of its response to Kauri dieback, ARC has a liaison officer, Stacey Hill, who is responding to complaints from private land owners and the public about Kauri dieback sighting on private and other off park land. To date Stacey has undertaken site inspections at over 125 different Kauri blocks across the region. Unfortunately PTA is a major problem for landowners too as PTA symptoms has been found at some (almost 40) sites. Locations include the important Waitakeres park buffer area e.g. Karekare, Oratia and Titirangi. Stacey is also undertaking a tree health survey on Waiheke Island which to date, is clear of symptoms. If anyone would like Stacey to make a site inspection to any Kauri of concern she can be contacted at stacey.hill@arc.govt.nz or 0275674402

The Department of Conservation has also been undertaking similar tree health surveys in Northland Kauri forests with the disease also being potentially present in close proximity to iconic large trees

ARC funded Research

Landcare Research was contracted by ARC in October to undertake work on the how the disease is spreading in the parks. This includes stream surveys to assess the risk and presence of PTA in water (as PTA produces spores which potentially can swim in freshwater). A study is also underway to look at the potential vectoring of PTA by pigs (soil on trotters and snouts) and people (soil on shoes and tracks).

Phytophthora taxon agathis (PTA) Kauri Collar Rot - Waitakere City Council workshop -17 February 2009

The workshop was addressed by **Danielle Hancock**, **Martin Herbert** (Treescape), **Roscoe Webb** (Parks Asset Team) and **Dr Nick Waipara** (ARC).

Nick Waipara- notes on his presentation by Lynda Williams (see page 7 for Lynda's comment)

We are working in the dark re this organism. PTA is an organism new to science which hasn't even been named yet

We do know that it is not an airborne organism, and is of tropical origin. We know that because 26 degrees is its optimum temperature, and NZ soils do not usually reach that temperature

Its existence became known as people began noticing declining tree health and tree death in kauri trees in the Auckland region, including those in Auckland's regional parks. PTA is now known to be the primary cause of kauri dieback. In Huia there are about 50 dead trees.

The organism also kills seedlings and saplings so affects both young and old trees. It causes bleeding basal lesions. If you remove a piece of the bark of an affected tree you find a mottled area of rotting inner bark and wood underneath. The kauri tree bleeds in an attempt to wall off the organism

Pathogen does not get up into the canopy, but the canopy dies because of the way the tree attempts to contain the disease and fight it off

In May 2008 PTA was noticed in Great Barrier Island, Waitakere Ranges and the Waipoua Forest. Then it was noticed on the Pakiri beach reserve where there are over 100 dead trees. Private landowners around Pakiri also have affected trees. But it probably took about 10 years for these trees to die.

Other podocarps are fine because this organism is specific to kauri.

PTA is a very ancient group of organisms. Moves a zoospore bit like a tadpole as it has a tail. It can move through water and soil. It is believed that the spores can survive in the soil for around 6 to 24 months on the soles of shoes/boots. It is very fortunate that it is not an airborne organism.

ARC is adopting a precautionary and prevention approach until research provides more information. ARC is the main owner of kauri in Auckland region.

The response was initially to try and contain it, to try and protect other areas which do not have the disease eg Waiheke Island and the Hunua ranges are both free of it.

SOP Standard Operating Procedures are being implemented. Signs on walkways with strategies for preventing transmission of the organism. These signs are the least vandalised ever erected, so people are obviously very concerned about the issue.

Website address for information
: www.kauridieback.co.nz

GIS mapping and aerial photography project for all parks. ARC did not know where all the kauris in the Auckland region were. Site visits are also taking place with over 130 property inspections being done so far. Surveys are done by employed contractors

Sandra Coney has been intensively lobbying central government to get involved as this is not just an Auckland issue. It could spread to the Coromandel, for example. Kauri are also regarded as a taonga and a NZ icon.

There is a Joint Agency Response Group Environment Waikato, Northland Regional, ARC, Environment Bay of Plenty, MAF and DOC. Looking at communication, liaison, operations, planning and intelligence. Currently preparing a business case to go to Cabinet

A response strategy will be prepared which will detail what each authority's responsibilities and tasks are. Funding to follow this. Although the organism only affects kauris, it has wider environmental implications. There is a rare orchid that only grows under kauri trees, for example.

Huia has two trees that are affected and should be dead by now but aren't. Nick is keeping a close eye on them. Kauri wall off root to root transmission, but kauri may escape being infected for other reasons, eg on a bit of a slope so the soil and/or water transmission bypasses them and does not affect them.

Nurseries need to be careful about not spreading the disease.

PTA could represent a threat to Fiji kauri and to Queensland kauri. There are 13 kauri species in the world.

But *phytophthora* needs a host. If spores are in soil with no kauri around they won't survive. As an agatha pathogen it is very specialised, very targeted. It is not a wide pathogen and does not like the rest of the family!

Kauri have their own pathogens, but they don't keel over from these because they have had millions of years to evolve and have learned to co-exist.

Zoospores do not survive dry conditions; biggest threat is during the winter. ARC is currently considering possibility of closing some tracks.

There are 64 suspected or confirmed diseased trees in the Auckland region so far. The WCC is getting enquiries about PTA every day.

There are 187 city parks within the ARC region.

Map pinpointed two diseased trees, in Huia and Maungaroa Ridge. Option of cutting down and removing diseased trees has been considered, but the ARC is waiting on team of scientists to make that decision.

Martin Herbert Treescape -notes on his presentation

Have been tracking trees for the past 6 months. recommended websites and magazines

Forest Health News, ENSIS The joint forces of CSIRO and SCION www.ensisjv.com

www.forestry.co.uk is another good website. You'll find an article on this website on *phytophthora ramorum* "Sudden Oak Death".

Biosecurity is a another good magazine with free copies available. Also check out the Forestry Commission newsletters.

What to do with dead trees or branches of diseased trees?

They should be removed. Take to East Tamaki where there is a quarantine area? Another quarantine area may be needed. Another option is to leave them where they are and let nature take its course. Important not to chip and spread it. Must not do anything to increase the risk of spreading it.

Contractors need leaflets to put in letter boxes of property owners who have kauri trees on their property. Treescape is very supportive of doing anything that will save the kauri trees.

WCC actions outlined by Danielle Hancock – notes on her presentaon

- Maintain accurate information
- Car kits (they cost \$20 to put together) for all field staff and volunteers
- Internal education
- Wait for Joint Agency response

Issue raised that using a tray for disinfecting shoes may be preferable for visitors. Spraying and brushing may not be enough to get rid of the spores. Need to remove all the soil and remain in tray for 20 seconds to allow good penetration.

Need to educate people everywhere, so that when out and about they are more likely to co-operate with foot/shoe baths.

Sponsorship deals needed for funding.

Nick Waipara commented that some trees succumb and die very quickly, while others appear to fight the pathogen over years and die much more slowly.

Sterilisation around the 64 affected trees suggested while we wait to get more information. The research and technical advisory groups are considering this and other measures. Issue of whether phosphite applications may kill other ivegetation.

Issue of closing off tracks during the winter raised as Nick had said this was when tracking of soil in shoes from one area to another most likely and most dangerous. Spores will die in dry conditions when they do not have access to a host. Further discussion resulted in suggestion of closing off all tracks summer and winter in order to completely protect the trees.

"It is less than a year since we woke up to the fact that some of the kauri trees in the Waitakere Ranges were dying, and realised that others further north had already died. While scientists and researchers are working on finding out more about this hitherto unknown pathogen, government agencies and local authorities must be encouraged to take action. Educating the general public and holding workshops are only part of what is needed. Attempts must be made in an effort to prevent this killer organism from spreading further and to protect unaffected areas of kauri forest from getting infected. We have to seriously consider closing access to our kauri forests for example, if other measures such as cleaning boots and shoes are not effective enough. If the choice is either isolate our national icon or risk losing most of our kauri trees, we must make the difficult decision to do everything in our power to preserve an important part of our heritage."

Lynda Williams



Kauri dieback - Kauri PTA Fact Sheet (ARC)

kauri dieback joint agency response team 0800 NZ KAURI (695 2874) or www.kauridieback.co.nz

What is *Phytophthora taxon Agathis*?

Commonly known as PTA, *Phytophthora taxon Agathis* is a microscopic fungus like plant pathogen (a disease causing agent) that only affects kauri. Recent research has identified PTA as a distinct and previously undescribed species of *Phytophthora*.

What does it do to kauri trees?

Symptoms include yellowing of foliage, loss of leaves, canopy thinning and dead branches. Affected trees can also develop lesions that bleed resin, extending to the major roots and sometimes girdling the trunk as a “collar rot”. PTA can kill trees and seedlings of all ages.

How is it spread?

PTA is believed to be a soil-borne species spread by soil and soil water movement, plant to plant transmission through underground root-to-root contact, and human and animal vectors.

Where did it come from?

Formally identified in April 2008, its closest known relative is a chestnut pathogen from Korea (*Phytophthora katsurae*). The assumption is that it is an exotic pathogen. However nothing is known about this particular species overseas.

Where is it?

PTA has been found at Huia and Maungaroa Ridge in the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park and at Department of Conservation reserves at Great Barrier Island and Trounson Kauri Park in Northland.

The facts on *Phytophthora taxon Agathis* (PTA)

Symptoms of kauri dieback have also been observed at Cascade Kauri in the Waitakeres and other sites in Rodney, Franklin, Waitakere and the North Shore, as well as Pakiri, Albany, Okura and the Waipoua Forest.

What can we do to stop it spreading?

Make sure shoes, tyres and equipment are clean of dirt before and after visiting kauri forest. Clean shoes and any other equipment that comes into contact with soil after every visit, especially if moving between bush areas. Keep to defined park tracks at all times. Any movement of soil around the roots of a tree has the potential to spread the disease. Keep your dog on a leash at all times. Dogs can inadvertently spread the disease if they disturb the soil around the trees.



What should I do if I have kauri on my land?

Minimise movement around kauri tree roots. Keep dogs and animals away from kauri trees. Download a warning sign and put it up to alert visitors to the dangers of spreading the disease. This can be laminated to make it more durable. If you think your trees have PTA symptoms contact the Kauri Dieback Response Team on 0800 NZ KAURI (695 2874).

Will parks or reserves be closed?

At this stage there are no plans to close parks or reserves, but it is something we may have to consider in the future

What is being done?

A collaborative response to kauri dieback is underway that includes MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, the Department of Conservation, Auckland Regional Council, Northland Regional Council, Environment Waikato and Environment Bay of Plenty. All are working together as one agency to protect high value kauri areas and iconic kauri trees.

The Kauri Dieback Response Team is currently:

Assessing the risk posed by the organism to individual trees and their ecosystem.

Determining methods and their feasibility to limit the spread of the pathogen through the application of appropriate measures.

Collecting further information to inform a response decision (how widespread and what we can do about it).

Ensuring a coordinated inter-agency approach to *Phytophthora taxon Agathis* including the appropriate management of communications and information.

Contact us

For more information, or to report any suspect sightings of diseased kauri on public or private land, phone the Kauri Dieback Response Team on 0800 NZ KAURI (695 2874) or visit www.kauridieback.co.nz.

Proposed Sale of Bush Blocks on Falls Rd, Te Henga

Ark in the Park (AIP), the project arm of the West Auckland branch of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Incorporated, has been undertaking biodiversity protection conservation work in the Waitakere Ranges for the past four years. The Auckland Regional Council has allowed AIP volunteers to use its Cascades Kauri Park ranger station as a base for their activities and recently have identified a need for a home base for students and overnight volunteers that is close to the Cascades Kauri Park and their supplies.

Waitakere City Council has been approached to undertake a joint venture, to lease 29 Falls Road, relocate a house to the site, and develop a research centre and overnight residence for casual volunteers and students. Forest and Bird will be seeking funding from other bodies as well as from Council towards the project.

WRPS has recently heard about a Council proposal to offer for sale six sections that it owns on Falls Rd, Te Henga in order to finance \$65,000 requested by Ark in the Park towards locating a research station and field base on another Council-owned section at 29 Falls Rd. The sections are all currently bush-blocks and zoned residential and are located adjacent to the quarry.

WRPS is fully supportive of the proposal for the research station and thinks it is highly appropriate that it is located on a vacant Council section. However WRPS questions the sale of the other 6 sections to finance this project for the following reasons;

- Council does not need to sell 6 sections to find \$65,000.
- The sections are currently bush and allowing development on them would generate a sprawling residential enclave in an area substantively bush and parkland and having adverse effects on the environment.
- The sections should be retained as environmental compensation for the quarry.
- WRPS believes that it is contrary to the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act to encourage development in this area.
- WCC should be leading by example in encouraging landowners to place protective covenants on bush by placing covenants on all these properties.

WRPS has written to the CEO of Waitakere City Council regarding this matter and asking Council to place on hold any moves to sell the Falls and Te Henga Road sections and instead amalgamate them and add them to the Quarry Reserve Land, but we have received no reply to date.

Any local residents who have concerns about this issue and would be prepared to make a submission please get in touch with John Edgar.

On Yer Bike!

Despite long opposition from the Society, demand from mountain bike lobby groups to be able to ride the walking tracks of the Waitakere Ranges continues to grow. Mountain bikes are not currently permitted to use the tracks in the ARC-administered parkland and the ARC recently decided against allowing them access to the Long Trail at Te Henga. There are three significant arguments against allowing mountain bikes on Ranges park tracks:

1) Disturbance to other users

Despite the ban on bikes, user surveys have shown they already cause more disturbances to other track users than any other cause. The narrow tracks in the Ranges make it difficult for walkers and mountain bikes to share tracks without incident, something neither riders nor walkers want. Fast downhill bikes can easily surprise and scare walkers.

2) Track damage

Previous experience of mountain bikes being allowed on Waitakere Ranges tracks showed that forest tracks, designed for foot traffic, are extensively damaged by bikes. Also, overloading became a significant problem on some tracks in the Ranges when mountain bikes were permitted.

The increased use of the tracks, by permitting mountain bikes, requires additional track maintenance and management and so extra funding. Many tracks are very wet during the winter, and mountain bikes cause extensive rutting under these conditions. Damage is not limited to the tracks, but also to water quality at stream crossings, and to the vegetation, both foliage and roots of the native flora.

"The ARC's track repair budget is already fully stretched and some tracks, in bad need of repair, have to wait years to get fixed. The Society does not think the Region's ratepayers should be funding damage caused by mountain bike users when they have a specific area set aside in Woodhill Forest for their activity," says Society President John Edgar.

3) Spread of weed and disease

The spread of weeds in the Waitakere Ranges is already a major challenge. Any traffic into Parks brings weeds, but we consider that Mountain Bikes, because of their off-road nature, are capable of carrying and distributing weeds over a wide area. With the iconic kauri tree already severely threatened by the new collar rot disease, anything that disturbs soil and spreads it to other areas is a major problem. Bikes can easily spread soil in tyre treads and cover wide areas in a day, before being transported to other areas to do it again.

The Society will continue to oppose this activity being permitted in the fragile ecosystem of the Ranges. Let's keep bikes off the Waitakere Ranges tracks so we can all enjoy the peace and quiet on foot. Mountain bikers are free to enjoy the Ranges tracks anytime they want but they need to leave their bikes at home.

WRPS SUMMER FIELD TRIPS 2009 - No 2

Come for a walk and a talk with Dr Bruce Hayward

Join us for a late summer walk on Karekare beach, the second of our 2009 summer low-tide walks with Dr Bruce Hayward who will examine and discuss the Piha Conglomerate, Karekare Crater and the Watchman Dome.

When: Sunday March 22 at 1 PM

What: To examine the Piha Conglomerate, Karekare Crater and Watchman dome.

Where to meet: Karekare carpark.

Where we will go: We will visit both the north and south ends of the beach with the option to walk south to the Pararaha Cliffs at the end.

Duration: Total time about 3 hrs.

Bring: Footwear for beach, stream crossing and a small amount of rock platform scrambling at Farley Pt.

For more information or queries please contact Secretary Mels at mels@waitakereranges.org.nz or phone 09 8168337.



GEOLOGY ROCKS AT MURIWAI

First WRPS Field trip of the summer series
Report and photos by Mels Barton



The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society recently held the first of its low-tide summer trips at Muriwai Beach. The informative walk and talk was led by geologist Dr Bruce Hayward of Geomarine Research Ltd and attended by 66 people, many of them Rodney locals, as well as members and friends of the Society.



The walk started at the Maori Bay car park and examined the internationally important exposures in the cliffs here, which show pillow lavas and huge lava feeder tubes from the Waitakere Volcano, which was erupting about 6km off the coast of Muriwai from approx 50 to 17 million years ago.

The more intrepid amongst the group scrambled over the rocks at the south end of Collins Bay and were rewarded by views of the submarine canyon exposed in the cliffs of Pillow Lava Bay.



The crowd were highly engaged and asked Dr Hayward many searching questions before returning to Maori Bay and looking forward to the next outing. It would seem that geology is a popular topic for the people of Rodney who were very keen to learn more about their stunning local environment.

For information on future events and to join the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society and support their work, visit their website at www.waitakereranges.org.nz or email the Secretary Mels Barton on mels@waitakereranges.org.nz.

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.co

Secretary:

Mels Barton
816 8337
mels@waitakereranges.org.nz

Treasurer:

Sandra Jones
09 817 2788
kemsdale@ihug.co.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

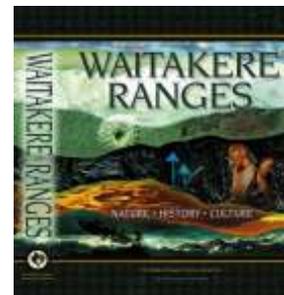
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WRPS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
7pm Monday 30th March 2009
Arataki Visitors Centre
Scenic Drive



Please join us at 7pm for our AGM followed by a talk from our
guest speaker

Dr Philip Simpson of Uruwhenua Botanicals, Takaka will address the meeting.

FLIGHT OF THE ICONS



Using cabbage trees, rata, pohutukawa and totara, the subjects of his published and proposed books on natural and cultural history, Philip will outline what has happened to these iconic native species, what ongoing threats there are to their well-being, and what people have been doing in attempting to reverse the trends.

Philip Simpson is an ecological consultant and wine grower living in his place of birth, Golden Bay. This 'retirement' follows a career in the public service, notably the Department of Conservation. He has written two definitive books on New Zealand botany, on cabbage trees and pohutukawa and rata: both were Montana book award winners. A third book, on totara, is in the planning phase. His most current work involves assessing natural areas on private land.

Join us at the WRPS Annual General Meeting
7 pm Monday 30 March 2009
Arataki Visitors centre
Scenic Drive

Sender:
The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society
PO Box 15668
New Lynn
Waitakere City, 0640