

WRPS NEWS



Issue 169

Newsletter of The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc.

May 2016

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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President's Report

Thank you to all the members and friends who attended the AGM in March. The Arataki lecture theatre was full and there was a very positive response to the Society's work over the past year. We all enjoyed Dr James Russell's address on "Predator Free New Zealand" which was a great follow up to Professor Mick Clout's address in 2015. It is encouraging to know that there is a strategy in place for achieving this goal and it will be wonderful to work towards seeing the Waitakere Ranges become predator free in the years ahead.

We were sorry to lose Trixie Harvey and Lynda Williams from our committee after twelve years, but welcome onto the committee Janet Thomson, whose profile can be read in this newsletter. We also thank Joanna Silver, who has been on the committee for two years, for taking on the role of secretary so enthusiastically.

The Society is engaged with many issues, and they are documented in our Annual Report, on our website, on WRPS facebook and in the Heritage Area Coordinator's report in this newsletter. We are always happy to provide more information to members.

Our submissions to the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan are finished and we await the recommendations of the Independent Hearings Panel due 27th July and any appeals need to be lodged by 16th September.

Of great concern is the spread of kauri dieback. This is the greatest ecological threat to the ranges for many years. Results from the recent five-year air and ground surveys of the effects of *Phytophthora agathidicida* are still being assessed, and we hope to have the results in time for the next newsletter.

I can recommend the Environmental Defence Society conference "Wild Places" in August that will explore both emerging threats to our natural environment and the exciting new opportunities for protection. There is a link to this later in this newsletter.

The Waitakere Ranges are always an outstanding place to live in and to visit, but only our careful attention, and action when required, will keep it that way. Thank you all for your support.

John Edgar
President

Janet Thomson New Committee member



Hello WRPS members

My name is Janet Thomson and I joined the WRPS Committee at this year's AGM. Here is a little about myself and my interest in WRPS.

I grew up in West Otago. I studied commerce at Otago University, worked in various government policy roles in Wellington, then moved to Auckland in 1998 with my partner Gary. In Auckland I have studied and practiced in the diametrically opposite fields of the Alexander Technique and accounting. Today I work as an accountant in the film and television sector and independently. When my work is done I love to be in the garden, to cycle and walk, play guitar, learn Spanish, and sing. And I love cats.

We moved from the city to Oratia ten years ago, and I feel so very fortunate to live in this naturally beautiful part of Auckland. I believe it is vitally important that people work together to protect and conserve the natural ecosystems within the Waitakere Ranges both for the intrinsic value of nature, and for the benefit of Auckland city. The Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area must be retained as a unique and important component of Auckland's heritage – one of many treasures that enable current and future Aucklanders to take pride in their beautiful city.

I joined the society to connect with others who care deeply about the importance of nature and conservation in this part of Auckland. I honour and appreciate the immense

work that has been undertaken by the many committed people affiliated with WRPS since its formation. I want to contribute my skills and experience to support WRPS to pursue its objectives into the future. I look forward to meeting and working with many WRPS members in the coming years.



Gannets in flight

Photo: John Edgar

Annual Report of the Executive Committee

presented at the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Wednesday 30 March, 2016
by John Edgar ONZM, President

I am pleased to present the 43rd Annual Report of the Executive Committee of The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Incorporated.

A year ago we reported our concern about the closure of the Te Henga quarry and Auckland Council's proposal to use it as a clean fill dump. This was successfully opposed. The quarry operator, Perry Resources Ltd ceased quarrying in April and began the restoration of the site by contouring using the overburden and some imported clay and they will begin planting native trees this autumn and keep up a maintenance and weed control program. Our concern now is with the final designation of the quarry. We will work to see that it becomes part of the Regional Park with which it is contiguous, rather than a local park.

After many meetings with Council and the community, we were pleased with the final version of the Te Henga Local Area Plan, and the Local Board have said that there will be no new Local Area Plans instigated until the current ones are well progressed.

MPI and DOC have continued to carry out eradication of *Salvinia* in the Te Henga wetland, and they have been successful in this using ground and aerial spraying. They have been diligent in their consultation with the community, and we are hopeful of complete eradication of this very invasive perennial aquatic fern.

Kauri in the ranges are infected with the pathogen *Phytophthora agathidicida* and there is no known cure. A year ago 13% of kauri in the ranges were infected, and 65% of these trees were along walking tracks, an indication that track users are spreading the disease. To

quarantine areas showing no dieback, 27 km of walking tracks in the ranges remain closed to the public but compliance has been poor. Preliminary results from the most recent five-year ground and aerial dieback survey indicates that the disease is continuing to spread, and that some very old trees in the ranges have now been infected. We will report in full on this in our next newsletter.

In 2014 Council granted a three-year consent to the Hillary Trail Ultra Marathon from Arataki to Muriwai involving up to 675 participants each year. We are not convinced that the conditions imposed on the event will stop the spread of kauri dieback, the greatest occurrence of which is along the Hillary Trail. It has become clear that the trigene footbaths that the runners run through at intervals along the trail are not 100% effective at killing the pathogen carried in the mud on boots and shoes.

Following the resignation last year of our Heritage Area Coordinator Christine Rose, who began work for Council as their Kauri Dieback Community Coordinator and who remains on our committee, we advertised for a new coordinator and in August we appointed Katherine Russell to the role. As a geographer, Katherine has excellent qualifications and she has taken on many of the research and submission writing tasks, which has reduced the workload for committee members.

The Society has spent considerable time submitting on the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (PAUP). The complex hearings process has been a challenge for our legal and planning team, but they have represented the Society to the highest standards. The hearings will be completed in the next few weeks when the Independent Hearings Panel will release their recommendations followed by Council's decisions in August.

Over the past year we have made submissions on various matters including the Auckland Council Annual Plan, the Resource Legislation Amendment Bill, the Marine Protected Areas Act, the Environmental Reporting Regulations, the Regional Pest Management Plan, the Heritage Area design guidelines, the Rating of farm and lifestyle properties and West Coast Water Safety signage.

The Oral history project that began in 2004 has been postponed for the time being, although we are always open to suggestions of people to be interviewed. To date, 27 interviews have been conducted and we thank Anna Fomison for her diligence in this project. Her recorded interviews are very important for our archives, and are also lodged with the Auckland and Turnbull Libraries.

Our new website is working well to disseminate information and allow people to purchase merchandise and join the Society. Once again thanks to Anna for keeping the website up to date. And thanks to Katherine, we are regularly using our facebook page to promote the Society, advertise events and post the latest news.

As you will hear in the financial report, the Society remains in a strong financial position. The majority of the reserves have accumulated from sales of the Waitakere Ranges book. During the year we have used some of our reserves to fund our submissions on the PAUP. We have also been working to comply with the Charities Reporting Standards that come into force in 2017, and we considered

it prudent to prepare for this in advance. Thanks to Sandra, Katherine and Joanna for their work on this.

We are grateful to have received a grant of \$10,000 from Foundation North to fund the Heritage Area Coordinator, and will be making a new grant application during the coming months to ensure continuous funding for this position.

We are also aware of the Incorporated Societies Bill that is likely to be tabled in the House later this year. As drafted, it will change some requirements for societies especially in areas such as officers' obligations, conflicts of interest, dispute resolution and winding up provisions. It is most probable that we will need to change our constitution in 2017 to meet the new requirements.

The Society relies on professional consultants to prepare submissions and evidence for us on a range of legal and planning matters. The *pro bono publico* contribution of our legal counsel Douglas Allan from Ellis Gould Ltd, Robert Enright from Kirkland Enright, and RMA consultant Gary Taylor from EDS is invaluable. Thanks also to James Hook at Envivo Planning who has advised and represented the Society on all planning matters. And once again our thanks go to Jenny Taylor who has maintained our membership database and coordinated mail-outs for many years.

The executive committee has met on the second Wednesday of the month. 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 volunteer time over the past year. It has been a pleasure to work with them and I would like this meeting to join with me in showing our appreciation for their efforts on our behalf. Special thanks go to our vice-president Anna Fomison, secretary Lynda Williams and treasurer Sandra Jones. The Society currently has three Patrons, Emeritus Professor Dick Bellamy, the Rt. Hon. Jonathan Hunt and Lynne Pillay. It has been my honour to be President and to chair the executive committee for the past eighteen years. I want to thank Society members and my family and friends for their support that has enabled me to better serve the Society.

In October, our secretary Lynda Williams resigned due to ill health. Lynda had been on the committee for twelve years. She has been our secretary and made many successful grant applications. Her commitment to the Society and her friendship will be greatly missed. Trixie Harvey is also standing down from the committee after twelve years. She and her husband Bruce edited the Waitakere Ranges book published in 2006 and wrote "Saving the Ranges", the 40 year history of the Society which was published in 2013. We would like to thank Trixie and Bruce for their dedicated support over many years.

Sadly, during the year some long-time members of the Society died. We remember the support of Angela Almond, Dorothy Butler, Ros Rothschild, Ann Guy and Marin Segedin, and offer our condolences to their families. Karekare resident Harry Turbott, architect, conservationist and the designer of this Arataki Visitors Centre, died this month. And sadly Sandra Jones is not

with us tonight as her husband Bryn died last week, and our thoughts are with Sandra and her family in their bereavement.

The Society is forty-three years old. To the members and friends who were there when the Society was founded in 1973, and the many others who have since joined we would like to express our thanks for your support. The Society has a proud history, but our work is not done. While the Heritage Area Act has made some matters more certain for both landowners, developers and the Society, proposed changes to the RMA if adopted will reduce the number of notified consent applications, and will limit our ability to be recognised as an interested party in resource consent matters. Your support in the coming years will be more important than ever.

Red-eared slider turtles



Spotted any cute turtles in your garden or out on walks in the Ranges? Wondered where they are from? We've been asked about some dinner plate sized turtles recently sighted around Titirangi and Swanson; here are some facts on where they are from and what to do with them!

Red-eared slider turtles are native to southern parts of the United States, but are considered one of the world's 100 worst invasive species. They are sold in New Zealand as pets when they are juveniles, around 50mm long, but grow up to 350mm long (i.e. a dinner plate size). They are long-lived, omnivorous and tolerate a range of environmental conditions. We are still learning about their impact in New Zealand; they can survive in the wild in here, but it is not yet known if they can breed. With their omnivorous diet it is suspected they could be adversely affecting aquatic plants, insects, eels and small fish species.

You can identify them by the small yellow to red 'dash' around their ears. If you see any in the wild, please report the sighting to the Auckland Council biodiversity team with details such as when and where you saw it, and any images you have. [Ph: 09 301 0101, Email: biodiversity@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz]

And if you have one that you no longer want, please contact your local pet shop, SPCA or turtle rescue Auckland.

Auckland Council consulted on banning the breeding, distribution and sale of red-eared slider turtles in its

discussion document on the upcoming pest management plan (pets could continue to be kept in secure confinement). WRPS supported this action in its submission on the discussion document. The draft Regional Pest Management Plan will be available in mid-2016 for consultation, and hopefully it will include tighter controls for this invasive species.

Katherine Russell

Heritage Area Coordinator's Report

The last few months have been very busy submitting on a number of policy issues, both regionally and nationally. The purpose of these submissions is to ensure that the unique nature of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area is taken into account and that national policy will enable us to continue the protection and preservation work for the Ranges.

On the *Annual Budget 2016/17 consultation document* we submitted on issues relevant to residents of the Ranges, including supporting the proposal to allow financing through the Retrofit Your Home scheme to upgrade septic tanks. Upgrading wastewater systems in the west coast lagoons is critical for reducing the amount of pollution entering these waterways. We also supported the local board's proposed activities, particularly continuing its work on climbing asparagus and the weed management plan, and a greater emphasis on the marine environment.

We also submitted on the Ministry for the Environment's *Next Steps for Freshwater* consultation document. In this submission, we focused on the need to protect our waterways and maintain bottom lines even where significant national infrastructure is proposed. We also supported the Freshwater Improvement Fund for activities to improve water quality, but not for use by companies to offset negative impacts of their proposals. We also supported regulation to require fencing to exclude animals from waterways, but suggested bringing the dates earlier than the proposed deadlines out to 2030. Animal faecal contamination is a major issue in the Te Henga valley and the lagoon.

Another issue was the *Resource Legislation Amendment Bill*, where we submitted focusing on two issues of concern; the erosion of environmental bottom lines and the reduction in public participation and democracy. The Environmental Defence Society did a detailed submission on these and many other points.

Most recently, we have submitted in support of the *Wildlife (Powers) Amendment Bill*. This bill will provide Department of Conservation rangers with greater powers to intervene, stop someone, require suspects to provide identity information, and seize materials for evidence, when they suspect someone of undertaking activities that might harm any wildlife protected under the bill. This includes a number of native species in the Ranges including birds, bats and sea mammals.

Following on from our February newsletter, we also submitted on the *Marine Protected Areas Discussion Document*. We are continuing to monitor activities in the

marine space including waiting for the proposed marine protected areas bill and talking to the local board about what they are proposing to do in this space.

In other news, we have been updating you on the *Huia Water Treatment Plant* in recent newsletters, but have not received any further information on this project since February. We are seeking an update from WaterCare at the moment.



Grey-faced petrel

Photo: John Edgar

Finally, it hasn't all been submissions and meetings! It's grey faced petrel breeding season and there is plenty of monitoring going on around the Ranges as these birds return to their nests to mate. WRPS President John Edgar, Karekare locals, myself and Dr James Russell headed out to monitor and band birds at Karekare in April. Auckland Council has also undertaken monitoring along the coast, and hopefully will give us an update in our next newsletter.

Katherine Russell HAC@waitakereranges.org.nz

Wild Places Conference Environmental Defence Society (EDS) 10 - 11 August 2016 Viaduct Events Centre, Auckland.

Wild Places define New Zealand. They evoke powerful emotions that connect us to these islands with their outstanding scenery and unique biota. They include land, lakes and rivers, and the sea. They extend over conservation, Māori and private land. *Wild Places* make this country special for those who live here and those who visit. Our economic welfare and country brand depends on *Wild Places*.

EDS's 2016 conference will explore New Zealand's *Wild Places* and assess both emerging threats and exciting new opportunities. It will draw on insights from international and local experience, case studies and workshops. It will look creatively at the development of powerful new synergies between conservation and tourism and will explore novel management and funding initiatives.

Registration link: <https://www.cvent.com/events/wild-places-2016/registration>

Financial Report to the AGM

Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Incorporated
Statement of Financial Position
As at 31st January 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
ASB Bank – FstSver (N&JSmith Fund - interest)	5,726	4,738
ASB Bank – Short Term D (Smith Fund - capital)	20,000	20,000
Kiwibank - 00 Account (H.A.C.)	9,169	1,293
Kiwibank - 01 Account (Operating)	7,015	19,911
Kiwibank - 02 Account (WRPS publications)	2,436	1,778
Kiwibank - Short Term Deposits	156,263	163,389
GST Refund Due	2,189	2,231
Stock on Hand – Finished Goods	19,023	17,261
Total Current Assets	221,821	230,601
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Fixed Assets as per Schedule	15,557	15,557
TOTAL ASSETS	237,378	246,158
TOTAL LIABILITIES	-	-
NET ASSETS	237,378	246,158
Represented by:		
TRUSTEES FUNDS		
Retained Earnings	237,378	246,158
TOTAL TRUSTEES FUNDS	237,378	246,158

Copies of the full Audited Financial Statements are available on request from the Treasurer Ph: 817 2788, Email: treasurer@waitakereranges.org.nz

Auditor: McGregor Bailey, Chartered Accountants

Change to Reporting Standards for Not-for-Profit Organisations

As a result of the introduction of new statutory Reporting Standards on 1 April 2015, the Reporting Standards used for preparing the Society's Annual Accounts have been changed from Accrual to Cash Accounting (Tier 4). The main effects of this change can be seen in the way that Interest received, the Audit fee, and Depreciation are now reported.

NOTES:

Bank accounts:

Operating account

Operating expenses included \$30,369 spent on Planning expenses relating to the Unitary Plan Hearings. Over the 3 financial years ending 31/1/2014-31/1/2016 these expenses totalled \$50,235. Refer to the comment under "WRPS publications account" below.

Land acquisition funds

Held in Term Deposits totalling \$61,352 (cf 31/1/2015: \$57,210)

WRPS publications account

Total: \$2,436 + \$94,910 held in Term Deposits (cf 31/1/2015: \$106,178)

These funds are being accumulated principally to cover the costs of a possible supplement to or reprint of the *Waitakere Ranges* book in the next few years. A portion of the interest earned on these Term Deposits over the last 6 years was used to subsidise the publication of the history of the Society, *Saving the Ranges*, in June 2013, and to fund the development of the new website which was launched in mid-2014. Some of the interest and a portion of the capital was used in 2015 to cover costs relating to the Society's work with Planners on the

Unitary Plan Hearings.

Fast Saver Account - Neil & Jean Smith Fund

The original donation (\$20,000) is held as capital and the interest earned (31/1/2016 balance: \$5,726) is tagged for special projects.

Stock on hand – value \$19,024.

This consists primarily of stocks of *Saving the Ranges*, and residual copies of *Waitakere Ranges*.

Fixed Assets - value \$15,557. This includes equipment purchased in 2009 from NZ Lottery Grants Board and ASB Community Trust grants (laptop computer, data projector and screen, digital recorder, mobile display) as well as the new website, launched in 2014, which is included as a fixed asset. However, under the new Reporting Standards (Tier 4, Cash Accounting), depreciation is not regarded as a cash transaction, so there is no change in value from the previous year.

Total Trustees Funds combines \$246,158 carried forward from previous years, less \$8,780 excess expenditure over income in the current year. A major portion of these funds is held in tagged Term Deposits – the Land Acquisition, the Neil and Jean Smith, and the Publications Funds.



Karekare, looking south

Photo: Ted Scott, Fotofile

WRPS Newsletter by Email

If you are receiving this newsletter by post but would prefer to receive it by email (as a .pdf file), please let us know (email us at wrps@waitakereranges.org.nz). You will have the added advantage of being able to view the photographs in full and glorious colour.

YOUR COMMITTEE

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



The Waitakere Ranges Protection
Society
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