



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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Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 41st Annual General Meeting
of the Society will be held at
7pm on Monday, 30th March 2015
Arataki Visitors Centre, Scenic Drive, Titirangi

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Announcements
3. Apologies
4. Confirmation of Minutes of AGM 2014 and Matters arising
5. Annual Report
6. Financial Report
7. Election of Officers
8. General Business

Speaker: Professor Mick Clout

“Science for Conservation: a personal perspective on the management of invasive mammals and conservation of native birds in New Zealand”

Mick Clout is Professor of Conservation Ecology at The University of Auckland, where his research speciality is the ecology and behaviour of vertebrates. He has longstanding interests in bird conservation and has worked internationally on the management of invasive species. Mick is a Fellow of the Royal Society of NZ, a member of the NZ Conservation Authority, and has chaired the Kakapo Recovery Group since 1995.

In 2014 Mick was awarded the Marsden Medal, awarded by the New Zealand Association of Scientists for "a lifetime of outstanding service to the cause or profession of science, in recognition of service rendered to the cause or profession of science in the widest connotation of the phrase."

In this talk he will give a personal perspective on the management of invasive mammals and conservation of native birds in New Zealand, illustrated by examples such as the recovery programme for kakapo (*Strigops habroptilus*).

To read more about Professor Clout:
<https://unidirectory.auckland.ac.nz/profile/m-clout>



Photo: Ted Scott

President's Report

I hope you have been enjoying the wonderful summer weather and getting to walk in the ranges and swim in the ocean. While it has been dry (with only 27 mm rain at Karekare in January), there have been drier summers of late and Auckland is certainly not in drought as are other parts of the country. The forest, the birds and the insects are thriving. As I write, a pair of keruru are in the karaka trees outside the house, devouring the ripe berries whole and ensuring that the karaka groves multiply.

As you will read, the AGM of the Society will be held in late March and we expect a big attendance to hear our speaker, Professor Mick Clout. Some of you will know of his work in conservation ecology, and you may have heard him recently speaking about his work to Kathryn Ryan on National Radio on the vision for a predator-free New Zealand by 2040. Predator-free New Zealand is committed to dramatically reducing NZ's predator populations by 2040, the bi-centenary of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The Society is fully involved in the hearings process on the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan. Thanks to Douglas Allan our legal counsel and James Hook our planner, we have been engaged since late last year in the complex process of attending the many stages of multiple hearings, making legal submissions and presenting planning evidence to ensure that the Society has the very best input into this Unitary Plan which once adopted will guide the development of Auckland for the next 30 years.

At the end of last year, we were sorry, but also pleased, to hear that Christine Rose, our Heritage Area Coordinator was resigning to take up a new position with Auckland Council as the Kauri Dieback Coordinator. In this role she will be required to research and disseminate information on the threat of kauri dieback to the communities of the Waitakere Ranges, and we look forward to working closely with her and the Waitakere Ranges Local Board on this serious ecological threat. We will be applying for funding this year to employ a new Heritage Area Coordinator.

We are pleased to welcome Joanna Silver to our committee. On her return from overseas last year, Joanna contacted us to see how she could help with our work. She has since been co-opted onto the committee and has already made a valuable input. You can read more about her later in this newsletter.

You will have by now received our 2015 invoice for membership subscriptions. We are most grateful for the support of our members for without that we would not be able to adequately protect and conserve the Waitakere Ranges in these new and challenging times.

*John Edgar,
President*

Update from Regional Parks, Auckland Council: Planning for the future

The council is currently consulting with several groups on a way forward for Kakamatua, Cornwallis within the Waitakere Ranges after the fire on Boxing Day 2014.



Photo: Friends of Manukau Harbour facebook

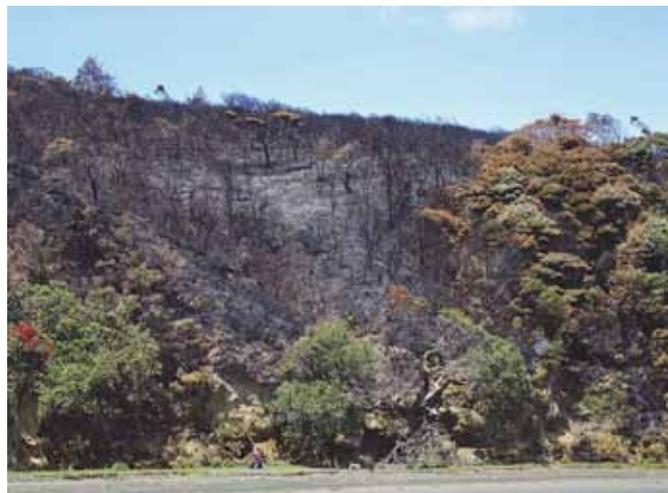


Photo: Friends of Manukau Harbour facebook

It will be consulting with Council biodiversity and biosecurity advisors, the community, Auckland Botanical Society, and other groups who have an interest and history in the site. There are likely to be future opportunities for public involvement in the project for those that are interested.

This area is a botanically important remnant gumland ecosystem affected previously by fire in the late 1970s. According to the Auckland Botanical Society, approximately 17 native terrestrial orchid species have been recorded in the area.

The former management of this area, based on the importance of the ecosystem, focussed on weed control which helped maintain open areas for orchids. Although still in the early stages of planning for the recovery of the site, these former management decisions will be taken into consideration for any future management of the site.

Planting preparations

The Arataki nursery is currently stocktaking and planning for the upcoming autumn planting season.

Planting programmes are scheduled for retired pasture land at Te Rau Puriri Park (South Head on the South Kaipara Peninsula), back dune planting at Muriwai, and riparian margin planting at Pae o te Rangi farm at Cascades Kauri Park and Whatipu.

An estimated 16,000 plants will be planted by the ranger team, with assistance from local schools and community groups.

Dune shaping and rehabilitation planting will also continue at Muriwai.

WRPS Newsletter Email List

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.

Joanna Silver Co-opted committee member



Joanna brings to the Society a bundle of commercial skills and a passion for the protection of nature. She has a legal and financial services background both in NZ and offshore - she was a qualified lawyer for over a decade before transitioning into strategy and business development, and has worked in government, start-ups and large global organisations.

Having grown up in Wellington, she missed the large green spaces when she moved to Auckland until discovering the Waitakere Ranges, where she realised what a taonga we have at our doorstep. Joanna has a particular interest in endangered species and Aotearoa New Zealand's native birds.

Joanna is currently a Director of Stitchbird Consulting, a consultancy that helps clients achieve results in all environmental aspects of their businesses including commercial strategy, complex projects, business development, participation in environmental markets, internal risk management and acquisition integration.

Kauri Dieback Community Co-ordinator – Waitakere Ranges

Kauri are an iconic and essential tree to Waitakere communities and ecosystems. Recognising their importance, and the threats from kauri dieback disease, the Waitakere Ranges Local Board last year created a new 'Kauri Dieback Community Co-ordinator – Waitakere Ranges' role, which has been filled by Christine Rose, a well-known conservation advocate, and most recently Heritage Area Co-ordinator for the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society.

Christine started in this new role in mid-January and has hit the ground running supporting events and activities, in critical areas of kauri forest in the Waitakere Ranges. She also attended the recent annual Kauri Symposium in the Hokianga, and we include a report on the symposium in another column in this newsletter.

Christine sees a most important part of her role is to support community groups and volunteers in the battle against kauri dieback disease. There is no cure for kauri dieback disease, so local action is essential. Working with locals and the wider public, the aim is to support an 'army' of volunteer stewards helping to stop the spread of the disease. This would include developing community

ownership of trigene stations so this essential defence against the spread of disease is as effective as possible. It also involves empowering people with knowledge of the disease, and the methods of control to stop its spread – particularly the avoidance of closed tracks in protected areas of healthy trees.

Christine is happy to offer, on behalf of the Biosecurity team and the Waitakere Ranges Local Board, assistance, resources, advice and support to all those with an interest in and love for the Waitakere Ranges and kauri in particular.

If you would like Christine to attend your group's meetings or events, for informational materials or 'kauri care guides', or for trigene to keep gear clean, please contact her at christine.rose@aucklandcouncil.govt. She looks forward to working with you to keep kauri standing.



11am - 4pm Sunday 12 April 2015
Olympic Place, New Lynn

WRPS will have a stall at the event

EcoDay is a community celebration, bringing together the best of West Auckland's community environmental groups, green businesses, ethical food vendors and local entertainers to create a fun, free & family-friendly day out. Head to [facebook.com/EcoWestFestival](https://www.facebook.com/EcoWestFestival) for event updates and all details.

Symposium on kauri

Valentine's weekend saw the public, scientists and the Kauri Dieback Management Programme team gather to learn about and discuss the latest research and activities for protecting New Zealand's iconic kauri trees from kauri dieback disease.

Roughly 90 people attended the 2015 Kauri Dieback Symposium at the Copthorne Hokianga Resort and Hotel on Saturday 14th February. Approximately 70 of those attendees also went on a field trip through Waipoua forest, hosted by Te Roroa, the following day.

The diverse range of speakers and attendees generated a great deal of discussions, which saw people gain more awareness of one another's viewpoints and build strong connections. As well as the scientists involved in researching ways for managing the disease, there were community groups which work to protect or conserve kauri; tourism operators who take visitors through native areas and the various teams within the Kauri Dieback Management Programme.

One person said 'It was an incredible privilege to be there surrounded by so many people committed to understanding the issues around kauri dieback and working towards solutions. I have certainly left with a completely new level of understanding and awareness of the different perspectives....it was invaluable!'

Another theme was the need for everyone involved in protecting kauri to continue working together to share knowledge, resources, and engaging people in removing soil and cleaning their gear before and after visiting kauri forests.

Many attendees also commented on the range of activities underway across kauri land and the diversity of people committed to protecting kauri.

Film clips of the presentations from day one will be available on the Kauri Dieback Management Programme's website www.kauridieback.co.nz in early March, and the media interviews are available on the facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/TheKauriDiebackManagementProgramme>.

The Symposium Organising Committee (made up of the Kauri Dieback Programme partners, SCION, Plant and Food Research, Landcare and Bio Protection) are currently surveying attendees for feedback on this year's Symposium, and how we can improve future ones. So thank you to everyone who made this year's Symposium a success and we look forward to hosting the next annual event.



11am – 4pm Sunday 8th March 2015
Parrs Park domain area behind The Waterhole
[facebook.com/waitakereranges](https://www.facebook.com/waitakereranges)

WRPS will have a stall at the Karnival
Please call by to say 'hello'

Control of the water fern *Salvinia* - a pest water weed in Te Henga wetland

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), in partnership with the Department of Conservation and the Auckland Council, is currently carrying out a range of activities to control and ultimately destroy outbreaks of a pest aquatic weed recently discovered in the wetland. The water weed, *Salvinia*, is a notoriously aggressive pest plant that if left unchecked, would rapidly cover the surface of the wetland and ultimately destroy the unique ecosystem there.

As the use of a herbicide spray is under consideration, MPI will provide residents with an opportunity to discuss the situation and the treatment options available. Already the infestation is ten times larger than the biggest so far dealt with in NZ (though still small by world standards). A previous infestation in the wetland in 2011 was treated by spraying but obviously not all the weed was destroyed.

Options presented to a recent public meeting at Te Henga are:

1. Manual removal: no good – time consuming, inefficient & liable to spread it as *Salvinia* can grow from a tiny remnant.
2. Mechanical: no good - destructive and as well as same as above
3. Bio-control: no good – too cold for the weevils etc. Long approval time to test and bring in biological control insects.
4. Herbicides: the only effective method – helicopter spraying uses less herbicide than on-the-ground spray and is more efficient. It is proposed to use Diquat which has been used in Rotorua for past 50 years controlling lake weed, and has successfully eradicated *Salvinia* in a wetland at Kaituna, BoP, and in many small ponds and dams in New Zealand.

Salvinia is very fast growing and doubles in size in 14 days. When found in December 2014, the infestation in the wetland was 1 hectare, and this has now grown to 4 hectares.

MPI are aiming for eradication in New Zealand and they are going to put substantial resources into eradication in Waitakere wetland. They are committed to keeping the community well-informed and are required to give two weeks notification of spraying.

The attached fact sheet outlines the situation and the proposed activities to remove the *Salvinia*. For more information: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests/salvinia>

Aquatic weeds like salvinia can be spread around as small pieces attached to water equipment and clothing/footwear.

While salvinia has only been found in the wetland, users of other fresh-waterways in the area, for example Lake Wainamu, are asked to use the standard Check, Clean, Dry guidance: <http://mpi.govt.nz/funding-and-programmes/other-programmes/campaigns/check-clean-dry/>

BOOMS TO CONTAIN THE WEED

As a first line of defence, the Ministry has installed booms as a trial measure to prevent or slow the spread of the weed out of the current locations. Salvinia spreads by water currents and can also be spread by animals and on equipment such as boats and fishing gear.

The booms have been custom-made for Te Henga but are used extensively overseas and are similar to the booms used in containing oil spills. They form a floating wall or barrier to stop salvinia plants and fragments drifting further within the wetland.



HERBICIDE SPRAY TREATMENT

MPI has also decided to control the visible patches of salvinia with the herbicide Reglone which has the active ingredient 'diquat', diluted to 20 percent. This is further diluted for application. Diquat formulations have been used for safely removing aquatic pest weeds in New Zealand for over 50 years. Diquat has proved very effective against salvinia here and in the USA and Australia.

The plan is to initially apply the spray by ground-based operators – wading and kayaking.

ABOUT DIQUAT

MPI considered a range of herbicides to do this job and decided that diquat is the best option. The herbicide will be used along with a cellulose-based gelling agent to extend the time the diquat remains on the plants.

When diquat is absorbed by the weed, it produces peroxide which acts like a bleach and destroys the plant.

It will be particularly useful in Te Henga as salvinia floats and the whole plant is killed. Other plants in the wetland may be affected, but research has shown their roots remain largely unharmed and the plants should quickly regenerate.

MPI is confident that diquat is not harmful to human health when used at the required dilution rate for aquatic weed control. As a precaution only, in New Zealand there is a ban on swimming in treated areas for 24 hours after spraying.

In use, the concentration of diquat will equate to one part per million of diquat in water half a metre deep. The concentration of diquat rapidly falls after application, with the chemical usually falling to below detectable levels within one hour.

By way of comparison, chlorine, which is a more toxic compound, is used at rates of 0.5 to 1.5 parts per million in swimming pools.

Research carried out by NIWA found diquat is not toxic to fish, eels or freshwater mussels at the concentrations required for weed control. In addition field studies found no changes in shrimp, inanga, bullies and koura inside or outside areas treated for weed control.

Information about the NIWA study is here: <https://www.niwa.co.nz/sites/niwa.co.nz/files/import/attachments/diquat.pdf>

There has been a long history of using diquat as an aquatic herbicide in New Zealand, dating back to the 1960's in the Rotorua Lakes area. In these lakes, no harmful changes have been observed in fish populations and sediment samples analysed have found no traces of active diquat.

USE OF HELICOPTER SPRAYING

Ultimately MPI believes spraying using a helicopter may be the only way to ensure the completely successful removal of salvinia from the area. The dense nature of the salvinia infestations; the fact it is mixed in with other native water plants, and the access difficulties of the wetland, make targeted treatment by helicopter a recommended option.

MPI employs highly experienced contractors for pest weed control who would ensure that herbicide was applied in a targeted manner to reach only where it is required. Spraying would be undertaken only on calm days and using specific nozzles and helicopter height to ensure no drift of the spray.

NOTIFYING RESIDENTS

MPI will ensure residents of the Te Henga/Bethells Beach communities have opportunities to discuss any proposed helicopter spraying with the Ministry. Should helicopter spraying be adopted, residents will be well informed about proposed dates and times and given advice around time periods to remain out of the wetland.

February 2015

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
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