

WRPS NEWS

Issue 182

Newsletter of The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc.

August 2019

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

PO Box 15668, New Lynn, Auckland 0640

Email: wrps@waitakereranges.org.nz

Website: www.waitakereranges.org.nz

 Find us on Facebook facebook.com/TheWRPS

President's Report

The Local Body election process is underway. Enrolment packs will have been sent to all enrolled voters. Enrolment for the printed roll closed on the 16 August, however you can still enrol up to 11 October. Voting documents will be sent out between 20 and 25 September. Voting closes at midday on 12 October. For more information go to www.vote.nz

We congratulate Gary Taylor on being made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit. Gary was a foundation member of WRPS, and served the Society over many years as President, Secretary and committee member. Together with other committee members he was instrumental in researching protected landscapes in New Zealand, other countries and wrote many papers outlining how the ranges could be better protected. This culminated in the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act (2008).

The Society's history of the Heritage Area Act is moving forward since our vice-president Anna Fomison has done a lot of work to source and collate images for the book.

We learnt some time ago that our website which is currently hosted by Adobe will need to find a new host, and we have chosen to have an Auckland based website designer to migrate and host our website. It will continue to look much as it did, but it will be easier for us to add content and we will have a specialist IT person able to assist when things go wrong.

By the time you read this I will have attended the Environmental Defence Society (EDS) conference "Through New Eyes: Rethinking Landscape in Aotearoa". WRPS donated \$8000 to the EDS study of protected landscapes in New Zealand, and one case study will be the Waitakere Ranges. The study will be published later this year.

In this newsletter you can read about committee member Mandy Patmore who travelled to the Fox River in July to help with the clean up of the washed-out landfill. And Lindy Harvey writes about the native tree planting at Whatipu in July that will create a memorial grove in one of her

mother's favourite places. Our Heritage Area Coordinator wrote a very good submission on the Department of Conservation and Fisheries New Zealand proposed Threat Management Plan for Hector's and Maui dolphin.

Thanks for your continued support. It allows us to do our best to protect the ranges against existing and new threats.

John Edgar ONZM

Heritage Area Co-ordinator Report

The focus for July was a submission on the Hector's and Maui dolphin draft Threat Management Plan. This Threat Management Plan review by the Department of Conservation and Fisheries New Zealand was to request feedback on the current proposals to protect Maui and Hector's dolphins.

The plan overall is far too weak, over-complicated and fails to include the full range of measures recommended by the International Whaling Commission and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

The WRPS submission emphasized the need to extend current marine mammal sanctuaries areas to the 100m depth contour which encompasses the dolphin's habitat, prohibit exploration and extraction activities by oil, gas, and mining companies within the protected areas – of both current and future Crown Minerals Act permit holders. Also supporting a prohibition of commercial set-net and trawl fishing within the dolphin habitat, and advocated support for cameras on all fishing vessels for accurate data collection.

WRPS emphasizes the importance of New Zealand taking action to protect the critically endangered Maui dolphin and endangered Hector's dolphin.

Eva Wrassky-Bulmer

Trixie Harvey Memorial Planting at Whatipu



On Sunday 28th July 35 volunteers from Friends of Whatipu (FOW) and two local Rangers gathered on a small grassy hill in the Whatipu campground to take the first steps in creating a memorial site for the late Trixie Harvey. This small exposed hill, covered in dense kikuyu and some gorse, provides a beautiful panoramic view of Whatipu and the Lodge. Volunteers and Rangers Brendan Mackie and Duncan Emerson installed a large macrocarpa seat on the hill. From the seat you look over the wild beauty of Whatipu including the frothy Manukau bar, Cutter Rock, Ninepin Rock, dunes, wetlands, bush and the historic Whatipu Lodge. About 70 plants were planted on the day (harakeke, manuka, kawakawa, kowhai, karaka and puriri) and many weeds removed. This is the first step in creating a site honouring Trixie with future plantings and work planned. FOW are grateful to the Rangers for their assistance with this special project.

Following the planting, there were a number of heartfelt speeches and special thanks to everyone involved. Whatipu holds a special place in the hearts of Trixie and Bruce, they were foundation members of FOW in the late 1990s. Bruce gave an emotional speech about their strong connection to Whatipu, being the birth place of Bruce's mother Laura Gibbons. FOW wanted to honour Trixie for her significant conservation work in the Waitakere Ranges over many years. She served on many environmental committees over the years including the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society and helped establish the Waitakere network of environment groups. Many people miss her wonderful personal qualities of love, compassion, energy, and hard work. In the future we hope mature puriri and kowhai trees will shade 'Trixie's seat' and people will come out to Whatipu to remember her.

Lindy Harvey

OPERATION POSSUM BLITZ

We are now half way through the year, and it is the winter season. Not many of us are thinking about gardening, though it is a suitable time to plant trees. Possums know this

and will seek out young succulent leaves. It is a good idea to check newly planted trees for possum damage and remember to listen at night for the coarse cough of the possum. It could be time for trapping!

Let us remember it is not just our garden produce which possums consume. Native bird's eggs are on the possum menu. In the possum's native country Australia, it is up against dingoes, bush fires, snakes and less palatable vegetation. In New Zealand, possums have no predators and there is a continuous supply of food. It is up to us to reduce the possum numbers by trapping and hopefully this will increase our native bird population.

Some of my callers are newcomers to the area and I make sure everyone who leaves here has full knowledge of and how to set a trap safely and the correct bait to use. Some callers need to replace an old trap which may last 16 years. It is good news that over the last 6 weeks, there are 24 new Timms traps "working" in our community.

If you need a Timms trap, remember they are open all hours and weekends as well. Operation Possum Blitz is a voluntary project, which started ten years ago and is supported by Bio Security, Auckland Council, who keep them well supplied with Timms Traps at a concessionary price of \$40.

For Timms Traps:

June 817 8315 or Linda 817 433
Email: op.possumblitz@hotmail.com
\$ 40 to purchase a trap

The Fox River Clean-up

I was sitting in the comfort of my lounge one Sunday night in June watching *Sunday* on TV1, when a piece about Fox River came on. I had heard about the rubbish dump being washed away in the March flood but was horrified to hear that locals were still completely drowning in the mess. Some days there were as little as 3 volunteers helping out. With the school holidays looming, and a fairly uncommunicative teenager upstairs, I couldn't think of a better way for both him and I to spend the break. I figured it was a good wee reminder to him about what is important in this life.

By the next morning I had contacted the Westland DOC office and booked flights to Christchurch. Fortunately, we have family in Ashburton and my sister in law was keen to join us, so we drove over Arthurs Pass and down the coast. On our way, we received an email telling us that the weather forecast was bad, and it was unlikely that we would be able to go out on the river. As we were already on our way, we continued anyway and arrived around 6pm.

Since DOC had taken over the coordination of the project, things were now well set up for volunteers. We were given accommodation at the local Backpackers and arrived to a great welcome from the other volunteers who like us, had

come from all over the country.

It was a good thing that we decided to head down despite the threat of cancellation, as the next morning we were given the go ahead to get out on the river.



Initially things didn't seem so bad. The strategy was to go over an area a few times to ensure that nothing was missed, and the part we started with had pretty much been picked clean. Moving downstream however, things were very different. The floodplain in some areas was about 2 kms wide. Rubbish was EVERYWHERE. And not in convenient wee piles for you to pick up at your leisure. It was wrapped around tree branches and buried under mud and silt. Oh, and you can add cow pats into the mix too. Why cattle are allowed to graze in this spectacular landscape, in the water catchment, and in the river itself is a question that needs to be answered. But that's another discussion altogether.

The work was hard. It rained constantly, and we were discouraged from taking breaks as hypothermia was an issue if you stopped moving too long. Food was given out at lunch time, but the breaks were as short as possible. To be honest, everyone found it hard to stop working anyway – there was a constant mantra of 'I'll just pick up one more piece before I stop'.

At the end of the day it was difficult to walk away. There was just an endless amount of rubbish. I honestly feel like for every piece I picked up, there were 5 more buried underneath it that I missed. At times you would find a small piece of plastic sticking out of the ground, that when you tried to pull up you unearthed a treasure trove of rubbish. Most of what we picked up had been buried for about 20 years. Straws, small butter containers, millions of tiny pieces of polystyrene, bottles, medical waste – including syringes and needles at times and countless plastic bags.

Each day we went home filthy, soaked, sore all over and filled with a mix of despair and gratitude. Gratitude that came from sharing space and time with so many amazing people, who all shared a vision of a different future. Despair at the state of our world, and the fact that we seem to be a fighting a losing battle.

I made so many amazing friends, all from very different backgrounds. Kevin the Meat Assessor from Nelson, in his



60s, there for 5 weeks. Nelly the Dutch farmer's wife from Putaruru, also in her 60s, there for 3 weeks. A group of young vegans from Wellington who were making a short film about the clean-up and brought their own yeast to make bread every day.

Before we left, I walked up to the old dump – just down from the Glacier. It sits almost on the river

bed itself and is about 100 metres down from where the road was taken out. The road is significantly above the valley, so the magnitude of the flood that did such damage is unimaginable. Still, it happened. And the fact is, it could happen again anytime.



The Fox River clean-up is now drawing to a close, but the dump is still there, and has only been temporarily closed. Another significant flood could wash the remaining rubbish back down stream again.

Further up the coast in Westport, another rubbish dump which sits on the coast is also at risk of being opened by the ocean. I wish these were isolated sites, but the fact is, New Zealand seemed to think it was a great idea to put landfills right next to waterways. As sea levels rise, and weather becomes more unpredictable, we are likely to see more Fox Rivers.

I wish I had a nice outcome to my story, but the fact is I don't. We need to do better. We need to reduce what goes into the landfill. There is no such thing as 'away'. We have been burying our environmental shame for too long, and it is now starting to resurface. Clean Green Aotearoa? Not without an honest look in the mirror and a whole lot of action.

Oh, and the sullen uncommunicative teenager was awesome and made me very proud. There is still hope.

Mandy Patmore

WRPS Merchandise

We have a range of merchandise ranging from high quality reference books to t-shirts, tea towels, uniquely hand-crafted mugs & bowls, a Don Binney poster print and bird prints by Mandy Patmore.

For more details of the Society's merchandise please refer to the WRPS online shop at: www.waitakereranges.org.nz.

Thank you for your continued support.

Tea Towels & T-Shirts



Made from unbleached 100% Indian cotton, designed in West Auckland by Julia Moore and screen printed by Karousel.

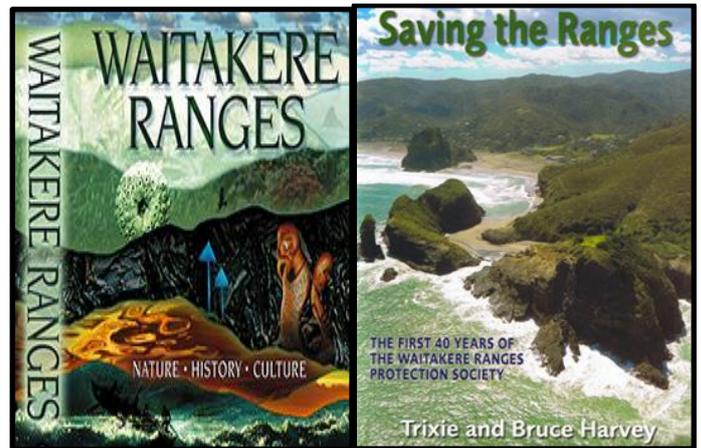
\$17 each + p&p

P&P costs vary according to number of tea towels ordered.

All T-shirts are 100% cotton except the grey marle which is 85% cotton /15% polyester.

Available in a variety of colours, sizes and cuts for men and women. Please refer to our website for more details.

Books



“Waitakere Ranges: Nature, History, Culture”

The story of the Waitakere Ranges is written by many authors who tell us from various points of view what it is about the Ranges that they love and value.

“Saving the Ranges: The first 40 years of the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society”

The book tells of the many people who have contributed to the conservation and protection of the Ranges and makes it clear that the work of the Society would not have flourished without the hundreds of members who have given their support.

Order / Payment

Online: Email your order information to treasurer@waitakereranges.org.nz, and make your payment online to:

[Books]: Kiwibank Acc No. 38-9010-0379887-02

[Other items]: Kiwibank Acc No. 38-9010-0379887-01

By cheque: Post your order details & cheque to:
The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society
PO Box 15668, New Lynn, Auckland 0640

YOUR COMMITTEE

President:	John Edgar Phone: 812 8555	president@waitakereranges.org.nz
Vice-President:	Anna Fomison Phone: 838 9665	amfomison@gmail.com
Secretary:	Position vacant	
Treasurer:	Sandra Jones Phone: 817 2788	treasurer@waitakereranges.org.nz
Newsletter Editor:	Orhan Er	orhaner8@gmail.com
Committee Members:	Mike Sweeney Mandy Patmore Monique Olivier Heather Tanguay	mikesweeney41@gmail.com phatworx@hotmail.com moniekolivier@gmail.com heathertanguay@slingshot.co.nz



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