

Regional Parks Annual Report

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009

Quality for Life



greater WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL | Parks



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Introduction

Welcome to Greater Wellington's *Regional Parks Annual Report*, a publication that informs you of the achievements and issues in Wellington's network of regional parks and forests.

Despite the distinctly average summer weather, total visits to our parks were only slightly lower than last year's record-breaking figures. However, these visits were taken by fewer people. 52% of our region's residents visited at least one regional park this year compared to 57% last year.

Our Regional Outdoors Programme (ROP) continues to be well supported with total attendance up from last year. It encourages new people into our parks and provides opportunities to work with volunteers, clubs and other councils.

Other events during the year included the Greater Wellington (GW) Environmental Awards, Restoration Day, two major Arbor Day celebrations, monthly Lion Foundation buggy walks and numerous community and corporate planting days. All these events provide excellent opportunities for promoting our regional parks.

The major project that started this year was the development of a draft Parks Network Strategy. The first stage of "information gathering" has occurred and officers are working on the first draft which will be presented to the Regional Sustainability Committee during October 2009.



View from a 4WD Sunset Tour



Winter in the Hutt Water Collection Area

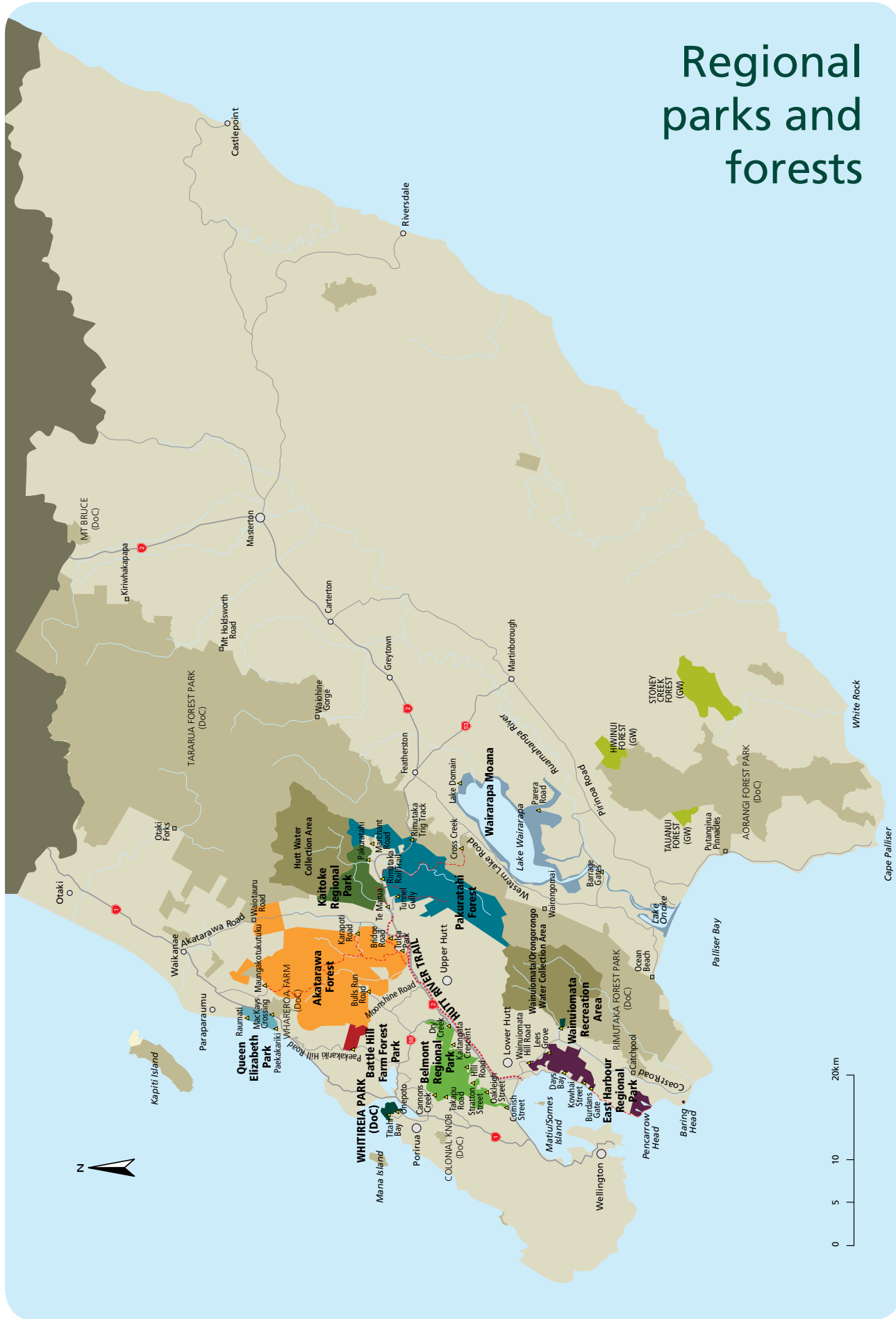


Learning to fly fish



Rimutaka Rail Trail

Regional parks and forests



Projects 2008-09

- There were an estimated 967,000 visits to our parks and forests over the past year, the first in which East Harbour Regional Park was included in the visit counts. If we exclude East Harbour, total visits were slightly less than 2008 but more than 2007
- A telephone survey of regional residents indicated that 52% of the population visited at least one of the regional parks in the past 12 months. This is a drop from last year's 57% level and a result which we believe reflects the poor summer weather. However, people now visit an average of two parks, up from last years 1.8
- The summer Regional Outdoors Programme (ROP) was completed with 57 events attracting over 15,500 people (1,700 more than 2008). Total attendance at Greater Wellington led events was 4,736, an average of 97 people per event
- We maintain strong relationships with our Parks 'Friends' groups and other community groups. Two issues of *Green Shoots* were published (a community newsletter) and sent to around 1,300 people and organisations
- The new Concessions Guidelines is now in effect. The new guidelines make it easier for small, non-commercial events and community activities to take place. Rangers are the main contact for such events, while larger events and commercial activities are centralised, and have fees attached
- The review of the Parks Bylaws was completed and following public consultation, the new Parks, Forests and Reserves Bylaws came into force (effective June 2009)
- The first of several sustainable land management plans was produced – for Battle Hill Farm Forest Park. The aim of these plans is to identify land types – generally within a farming environment – and how to best manage these to achieve the most productive outcomes while looking after key environmental values, eg, water quality
- Vandalism and security issues continue to be a problem in our parks and forests which require a lot of ranger time to resolve

How much does it cost?

Total Parks operational expenditure 2008/09: \$6.4m

Expenditure attributable to each park is identified in the relevant sections.

Parks Network Strategy



ROP participants in Belmont Regional Park

It's been a big year for Greater Wellington Parks. Thirty-three years after regional parks were first proposed for Wellington, we are re-examining why we have our parks, what we value about them and how they can continue to benefit the Wellington region long into the 21st century.

The first stage of preparing a Regional Parks Network Strategy has involved a lot of "information-gathering". We asked the general public, iwi, local and central government agencies, community interest groups, non-government organisations and clubs to give us their views on regional parks, as well as conducting other studies and reviewing relevant research. Interviews, meetings and workshops were carried out, 1,000 residents took part in a phone survey and several hundred postal surveys were sent out. A Recreation Study was commissioned and information was drawn from the Wellington Regional Strategy Open Space project currently underway.



Freshwater crayfish

According to the feedback the top four benefits of our regional parks are:

- Protecting and conserving our natural environment
- Helping people keep healthy, by providing places for respite and exercise, away from the pressures of urban living
- Bringing people together, as family groups and with community activities
- Helping build an informed and educated community, which is in touch with nature and our local history



North Island robin
East Harbour

The feedback provided Greater Wellington (GW) with clear messages about what the core elements are that make up the parks experience people want us to maintain into the future. Specific suggestions were made regarding how the conservation and education roles of parks could be enhanced.

We asked respondents to identify issues that they believed the regional parks could help address over the next 20 years. These include:

- Health and access – there is concern about increasingly inactive lifestyles and high levels of stress. Parks need to be accessible to a society which has a reduced level of car ownership
- Urbanisation – with more regional residents living in our cities, we need to ensure that quality open space is available to them
- A changing community profile – our society is becoming more diverse so there will be increased demand for non-traditional use of parks. We have an ageing population and also need to engage youth, the disabled and new migrants. Some community groups are struggling with ageing membership

Most respondents want to see parks at least maintained in size and number. However many would like to see more parks. Linking regional parks with other public spaces to establish ecological and recreational corridors is also highly desirable. Development in regional parks should be limited and carefully planned to fit in with the natural environment.

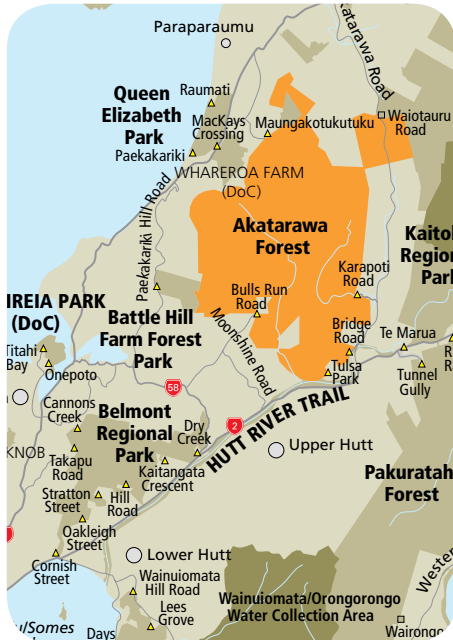
Councillors will consider the feedback in the first few months of the 2009/10 financial year.

Akatarawa Forest

PARK AREA: 15,400 HECTARES



Akatarawa
FOREST



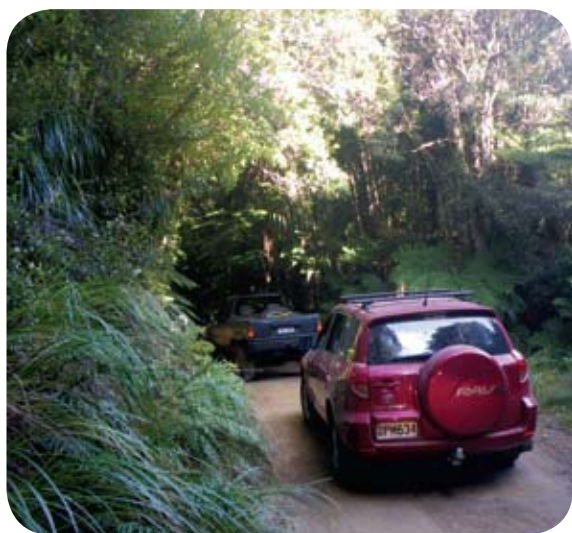
A future water collection area, this steep forested hill country contains original lowland podocarp and remnants of montane forest, exotic plantings, regenerating native forest and several wetlands. The bird and insect life is highly diverse with all the region's surviving indigenous bird species found here. The forest forms links and ecological corridors with other public land in the Akatarawa, Tararua, Rimutaka and Orongorongo ranges.

It is important for mountain biking (featuring the internationally renowned Karapoti Classic course), hunting and motorised recreation (4WD and motorcycling). The Cannon Point Walkway is popular for walking and running. We continue to work with the Akatarawa Recreational Access Committee (ARAC) to facilitate recreation in the forest and resolve management and planning issues.

- The ROP events included the 4WD *Back Country Akatarawa*, which was held in conjunction with the Cross Country Vehicle Club. The event attracted 56 vehicles for two "tagalong" trips through the forest from Upper Hutt to the Kapiti Coast and back again
- The annual Karapoti Classic event had over 1300 cyclists taking part in March this year
- Consents to enter the forest issued: 21 for Army / Police / driver training; 133 for 4WD clubs
- We continue to have problems with security and unpermitted use of the forest. This unauthorised access is probably a major contributor to the vandalism that a local contractor is experiencing. It also costs us in replacing the locks and gates
- Bird counts were completed for the first time in Akatarawa Forest. The most commonly recorded were tomtit, silvereye and grey warbler. Kākāriki and the nationally vulnerable New Zealand falcon were also recorded
- A biannual aerial survey for introduced insects and fungi highlighted an area of dead and dying exotic trees in the Hukinga. Also discovered was a large population of the critically endangered *Brachyglottis kirkii* in the Maungakotukutuku valley. These finds are good indications that our pest control is having a positive effect
- Monitoring staff remeasured seven permanent forest plots. Eight species of orchid were recorded in one plot. Little evidence of recent browsing damage was found, and a number of highly palatable species appear to be regenerating well in the area. The data will be added to the National Vegetation Survey database maintained by Landcare Research
- Mapping of the different vegetation types in the Whakatikei catchment was carried out. This work will provide us with greater knowledge of the composition of the ecosystems present and will allow us to make better informed management decisions

- Follow up spraying of previously controlled alder and strawberry dogwood infestations in the Hukinga was carried out
- A section of land on Bridge Road was cleared of weeds and we will work with the community and school groups to plant it
- Professional goat control operations in September and May culled 88 goats

Annual expenditure: \$228,000



4WD Back Country Akatarawa ROP event



Karapoti Classic



Pig hunting in Akatarawa



Surveying a permanent forest plot



Battle Hill
FARM FOREST PARK

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

PARK AREA: 502 HECTARES



A mix of pasture, plantation forestry, wetlands and a small remnant of native forest, Battle Hill is the site of the last significant confrontation between Maori and early colonial forces in the region. The combination of flat, rolling and steeper hill country make it popular for walking, horse riding, mountain biking, camping and picnicking

- A number of equestrian based events were held in the park. They ranged from the Makara Pony Club's cross-country and dressage event (with 100 riders) to club days for the Pauatahanui Pony Club
- The park hosted many school visits with groups of up to 170 children as well as the annual Parumoana Schools Cross Country event
- In October five orphaned lambs were available to be fed by children
- A new wetland was planted by 250 local school children on Arbor Day, substantially improving the available wildlife habitat and reducing hazards for livestock
- The new Battle Hill Heritage Trail received a "Highly Commended" in the Outstanding Project Award category at the NZ Recreation Association national conference
- A sustainable land management plan was produced for Battle Hill Farm Forest Park during 2008/2009. The plan details land capability classes within the park and divides the farm into land management zones. Actions that can be taken to improve soil conservation, riparian and restoration plantings and farming practices have been suggested and prioritised
- The draft Battle Hill Farm Forest Park management plan was released for a second round of public submissions in November. 43 submissions were received. Hearings were held in April, but the Regional Sustainability Committee is yet to complete deliberations on those submissions in order to finalise the plan
- New campground regulations were implemented during spring to improve safety and received positive feedback from campers. The new booking system helps moderate numbers during peak times and ensure that campers have a pleasant and enjoyable stay
- A line of possum traps was installed beside the stream through the bush remnant to slow the influx of possums from the private forest land opposite the park and to reduce our reliance on pesticides
- Recent rodent monitoring in the bush remnant showed that rodent tracking is reasonably high at 30%. This may be due to traps rather than toxins being used to control possums in the remnant. Toxins in bait stations will be used before spring to lower rat numbers nearer bird breeding time

- Volunteers from Mana Boat Club and Mana Lions checked and re-baited possum and mustelid traps throughout the farmland on a monthly basis
- Staff controlled large areas of holly and hawthorn in the gullies adjoining the bush reserve while a contractor targeted selaginella and tradescantia infestations alongside the stream

Annual expenditure: \$338,000



New Park Ranger Andrew Nevin helping with Arbor Day planting



Buggy walk



Filming in the front paddocks



ROP Farm day

Belmont Regional Park

PARK AREA: 3,691 HECTARES



Belmont
REGIONAL PARK



Based on a central plateau that is part of an ancient rolling peneplain, the park offers views over the Hutt Valley, Wellington and Porirua harbours. Its wide open spaces and hidden valleys make it popular for walking, tramping, running, mountain biking and horse riding. The park features the historic Korokoro Dam, World War II munitions bunkers and the original coach road from Lower Hutt to Pauatahanui. The 22km Puke Ariki / Haywards Korokoro Traverse takes in Boulder Hill (442m) and Belmont Trig (457m). The Friends of Belmont Regional Park and the Friends of Maara Roa remain very active advocacy groups who help to represent community views on planning & management issues.

- In addition to the several ROP events held in the park, other events throughout the year ranged from half marathons, rogaines and orienteering to various mountain bike and horse endurance events
- The *Friends of Maara Roa* group were joint winners of Greater Wellington's Rata Community Partnership Award for their work in bush restoration and predator control in the park
- Liaison work with the mountain bike community has continued. Voluntary work to upgrade and maintain the Danzig Track was carried out
- Fencing work on Waitangirua Farm and building maintenance work is progressing. Funding was available this year to carry out work on farm buildings, fences and farm domestic dwellings
- Press coverage during March reported recent sightings of whiteheads in Belmont Regional Park. This return is significant as whiteheads disappeared from the area about a century ago
- Council decided to classify Waitangirua Farm as a Recreation Reserve and to retain the conservation covenants after a public consultation process
- Pest plant control was carried out in the Korokoro Dam area, and in Sweetacres and Speedys Reserves. Species targeted included tradescantia, African club moss, common ivy, holly, Darwin's barberry, old man's beard and climbing asparagus
- A pest plant survey of the major forested areas of the park, i.e. Cannons Creek bush, Dry Creek, Speedys Reserve and Korokoro Valley was completed. The data will be used to prepare a new pest plant plan for the park, which will identify management priorities for the next five years
- Ongoing possum control was carried out in Cannons Creek, Dry Creek, Speedys Reserve and Korokoro Valley. An extension to the Korokoro Valley programme to include the western side of the catchment was established
- Monitoring of the Cannons Creek and Speedys Reserve possum control programmes showed that we achieved 0% Residual Trap Catch (RTC) and 2.3% RTC respectively. The result for Cannons Creek, where possum control is carried out by volunteers, was very pleasing
- Professional hunting operations have been carried out in Korokoro Valley and Dry Creek. The use of Judas goats is proving effective in keeping goat numbers low

- Rodent and mustelid tracking tunnel lines were installed in Korokoro Valley and the first monitor was carried out by members of Korokoro Environmental Group (KEG) in June. This monitoring will provide useful data about the effectiveness of the pest control techniques being used in the valley in terms of providing a safer breeding habitat for birds and other wildlife. The Korokoro Environmental Group also continued their restoration work in the Korokoro Valley

Annual expenditure: \$658,000



Friends of Maara Roa, joint winners of GW's Rata Community Partnership Award



Instructing Korokoro rodent monitoring volunteers



ROP Puke Ariki participants



Judas goat (note the tracking collar)



East Harbour
REGIONAL PARK

East Harbour Regional Park

PARK AREA: 2,020 HECTARES IN THREE SEPARATE BLOCKS



Beech/rata on the hills and lowland podocarp/broadleaf in the valleys of the Northern Forest provide the eastern backdrop to Wellington harbour and excellent walking, tramping and picnicking opportunities. The Parangarahu (formerly Pencarrow) Lakes Area contains the nationally significant freshwater Lakes Kohangapiripiri and Kohangatera, home to a wealth of native plants and wildlife. The Mainland Island Restoration Operation (MIRO) maintains an intensive pest control network in the Northern Forest.

- For the first time, visits to East Harbour Regional Park were counted. Over 170,000 visits were recorded, making it the second most visited park in our network
- MIRO were joint winners of Greater Wellington’s Rata Community Partnership Award for its impressive pest control and bush restoration work
- The annual *Butterfly Creek Night-time Madness* running event attracted around 350 participants

Northern Forest

- Another section of the Mackenzie Track in Butterfly Creek valley was upgraded during October as was the lower part of the Cheviot Road track
- A professional deer hunter reduced the number of deer in peripheral areas of the Northern Forest block not included in the ballot hunting area. 12 deer were culled during July and October
- At least some of the North Island robins that were released last year into the Mainland Island by MIRO are surviving and thriving. Some of the banded birds are regularly seen and one un-banded fledgling has been sighted
- Tawa fruit-fall plots were re-monitored with no possum damage to the fruit being found. This shows that the few possums surviving are having little impact on the availability of fruit for birds and for germination. Damage to fruit by rodents was also minimal
- Staff have continued work on controlling the invasive climber, climbing asparagus. They have also controlled other pest plants such as sycamore, poplar, old man’s beard, climbing spindleberry, holly and Japanese honeysuckle at several track entrances

Parangarahu Lakes Area (formerly Pencarrow Lakes Block)

- New signage was installed at the five entrances to the Parangarahu Lakes Area
- The NZ Historic Places Trust produced four information panels depicting the use of the old Pencarrow Lighthouse. They also mark the 150th anniversary of the lighthouse operating
- The descendants of Mary Jane Bennett, NZ’s first and only woman lighthouse keeper, celebrated the 150th anniversary of her employment at the country’s first purpose-built lighthouse at Pencarrow Head
- Two new restoration planting plots were established and planted out by MIRO volunteers

- The coastal area of Kohangatera was fenced to prevent entry by livestock. Cattle stops were installed on the lakes boardwalks to prevent stock crossing them
- A network of 72 mustelid traps was established in mid-October. Thirty-three mustelids (12 stoats, 20 weasels and 1 ferret), 20 hedgehogs and 38 rats have been trapped over the eight months since the traps were installed. It is hoped that this work will improve the breeding success of wetland birds

Annual expenditure: \$341,000



Mountain biker in the Parangarahu Lakes Area



ROP Giant Rata Journey participants



Cheviot track was upgraded



Pencarrow Lighthouse information panel



Hutt River Trail

LENGTH: 30KM



Running from Hikoikoi Reserve on the Petone foreshore to Birchville, Upper Hutt, the 30km Hutt River Trail provides easily accessible recreational opportunities. Linking to parks and sports fields and with tracks often on both sides of the river, this lengthy, flat and scenic terrain is not readily available in the western side of the Wellington region. Off-road links are planned to the Rimutaka Rail Trail and thus to the Wairarapa. Other stakeholders include the Rotary Clubs of the Hutt Valley, the Phoenix Trust, and the Upper Hutt and Hutt City Councils.

- The Regional Outdoors Programme included a number of events on the Hutt River Trail. They ranged from the old favourites: the Hutt River Gravel Grab, Bike the Trail (1654 participants), Have a Go Fly Fishing (which saw new members recruited for the fishing club); to new events: Walk the Trail (over 150 people) and the Stopbank Soiree (which showed off the new Strand Park stopbank). Kev the Wandering Kiwi also turned up with over 150 people taking part in a walk along the trail
- There were also lots of other events throughout the year. Hutt Valley Orienteering held two events at Belmont and Poets Park. The annual Hutt News fun run/walk and the Start Me Up womens fun run/walk/cycle both attracted hundreds of participants
- A buggy walk was held in December which saw 130 participants walk from Harcourt Park through Totara Park and back again
- Capital Multisport held a half and a full marathon along the river trail which attracted over 300 participants
- April saw the Petone Workingman's Club Charity Duck Race from Melling to Ewen Bridge and the Upper Hutt Cosmopolitan Club charity boat race at Whakatikei (1000 plastic tug boats)
- The annual Crazyman event was held in May with approximately 400 participants
- The Hutt Valley Rotary Clubs received a merit award in Greater Wellington's Rata Community Partnership Award for their work on the Hutt River Trail
- Arbor Day plantings were held with Hutt Valley High School and Fergusson Intermediate. They planted 300 and 250 native plants respectively. The enthusiasm levels were high from both schools
- Maidstone Intermediate held a river rubbish clean up day during September. Three dozen rubbish bags were filled plus car seats and other rubbish was collected
- Two visit counters were installed at County Land and Block Road during March. After only one month, visitor movements of over 10,000 were recorded at both sites
- Unfortunately trail bike riders continued to disrupt legitimate trail users throughout the year and numerous stolen or abandoned cars were removed from the area. Illegal dumping of rubbish and vegetation along the river berms also continues

- Toxic algae returned to the river in December. A two tiered sign system was put in place this year with the first warning signs erected in early December. A second stage sign was erected at the Silverstream Bridge during January
- 100 metres of river trail was installed behind Owen Street in Belmont, Lower Hutt, filling a gap in the marked route
- The TV show *Sensing Murder* filmed for half a day at Melling

Annual expenditure: \$63,000



Kids enjoying the ROP Kev the Wandering Kiwi event



ROP Beginners Guide to Fly Fishing



Buggies on the trail



Diplodinium trullifolium orchid

Kaitoke Regional Park

PARK AREA: 2,861 HECTARES



Kaitoke
REGIONAL PARK



Easily accessible podocarp/broadleaf and beech forests and a matai/totara remnant near Te Marua contain an abundance of native birds. Fish are plentiful and there are extensive opportunities to swim, picnic and walk near the Hutt and Pakuratahi rivers. Kayaking through the Hutt River Gorge is both scenic and challenging. There is a large, landscaped camping ground near the main entrance. Kaitoke Regional Park is a significant location for outdoor commercial filming, with the Lord of the Rings "Rivendell" site popular with visitors. Nearly half of metropolitan Wellington's water is drawn from the Hutt River and treated within Kaitoke Regional Park.

- Among the usual ROP events held at Kaitoke was the new *Rongoa Maori – Maori Medicine Walk*. There was such high demand for this event that we could have booked two more of the walks
- Two school camping groups of over 200 students camped at Kaitoke during February. March saw 9 tours of the Swing Bridge track for 168 Japanese students and four school tours with 216 students
- The Totara Park Scouts held their annual fundraising trolley derby at Te Marua with over 60 trolleys entered
- Access to the *Legolas* tree in Rivendell has been restricted due to concerns about its health. A plan to improve this high profile area of Kaitoke is in development
- The farming lease at Te Marua was renewed for 2½ years with a right of renewal of another 2½ years
- The annual kereru count in the campground saw a 70% increase on last years figures. The improvement is evidence that the pest control operations in the surrounding forested hills, where kereru nest, is of benefit to the bird life
- Vandalism at Kaitoke has continued with graffiti on signs, flax stolen from the Keith Spry Lookout, smashed toilet roll holders, a stolen pump and trail bikers riding at Benga Flat
- A new lookout overlooking the Stuart Macaskill Lakes, located south of the Te Marua Water Treatment Plant gates, was officially opened on 25 March 2009. The lookout features commanding views of the lakes and has been constructed using surplus or decommissioned water supply infrastructure. The lookout was built mainly to cater for the school tour groups who visit the Te Marua Water Treatment Plant although it is also open to the general public
- Staff carried out a comprehensive search for pest plants through the Te Marua bush remnants. The most common pest plants found were hawthorn, cotoneaster, broom, jasmine and privet. All pest plants found were controlled
- Professional hunting operations carried out in July and January culled 24 goats and 14 pigs

Annual expenditure: \$431,000



ROP Mountain Safety Bushcraft Course



Keruru at Kaitoke



ROP Ridge Track Adventure



Squeaking longhorn Beetle



Campground at Kaitoke

Pakuratahi Forest

AREA: JUST OVER 6,888 HECTARES



Pakuratahi
FOREST



Managed as a future water collection area, the forest comprises one large, steep river catchment. It forms an ecological link between the Hutt and Wainuiomata water collection areas and the Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges. The wetland at Ladle Bend, beech stands in the upper catchment and the only snow tussock in the Rimutaka Ranges are all regionally significant. Of national significance is the original railway line formation between Wellington and Wairarapa, now popular for biking, walking and picnicking. The area contains 775ha of exotic plantation forest.

- The ever popular ROP event *Rimutaka Rail Trail* ran twice over summer and the Mt Climie 4WD trip was booked out. Unfortunately the *Paws in the Park* event was cancelled due to bad weather
- A large rimu that was blown down was removed from the Mt Climie access road and donated to local iwi for carving
- New bird monitoring lines in Tunnel Gully have been established. Volunteers completed the first surveys in September. The most common species observed were grey warbler, fantail, bellbird and tui
- A biannual aerial survey for introduced insects and fungi showed the forest canopy to be in a very healthy state
- A surface of asphalt millings was laid on the entrance road to Tunnel Gully forming a hard surface similar to seal at a fraction of the cost
- The tunnels on the Rimutaka Rail Trail were cleaned of soot and inspected
- A professional hunting operation in June culled 41 goats

Annual expenditure: \$266,000



Swamp maire fruit



Participants on the ROP Rimutaka Rail Trail



ROP Mt Climie 4WD trip



Millings were laid on the Tunnel Gully entrance road to create a hard surface



Kapokapowai (giant bush dragonfly)

Queen Elizabeth Park

PARK AREA: 655 HECTARES



Containing the last remaining area of relatively unmodified dunes on the Kapiti coastline, Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP) offers easily accessible opportunities for walking, cycling, horse riding, group picnics, sports events and festivals. During the 19th century there were significant Maori villages at Wainui and Whareroa, and the park is rich in the histories of Tangata Whenua and Europeans alike. During WWII it served as a US Marine encampment and has been a public park since 1953. Facilities include the Wellington Tramway Museum, camping at Paekakariki and commercial horse riding. The Friends of QEP are active on several fronts.

- In addition to the usual ROP events, a new event – *Darwin's Birthday* – was held. It marked the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birthday and included a range of geology, botany and ornithology talks
- Two *Eventing Wellington* equestrian events were held at the park
- Volunteers managed to plant over 15,000 plants in the park during the planting season
- Staff helped the Friends of QEP group put together a successful application to the Department of Conservation Community Conservation Round for funding the extension of the QEP bush remnant. They were awarded \$26,000 towards the project
- A rare Gray's beaked whale beached itself in December and died. It was 5m long and weighed about a tonne. The local iwi gave a blessing before it was buried within the park
- The water supply system at the park required some work throughout the year. The main bore was replaced and we are investigating options to connect the drinking water supply to the water main at Raumati South
- An intensive sweep of the dunes searching for and controlling the pest plant boneseed was completed. Over six thousand boneseed plants were controlled. Control also continued on pampas, Japanese honeysuckle, German ivy, tradescantia, buckthorn, karo, blackberry and gorse
- A survey of the park for pest plants was completed. The data collected will be used to prepare a new pest plant control plan for the park which will identify pest plant management priorities for the next five years
- Night shooting of rabbits continued. An assessment of rabbit numbers carried out in May found very low numbers
- A volunteer trapped 13 stoats and 32 weasels in the park. He also culled 72 hedgehogs, 34 rats, 8 possums and 41 mice
- Rodent monitoring in the dunes has shown that rat tracking remains at 5% or below

Annual expenditure: \$720,000



A Gray's beaked whale beached itself in the park



Controlling the pest plant boneseed



ROP Darwin's 200th birthday



One of the many groups who visited QEP



Volunteer planting on the dunes

Wainuiomata Recreation Area

AREA: 338 HECTARES



Wainuiomata
RECREATION AREA



A peaceful and sheltered valley east of Wainuiomata, the Recreation Area is a popular spot for family outings, picnics and dog walking. There are numerous swimming holes in the Wainuiomata River and easy walking and mountain biking tracks along the valley floor.

Although the Recreation Area itself was once logged and most of the bush is now regenerating, it lies at the foot of one of the largest and most pristine lowland forests in the lower North Island (the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area).

- The ROP event *Kev the Wandering Kiwi* was once again popular with over 290 people attending
- A Honda Tree planting day was held with help from five Wainuiomata primary schools. They planted 1,500 native trees in the Triangle Paddock during September
- A corporate Honda Tree planting day was held in June with 500 trees planted around the Lower Dam education centre as part of the landscaping upgrades to prepare the area for opening to the general public in November 2011. The centre was painted and a new fence constructed to screen the ranger houses from public view
- Vandals continue to remove bollards from Reservoir Road which allows them to drive their cars around on the grass. Vandalism, graffiti and rubbish dumping continue to be an ongoing problem
- Tradescantia infestations on the river flats between the Lower Dam and the entrance gate were re-sprayed by professional contractors. This was another step towards the elimination of this invasive pest plant from the GW managed part of the Wainuiomata catchment
- Some of the tracks in the area were re-metalled and regular maintenance carried out
- Engineers carried out their six-yearly inspection of all Recreation Area structures and no major issues were found
- Some of the Rimutaka Forest Park Trust kiwi have made homes in and near the Wainuiomata Recreation Area. One bird was found 15m from the main walking access track. This bird was caught and released further back in the park. Appropriate signs have been installed to advise people to keep their dogs on leashes

Annual expenditure: \$59,000



Building a new fence around the Rangers' houses



Corporate Honda Tree planting



ROP Kev the Wandering Kiwi meets some friends



ROP Kev the Wandering Kiwi participants set out on their walk



Honda Tree Planting in the Triangle Paddock

Wairarapa Moana

PARK AREA: 7,800 HECTARES



Wairarapa Moana comprises the Wairarapa and Onoke lakes and their associated wetlands. It includes the third largest lake and one of the largest wetland complexes in the North Island, and is internationally recognised for its migratory birds.

Greater Wellington is one of the management partners in Wairarapa Moana, along with the Department of Conservation, South Wairarapa District Council, Rangitane o Wairarapa and Kahungunu ki Wairarapa. An Establishment Board of representatives of all the partners was set up in 2008 and has been planning the first stages for creating a wetland park.

Over the past year some progress has been made:

- A planting day held at Lake Domain was attended by over 70 local residents and stakeholders. 1,800 trees were planted beside Barton's Lagoon in an area that mature alder trees had been removed from last year
- Planting and a beach clean up were held at the Onoke Spit
- A draft "vision" for the project was developed
- A major cultural heritage study of the lakes was completed. Three key themes were described and assessed. These themes were:
 - Sites, features and areas of significance
 - Culture, customary and spiritual values
 - Relationships, stories and events
- A development concept plan for Lake Domain was drafted
- Improvements were proposed to the directional and interpretive signs around Wairarapa Moana
- A trial was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of controlling dense stands of mature alders by aerially spraying two different herbicides. The two herbicides were used separately at three different locations on the eastern lake shore. The effectiveness of the herbicides in killing the trees and the amount of unwanted by-kill will be analysed next year
- Staff carried out pest plant control work on Pounui Wetland on the western side of Lake Wairarapa. This relatively pristine wetland is under threat from invasion by willow and pampas
- A study of fish in Lake Wairarapa was undertaken during April and May by a contractor. Three sites were surveyed using five different trapping and netting methods. Eight native and three exotic fish species were captured, as well as two species of native crustacean. After short-fin eels, perch were the dominant large-bodied fish species found. The number and size of perch appear to have increased in the lake since 1991, this is bad news for the native fish species that they prey on

Annual expenditure: \$112,000



Pounui Wetland willow control



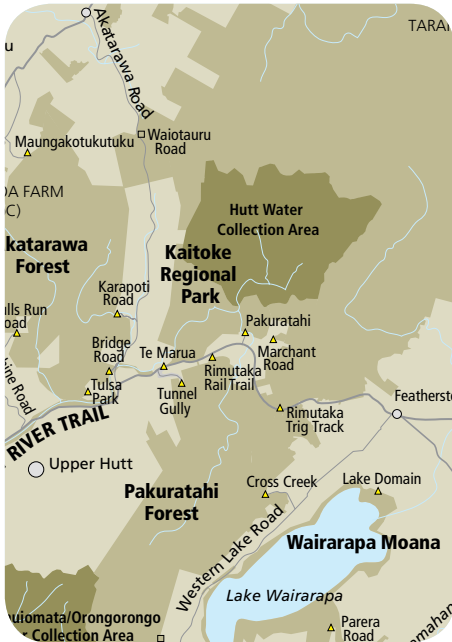
Lake Wairarapa alder aerial control trial



A stock control fence was built in Barton's Lagoon

Water Collection Areas

Hutt



- Bird monitoring carried out in the Eastern Hutt showed that bird numbers have decreased again, probably due to it now being five years since the last 1080 operation. However, two nationally vulnerable species, North Island kaka and New Zealand falcon continue to be present in the area
- Annual hinau fruit-fall plot monitoring showed that rodents had browsed a large proportion of the fruit that had fallen to the forest floor this year, but signs of possum browse remain low
- A biannual aerial survey for introduced insects and fungi found the forest canopy and scrub layer to be in a very healthy state
- A professional hunting operation in January culled 17 goats, 9 deer and 1 pig

Annual expenditure: \$9,000

Encompassing the headwaters of the Hutt River at the southern end of the Tararua Ranges, the Hutt Water Collection Area (WCA) supplies nearly half of the Wellington urban region’s drinking water. It contains extensive areas of unmodified silver beech, red beech, and valley floor podocarp forest, alpine tussock lands, alpine wet turf and sub-alpine sphagnum bog. One of the few areas in the region containing southern rata, the forest is home to a great variety of indigenous forest birds, including the rare kaka, kakariki and NZ falcon (karearea). Some hunting and tramping takes place here but the terrain is rugged and mountainous, broken by many streams and narrow, steep-sided ridges. The hilltops are extremely exposed and have a reputation for high winds, fog and sudden weather changes.



A successful pig hunt



An awesome winter's day



**Wainuiomata
Orongorongo**
WATER COLLECTION AREA

Wainuiomata/Orongorongo



The lush native forests and clear rivers of the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo water collection areas were recognised early on for their water supply potential. In 1878 a dam was constructed and a pipeline laid to Wellington. Today the Wainuiomata Water Treatment Plant supplies about 20% of the water used by the four cities in the region. The forests in the Water Collection Area include superb rata podocarp, sub-tropical emergent forest above a canopy of hinau, kamahi, rewa rewa and tree ferns. Some black beech is found on drier sites, and silver beech on the high ridge-tops.



A rata had to be cleared from the Orongorongo access road

- The Wainuiomata Water Catchment Area (WCA) walking tours continue to be very popular with high numbers of bookings
- Unauthorised access continues to be a problem with people being asked to leave on a regular basis
- The annual hunting ballot attracted a lot of interest with over 70 entries. The hunters managed to cull 6 goats, 4 pigs and 6 deer
- Tawa fruit-fall plots were remeasured in the forested area and no possum damage was found. This is good news as it means that possum numbers in this area must be low. Rodent damage was also low at 6%
- The Rimutaka Forest Park Trust released kiwi close to the southern boundary of the Wainuiomata WCA in April. Nine kiwi have been tracked and currently reside at the head of Georges Creek
- A biannual aerial survey for introduced insects and fungi showed that the forest canopy was in a very healthy state. However an area of severe beech forest wind-throw was observed
- Research on the Wainuia snail in the Wainuiomata WCA was completed by a snail expert. In comparison to data recorded in 1990, there were fewer live snails and damaged shells, but more whole shells and eggs found. The higher number of eggs, combined with a smaller number of damaged (preyed on) shells suggests that the recently increased predator control is having a positive effect
- An underwater survey of the aquatic flora of the recently-established lower dam lake detected 18 exotic and 8 native aquatic plants growing in the lake
- Professional hunting operations were carried out in July, October, January and June. A total of 41 goats, 33 pigs and 14 deer were culled
- We have continued to carry out intensive and comprehensive pest control within the Wainuiomata Mainland Island
- Bird monitoring data from this year shows that bird numbers in the Wainuiomata Mainland Island continue to be significantly higher than in our non-treatment area, indicating that bird populations are benefitting from the ongoing pest control

Preparation for new parks

Whitireia Park



- Together with Ngati Toa, we have been looking at ways of jointly managing the park in the future
- Maintenance work was carried out on the forest remnant fence above Onehunga Bay
- Gorse in the grazed areas was controlled
- Shooting of rabbits and hares was carried out

Annual expenditure: \$14,000



Onehunga Bay Care Group planting day



Onehunga Bay Care group dune planting

Water, air, earth and energy – elements in Greater Wellington’s logo combine to create and sustain life. Greater Wellington promotes **Quality for Life** by ensuring your environment is protected while meeting the economic, cultural and social needs of the community

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