



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2010

GREEN SHOOTS

Green Shoots goes into cyberspace!

The next issue of *Green Shoots* will be an e-newsletter, emailed in June and December to *Green Shoots*' subscribers.

"It's a big change for us but there are great benefits – we'll be able to provide easy links through to more information and it'll save paper, which is good for the environment," says Amanda Cox, Parks' Marketing and Design Manager.

Let us know your email address: Please email parks@gw.govt.nz to go on our e-newsletter mailing list. Subject line: Green Shoots.

No email address? Please phone 04 830 4147, letting us know that you don't have an email address, and we'll continue to send you a hard copy.

Parks' achievements 2009-10

Check out the *Regional Parks Annual Report*, detailing Greater Wellington Parks' performance over the past financial year.

Highlights include the purchase of Baring Head, work on the parks network plan, the Great Outdoors summer events 2010 programme, and achievements in improving biodiversity within the network through pest control and planting days.



Copies of the report are available in libraries throughout the region. You can also download a copy at www.gw.govt.nz/plans in the "document library" or call 04 384 5708 for a hard copy.

Baring Head

The land has been purchased, a Friends group established, tracks developed... Baring Head will soon be open for everyone to enjoy



Baring Head, looking towards Wellington

Things have been happening rapidly since this iconic piece of land – which includes the lower reaches and mouth of the Wainuiomata River and much of the coastal escarpment – was purchased by a Greater Wellington-led consortium in June.

Staff at Greater Wellington have worked hard to make the area safe for the public and establish relationships with the new Friends of Baring Head Charitable Trust. We have also been working closely with our funding partners – Hutt City Council, the Department of Conservation and the Nature Heritage Fund – to assess the values and opportunities presented by this new addition to East Harbour Regional Park.

Public consultation is also underway. Fifty-seven people attended a workshop at Petone Workingmen's Club in late November to learn more about the area and contribute ideas for recreation and tourism at Baring Head. A report from the workshop and other feedback will be available in March 2011 and will feed into the formal management plan process for Baring Head, which will take place later in 2011. Greater Wellington is also carrying out work regarding the best ways to protect the cultural heritage and ecology of Baring Head.

For information on Baring Head and its official opening on 13 February 2011, see www.gw.govt.nz/baring-head.

New Council

Having good relationships with environmental volunteer groups is important to Greater Wellington and the election of a new council provides an opportunity to build on this, says Chair Fran Wilde.



Four new Councillors have joined Greater Wellington: Daran Ponter for Wellington, Jenny Brash for Porirua-Tawa, Gary McPhee for the Wairarapa and Paul Swain for Upper Hutt. Fran Wilde (left) was re-elected as Chair and Peter

Glensor as Deputy Chair.

The new Council has developed a committee structure based on the four well-beings, with Cr Nigel Wilson (right) appointed as Chair of the new Social and Cultural Wellbeing Committee (its responsibilities include regional parks).



Chair Wilde says we're in a time of positive change for the regional parks network. "The Baring Head purchase is a significant addition to the network and we're all excited about its official opening in February. Plus the handover of Whitireia Park management to Greater Wellington is likely to happen next year. Parks' community groups will play a vital role in helping us to ensure that these new additions meet the community's needs."

Cr Wilson says that the Social and Cultural Wellbeing Committee, and indeed the wider Council, will continue to support and encourage community volunteers. "We'll be working to strengthen our relationships – I'm certainly looking forward to working more closely with Friends groups."

Wairarapa Moana update

It's been quite a year for the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Park

The Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Park project had a successful launch in June with a week of activities including a planting day, a ceremony at Kohunui Marae in Pirinoa and an open day with display and mini-lectures in Featherston.

You can find out more about Wairarapa Moana at *He pātaka kai, He pātaka kōrero – Stories about a lake and its people* – an exhibition that goes until 7 May at Aratoi – Wairarapa Museum of Art & History, Bruce St, Masterton.

www.gw.govt.nz/wairarapa-moana-wetlands-park

The biggest planting season ever!

Here are some highlights from this year's planting season...

10,000 new plants at Queen Elizabeth Park



A staggering 10,000 plants were planted in just three hours at Queen Elizabeth Park in August.

This massive planting day was organised by Greater Wellington to mark 10 years of Greater Wellington's Take Care programme, which began in July 2000 to reverse the loss of the region's biodiversity.

The community support was incredible with 270 people mucking in, including Friends and Take Care groups, staff from Greater Wellington and the Department of Conservation, Greater Wellington Councillors, local Scouts, and members of the public.

A wonderful effort from all involved – this event will serve as benchmark for future mass-plantings.

Photo: Titahi Bay's Sheryl McCormick, one of many volunteers who helped plant 10,000 plants in three hours at Queen Elizabeth Park

Poplar Avenue plantings

Queen Elizabeth Park was the venue for another biggie – this time in Raumati South, where planting days to restore the Poplar Avenue wetland took place from May to August.

The turnout for the first planting day was fantastic, with over 100 people (right). There was a festive atmosphere including a band and even bagpipes. Morning tea was generously donated by Pak 'n Save Kapiti.



Other planting days followed involving the community, corporate groups, schools and Community Max trainees. A total of 16,000 plants were planted over the season.

The planting days were organised by the Raumati South Residents Association with support from the Department of Conservation's community conservation fund and Greater Wellington.

Friends of Maara Roa celebrate 10 years

It was a cold start to the day but that didn't stop more than 60 people attending the Friends of Maara Roa's 10th Anniversary celebration in September.

The celebrations included a welcome from Greater Wellington Councillor Peter Glensor, a blessing from Toa Waaka of Ngāti Toa Rangatira and the unveiling of a plaque by the then-Porirua Mayor (now a Greater Wellington Councillor) Jenny Brash and the then-Mana MP Luamanuvao Winnie Laban. Following morning tea, participants went on a nature walk and took part in a planting session.

The event was a wonderful way to celebrate the huge amount of work that the Friends of Maara Roa have been doing to restore native bush to Porirua's Cannons Creek. Here's to another 10 years!

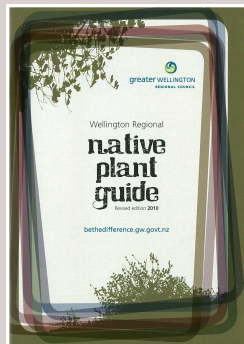
Native plant guide out now

Trying to decide which native plants to grow in your garden? Or could you do with a plant guide for community restoration planting?

Then Greater Wellington's new, improved *Wellington Regional Native Plant Guide* is just what you've been looking for!

Plants that are native to an area have advantages: they are adapted to local conditions and therefore likely to perform better, maintain unique local characteristics, and they provide food and homes for local wildlife.

The guide was first published in 1999 and sold more than 22,000 copies. The 2010 edition is fully revised and full of practical up to the minute advice, clear text, photos, and maps that will inspire you to plant native plants that are local to your part of the Wellington region.



Go to www.bethedifference.gw.govt.nz and click on "Biodiversity", then "Native Plant Guide" to check out an electronic version of the guide.

The guide is available from all good bookstores and garden centres or from any Greater Wellington office. Recommended retail price \$9.95.

Apply for a concession online

Applying for a concession in our regional parks and forests has just become easier. Now you can apply online for events or activities that are commercial or for more than 30 people. The online application process is simple, straightforward and will keep you well informed along the way.

www.gw.govt.nz/parks

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A real champion for the environment

The Friends of Maara Roa's Neil Bellingham has been recognised for his outstanding environmental work with an Encore Award.

Neil (right) was the joint winner of the Community Partnership Award, one of eight awards presented at the Greater Wellington and Department of Conservation's inaugural Encore Awards in November, honouring environmental achievers in the Wellington region.



Neil has been contributing to conservation and restoration in the Wellington region for 30 years, as a founding member of the Friends of Maara Roa – which is restoring the Cannons Creek area of Belmont Regional Park; with the Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet; and through the Trees for Survival nursery at Porirua College, which he set up in 2001.

Neil's work for the Friends of Maara Roa includes being instrumental to the creation of a restoration plan; carrying out a species survey; preparing the annual planting and monitoring plans; and preparing for, leading and teaching regular volunteer Friends as well as corporate groups, students and other community groups to carry out these plans.

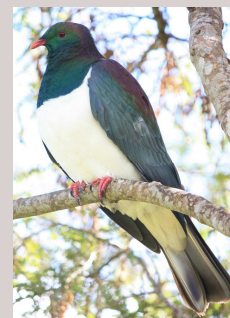
The difference between Cannons Creek now and how it was in the 1990s is marked. "The shrubs that were planted 10 years ago are now twice my height. And the increase in birdlife is incredible. I see dozens of tui and frequent pairs of kereru – and it pleases me every time I'm in the valley," says Neil.

Well done, Neil! You're a real champion for the environment!

Kereru comeback

"Seeing dozens of kereru – sometimes more than a hundred – in the air while walking in Kaitoke Regional Park is a fantastic sight," says Greater Wellington Biodiversity Monitoring Advisor Owen Spearpoint.

Since 2002, the average number of kereru (NZ native wood pigeon) counted in the park over one hour along a 1km route has increased from 29 to 112.



"In the spring, kereru come to the park to feed on the new buds and shoots of native ribbonwood and kowhai and the exotic willow trees, tree lucerne and broom. These species allow the kereru to take in essential nutrients and gather reserves for the coming nesting season. However, possums raid kereru nests and eat eggs, chicks and occasionally adult birds," says Owen.

"The good news is that we're seeing increased nesting success, which has meant an increased number of birds in the area. We think that many of the birds are likely to be coming from native forests surrounding the Kaitoke basin where Greater Wellington has carried out regular possum control."

Owen says that some of the kereru may even be coming from within the Rimutaka and Tararua ranges to feed in the park. "It looks as though Kaitoke Regional Park is becoming a top feeding spot for kereru from the central part of the Wellington region – it's a great result for our possum control work."

A Great Outdoors summer

It's going to be a superb summer in regional parks and forests, and volunteers will be working side-by-side with Greater Wellington to make it even better

There are 64 events in the Great Outdoors summer events 2011 programme. And with events ranging from guided nature walks and day tramps through to fly fishing and gliding, there's something for everyone.

Greater Wellington couldn't do many of these events without the help of so many knowledgeable people volunteering their time, says Amanda Cox. "The feedback from participants is always great. They really appreciate the insights and expertise offered by volunteers, who have helped so many people discover just how much our regional parks have to offer."

MIRO will lead the *Giant Rata Journey* in East Harbour Regional Park (20 Feb), the Friends of Belmont Regional Park will take you from *Creek to Peak* (22 Jan) and down the Old Coach History Trail (13 March), and the Friends of Maara Roa will help you *Explore the Real Cannons Creek* (29 Jan) and lead you to fantastic views in the *Three Cities Bush Corridor* (6 March) walk. The Kapiti and Hutt Valley Angling Clubs, the Gliding Club and the Deerstalkers are all hosting open days, while experts such as Graeme Jupp (*Rimutaka Rail Trail*) and George Gibbs (*Lighthouse & Lakes*) will educate and entertain with their knowledge and stories.

Places are filling up fast for many Great Outdoors events so check out the programme and book ASAP: www.gw.govt.nz/events.



The Hutt Valley Angling Club, hosting the Beginners Guide to Flyfishing

The community comes through for Whitireia

There has been a fantastic display of goodwill towards Whitireia Park following February's devastating fire

"The fire was a terrible start to the year but the public outcry, followed by great attendances at our planting days, has been heartening and shows how important the park is to the wider community," says Angus Hulme-Moir (right) coordinator of the Onehunga Bay Care Group. (Onehunga Bay is on Whitireia Park's north side.)



Restoration efforts have indeed been impressive. The care group secured support from the Whitireia Park Board and Greater Wellington, resulting in about 7,000 plants, most of which were planted on two community planting days – one in June and the other in July.

"There's so much goodwill out there – we had around 100 people at our first community planting day, where we managed to put about 3,200 plants in the ground. The rest were planted in the second community planting day and a few smaller planting days involving corporate and school groups," says Angus.

And the restoration work has continued beyond the planting season – Greater Wellington has just completed the first of two aerial spraying operations to destroy regenerating gorse in the burnt areas of the park and encourage the growth of native plants. The second spraying operation is scheduled for autumn 2011.

Greater Wellington will take over the operational management of Whitireia Park on 1 March 2011.

www.gw.govt.nz/onehunga-bay-restoration-group



The community out in force to restore Onehunga Bay after the Whitireia Park fire

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