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Street Address _____

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Postcards
Number of packs (5 cards per pack)

Total at \$5 per pack (incl p&p) \$ _____

Mugs
Number of mugs

Total at \$35 per mug (incl p&p) \$ _____

T-Shirts - Please write the number you need for each size in the boxes below:
S M L XL

Total at \$30 each (incl p&p) \$ _____

TOTAL payment \$ _____

Please send your order to Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, P O Box 15668, New Lynn, Waitakere City. Please enclose your payment with your order. Thank you for your support.

Support the Society by buying a T-shirt, mug or set of postcards!

The warmer weather will be returning soon so now is a great time to order a new Waitakere Ranges Protection Society T-shirt! Printed front and back, they are NZ - made in striking turquoise cotton. T-shirts cost just \$30 each (including postage & packing). Just order the number you need on the form above.



MP Lynne Pillay in her WRPS T-shirt

Make sure you always have a card on hand by ordering a set of five postcards featuring winning entries in the Waitakere Ranges Postcard Competition, including this one by Jeremy Roberts of Henderson Valley Primary.



Or treat yourself or a friend to one of these beautiful handpainted mugs. These stunning mugs have been uniquely designed for the Society by Karekare potter Lynda Harris and have proved hugely popular. The mugs are individually crafted and painted to show the bush covered ranges and a view to the sea with a splendid kereru admiring karaka berries. The mugs cost \$35 each, including p&p and \$10 from each sale goes to the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society. Mugs are made to order so please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.

Sender:
The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society
PO Box 15668
New Lynn
Waitakere City



Waitakere Ranges
Protection Society Inc

news

P O Box 15668, New Lynn, Waitakere City
www.waitakereranges.org.nz

Issue 127 August 2005

Your President's Report

Being in Scotland in June throughout the final deliberations of the Councils over the Heritage Area legislation was difficult, but the outstanding commitment by WRPS members, and the leadership of Kath and Anna carried the day, and I cannot thank you all enough for carrying the project forward so successfully. The few last minute problems that the bill has encountered are inevitable for such landmark legislation, but we are now faced with the parliamentary elections as a major hurdle before the bill can have its first reading in the new parliament.

It is confirmed that Labour, the Greens and the Progressives are fully supportive of the Heritage Area Bill. However those of you who have read the National Party's environmental policy that promises to tear the RMA apart, to severely reduce communities' ability to manage their resources, to abolish legal aid for objectors, to remove treaty provisions in the act and much more, will know that such policy will set the country back at least 20 years, to the dark days of "Muldoon" and "Think Big".

You might remember National's environmental spokesman, Nick Smith telling a public meeting in Waitakere earlier this year that legislation to



protect the Waitakere Ranges was not necessary as the RMA would be more than adequate to do the job. Even under the present provisions we knew this not to be true. Now National are promising they will **not** support the Heritage legislation and that, if elected, they will further weaken the RMA, it has become clear the public was being misled.

At present the Society is in a very strong position and has more projects progressing than at any time in the past few years, and many of them are updated in this newsletter.

We have successfully resolved our appeal of the five Waitakere dams consents through mediation with Watercare Services and the Auckland Regional Council, and it will be wonderful to see water flowing again in the streams below the dams when the compensation flows are commenced. A full report on this will be made in the next newsletter. Our expert witnesses are currently preparing evidence for the Swanson Structure Plan appeals to be heard in November, and the case will be the biggest and most complicated that the Society has undertaken. We are raising funds for the case at present and any donations earmarked "Swanson SP" will be most gratefully received.

Once again thank you all for your contribution towards the Heritage Area bill over the past years. The next few months will be very critical but I hope that in our next newsletter we can report that the bill has had its first reading in parliament and has gone to select committee.



John Edgar, President

Welcome to your Spring Newsletter

Inside you'll find reports on our recent walks and updates on some of the issues we are currently involved with. We also invite you to submit your questions about the Waitakere Ranges and we'll use our contacts to try to get you an answer. If you'd like to get more involved in any way please get in touch. All our contact details are included in the inside back cover or you can write to Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, PO Box 15 668, New Lynn, Waitakere City. Best wishes, *Kath* - editor@waitakereranges.org.nz

WRPS joins voices against seabed mining

The Society has joined the Green Party, Waitakere Forest & Bird and KASM (Kiwis Against Sand Mining) in their opposition to mining the seabed off the West Coast of the North Island for iron ore and other minerals. One company is already prospecting in a 1,270 sq km area for ferruginous sand; the black, volcanic sand which can be 40% iron ore. Other companies have also filed or are about to file applications for prospecting. One application, initially declined but eligible for reapplication, referred to an area of 3,617 sq km of seabed from New Plymouth all the way up to the Kaipara Harbour.

Under a prospecting licence a company can remove up to 1 cubic meter of sand every 24 hours. However should the results of the prospecting prove commercially attractive the companies would be applying for resource consents to remove tens of thousands of tons of black sand by sucking it from the sea bed and then processing it to remove the iron and other minerals. Because of technical requirements the mining has to be done in 25 to 70 meters of water; very close to the coast and to the beaches.



Image courtesy of DOC

The ecological consequences are unknown and not researched. NIWA only recently commenced a 15-year study of the marine environment so we do not even have any baseline data. The nature of seabed mining suggests it will cause removal of organisms and disruption to habitats and ecosystems. In addition the area of interest to the seabed mining companies coincides with territories of the critically endangered Maui dolphin.

We are currently dependent upon the political will of decision makers to decline any consent applications for full-scale mining. Chris Carter, Minister for Conservation under the current Government has said he would veto any application. The Auckland Regional Council have also indicated their opposition to the activity in their region.

To find out more visit www.blacksands.org.nz or call Waitakere KASM organisers Sara Carbery on 09 8128 272 or Fiona Anderson on 09 8128 815 or email stodbery@nznet.gen.nz

Waitakere Bill delayed

As reported in the NZ Herald in recent weeks, the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Bill will not now get its first reading in Parliament before the House rises for the general election. This is because of a technical boundary issue in part of the proposed protected area under Rodney District Council's jurisdiction. Rodney District Council need to renotify the landowners in the proposed protected area and there is not time for this process to be completed and for the Bill to be introduced to the Parliament. The Bill will now be introduced to the House after the general election.

Any Questions?

We certainly don't have all the answers to the questions you might like answered about the Waitakere Ranges but we can usually find someone who does. We're currently hunting out an answer to committee member Colleen Pilcher's question...

What are all the te reo Maori names for the different stretches of the Waitakere River?

Send us your questions and we'll track down the answer for you and publish it in a future newsletter. Send your questions to Any Questions, WRPS, PO Box 15 668, New Lynn, Waitakere City or email editor@waitakereranges.org.nz

Meet your committee - Denise Yates

Denise Yates was co-opted onto the committee last year, and elected at the recent AGM. However she is not new to the WRPS committee. Denise was on the committee prior to becoming a Waitakere City councillor from March 2001 to October 2004.



Denise has lived with her partner at Huia for 20 years, after 23 years in the Waikato where she and her children tramped the surrounding hills, tramped and skied at Ruapehu, and sailed on the lakes and shores of the upper North Island. She is a life Member of the Waikato Tramping Club. Her childhood hills were the Rimutakas, but she says the Waitakeres are truly the place the poet speaks of when he says "one place should prove beloved over all."

As a Waitakere City councillor Denise was vice-chairperson of the Environmental Management committee and the Hearings committee, and worked towards the realisation of our dream of legislation to protect the Waitakere Ranges in perpetuity. Though not re-elected in last October's election she continued to work towards the exciting outcome of all three local Councils voting to send a Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Bill to Parliament.

Much of Denise's time these days is spent in her roles as a member of the Auckland Conservation Board (just re-appointed for a second term) and as Trustee of the Ecomatters Environmental Trust, the Keep Waitakere Beautiful Trust and the Keep New Zealand Beautiful Trust. She is a committee member of the Huia Cornwallis Ratepayers and Residents Assn and has just joined Friends of Whatipu. Denise is also a Justice of the Peace and a Civil Union Celebrant.

Denise has been active in many groups seeking change in society, but says her passion has always been the environment and conservation.



Your Committee:

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- Vice-President: Anna Fomison
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WWW.WAITAKERERANGES.ORG.NZ

Bush watch

Spring is almost upon us, and high on my list of priorities for the second half of September each year is a sunny-day visit to the very western end of the Te Aute Road ridge in the Bethells Valley.

The kowhai should be in full flower and it's a glorious sight. The best in the whole of the Waitakeres in my opinion. Park your car and walk along the road so you can listen to and watch the dozens of tui noisily working the flowers. In some years there are also masses of white clematis flowers among the bright yellow of the kowhai. Right on the roadside there are a couple of wonderful old pohutukawa with huge reclining branches, covered in interesting epiphytes, and if you wonder about a tall northern tree rata that doesn't look quite right, have a closer look at the leaf fall on the road. It is actually a hybrid tree rata/pohutukawa. I may see you there!

Sandra Jones



Image courtesy of Tony Dunn

Meet the candidates

A pre election meeting has been organised for you to hear what the different parties competing for your vote in the election will do to protect the Waitakere Ranges and Auckland's Wild West Coast.

**7.30pm Wednesday 31st August,
Kelston Community Centre**

Speakers, including WRPS President John Edgar, will speak briefly on the values of the Waitakere Ranges and the Coast.

Candidates will then have ten minutes each to explain how they see protection being achieved or enhanced. This will be followed by a question and answer session between the audience and the candidates. It is hoped all the major parties will send representatives and candidates for the Waitakere electorate have been invited.

Sustainable Living

The Sustainable Living Centre in New Lynn is running seminars in August and September which may be of interest to Society members.

These include:

Design a green home Wed 31 Aug 6-8pm with Johann Bernhardt Building Biology & Ecology Institute (BBE)

Having the sun's help in your home Wed 14 Sept 6-8pm with Johann Bernhardt Building Biology & Ecology Institute (BBE)

Propagating Native Plants Wed 24 Sept 6-8pm - with Richard Maine Unitec Lecturer, School of Natural Sciences

Cohousing and Environmentally Sustainable Development Sat 28 Sept 10-12pm with Lynette Loffel Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood Seminars cost \$10 (\$15 where materials are provided) and bookings are essential. Phone 826 0555 or email slc@ecomatters.org.nz

Shorebird seminars

There are a three shorebird courses being held at Miranda in the coming months:

Protecting New Zealand Dotterel and other shorebirds, 7 September to 9 September '05
Cost: \$200.00 including two nights accommodation and food.
Tutor: John Dowding.

Shorebird Identification Workshop
Saturday 19 - Sunday 20 November '05
This course offers a blend of theory and practical field identification experience.
Cost: \$150.00 includes one night accommodation and food
Tutors include Adrian Riegen & Keith Woodley.

Residential Field Course 14-19 January '06
This annual six day course is well established and popular. Cost: \$ 450.00 includes all accommodation and food.

Places on each course are limited.

For further details contact:
Miranda Shorebird Centre
283 East Coast Road
RD3 Pokeno
Phone 09 2322781
email:

shorebird@xtra.co.nz

Image courtesy of DOC



The Waitakere Ranges

Picture the Waitakere Ranges. Beautiful bush land, deep blue streams, native birds, gorgeous views... Now picture all of that being divided into tiny little sections, and filled with houses. Rows and rows of houses. Like in Swanson. Once a part of the Waitakere Ranges, Swanson now consists of sections the size of a classroom! Who would want to live in a tiny little house that's basically on top of their neighbour's fence anyway?

So... why do people do this? I don't know, but I do know that...

- The Waitakere Ranges will never be the same for its hundreds of residents. I'm not only talking about children, adults, and elderly people, I'm talking about animals, too. Birds, insects, bugs, lizards... they'll all notice the change, as well. I live in the Waitakere Ranges, and I can't think of a better place to live. It's quiet, beautiful, and there's always something to do. Go for a walk further up the Ranges, or to the orchard at the end of our road. Or you can have a swim in the stream at the bottom of our garden. Or wrestling on the log bridge, trying to push each other into the cold stream below. Packing heaps of houses into the Waitakere Ranges will not only make it look disgusting, it will ruin the areas for everything that lives in it.

- Just about every area in the Waitakere Ranges has its own community group. The Henderson Valley Residents Association, which my dad is the chairperson of, the Karekare Residents and Rate Payers Association, and heaps more. For years these groups have been using up their spare time, trying to stop companies from ruining everything. All their hard-work has paid off. Until now, that is. If we let people build heaps more houses in the Waitakere Ranges, then all their work will have been for nothing.

- Waitakere City is one of the most beautiful cities in Auckland. From everywhere in our city, you can see the Waitakere Ranges standing tall in the distance. The Ranges are a very important part of our city, a really special feature that we all love. The Waitakere Ranges are the envy of a lot of cities, but here we are, letting people do what they want to our Ranges, not realising something. Take away the native trees, the native birds, the streams leading off huge waterfalls; take away everything that makes the Waitakere Ranges what they are, and our city will look like every other city in Auckland.

- Also, taking away all the trees will make the air hotter. Think about it. Trees clean the air. They suck up the carbon dioxide in the air, and let out oxygen. We need oxygen to breathe. It's like being in a car for ages. After a while it starts to get really stuffy, because you've used up all the oxygen in the air. That's what will happen to our city. It will also cause erosion in the Ranges. Without all the tree roots to keep the dirt in place, it will just slip away when it rains. The dirt's got to go somewhere, and that might be on the roads, or right onto someone's property. It might be your car's wheels that slip, or your garden that gets cluttered with dirt. Don't think that just because you don't live in the Ranges that you won't be affected.

We can't just stand back and let them do this to our Waitakere Ranges.

Jade O'Shea, age 12. *This article was initially written for Jade's studies at Rangeview Intermediate.*



Image courtesy of Tony Dunn



The Hunt for the Blue Toadstool

It was nearly midwinter, the Sunday before Solstice, June 19, when 14 keen ranges-lovers gathered in the Kauri Grove car park for a WRPS tramp. One of us, the only non-member of the society, Carole Shone was so keen she had turned up in the wind and rain the day before by mistake. Our leader for "botanising" was Sandra Jones and her sharp eye and gentle tone had us all glancing from canopy to the muddy path from the moment we set off. Within minutes some of us were seeing things we'd never seen before; a marvellous example of how the mind informs the eye and brings a focus to it that makes life appear more richly embroidered day by day.

We were in the hunt for mistletoe *Ileostylus micranthus* (Maori names for this native are piriraoa, pirirangi, pirita and pikirangi, according to J. Beever's Dictionary of Maori Plant Names) and a rare blue toadstool (*Entoloma hochstetteri*). The stakes were high: A chocolate fish for the first person to find the specimens in the quest. In spite of the rivalry, it was a very harmonious group that set off, down Kauri Grove Track which leads into the only unmilled 140 acres of original bush in the Waitakeres, apart from Cascade Kauri Park. A lime yellow spindly-thread fungus at low level stopped some of us early in our tracks, but there was no prize for spotting this one. It was the first of at least a dozen fungi found that day, including cloud ears found quite high on a tree. They are one of my favourite fungi to add to a stir fry of vegetables; crunchy and delicious.

We turned off into Marguerite Track to find "the only *Astelia nervosa* in the Waitakeres", here at least 40 years, so Sandra informed us. Shortly, we all gathered together while Sandra described the thick fleshy green leaves of the mistletoe hiding somewhere nearby. Blank stares for a wee while then suddenly Mels pointed at the dozen or so correct leaves in the green multitude. To me, it was nothing short of miraculous that anyone could spot the difference and find the mistletoe as they tramped along. A young botanist from Oratia Native Plant Nursery, Jeff McCauley had found it at the end of last year. The story of how it got there is one of those serendipitous tales of nature: The mistletoe is an epiphyte, a semi-parasite. This species has insignificant greenish insect-pollinated flowers, but its seed is contained in a relatively large yellow case, surrounded by a gelatinous goo. Maybe a bird has it on its beak and wipes it off when it lands on a branch, or it may pass undigested through the bird and land in droppings on the branch. The tiny root digs in and presto! The mistletoe starts growing. In this case there were only two small branches, no longer than 50mm with widely-spaced leaves, lush than the scruffy coprosma which was playing unknowing host but certainly nothing dramatic to catch the eye. Mels enjoyed her chocolate fish, practically swallowing it whole like a herring



Images courtesy of Tony Dunn

A pause to celebrate

It was great so many people could join us on Sunday July 10th to celebrate the Councils' approving the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Bill to go to Parliament. The Waitakere City Rugby Club at the Trusts Stadium was a great venue. Many thanks to the Oratia Nursery for the loan of native plants to decorate it and to Mels Barton and Anna Fomison from the WRPS committee for installing them. Anna organised the party single-handedly and Tim O'Shea from the Henderson Valley Residents Association provided a slide show of stunning images of the Ranges. The many speeches and toasts were followed by some great live music. Many thanks to Max, Harata, Peter and Hellen for looking after us so well at the Stadium and to Jeff and Peta and the Wetas for their great music.



Then the hunt was on for the blue toadstool, still on the Lucy Cranwell Track. To Carole, the keen one, went the prize: Almost hidden at boot level, among mosses and low leaves she spotted the glow of the moody blue toadstool, not much bigger than a gardener's thumb knuckle. Why is it blue? Is it magic? Nobody knew, but the quest had sharpened our gaze and I'll always think of this solstice season as the time of the Blue Toadstool; a questing time; a time for magic in the bush.

Some of us followed Our Beloved President down to Ussher Crossing, across the Winstone Track and up Home Track to join the Marguerite again, looping back to the car park. As a touch of weariness blunted the botanical mindset, I spotted a rare specimen: a long, thin, tubular, lime-green, 35-mm snaky thing with delicate branching at each end, so pretty I wanted to draw it. It looked like something thrown up from the sea, certainly not something rooted in the bush. No one could identify it. The puzzle was solved three days later when I saw a coil of our weed-eater's plastic starting string.....

The sun shone, the textures of the leaves dazzled, the boots were bathed in mud. It was a glorious Sunday. Thank you Sandra and WRPS.

Trish Gribben

Image courtesy of Mike Nixon



Image courtesy of Mike Nixon

Natural burials gain momentum

We had several letters in response to the coverage in our Feb 05 newsletter about natural burial in Waitakere and so thought an update would be of interest.

Waikumete and other cemeteries in Auckland are heading towards capacity. While Waikumete does provide an eco-burial area there are only 19 sites left in it. A group of four women have taken up the work and are extending many years' of work in this area by Liz Franke. They organized for Jerrigrace Lyons, a pioneer in the home funeral movement, to come to New Zealand from the US in April to share her knowledge and experience. The four women, operating as a State of Grace, have a range of relevant experience including work as a hospice registered nurse and an anthroposophical nurse. The four share a passion to help people maximise their personal choice and autonomy when it comes to burial, very like the spirit of the homebirth movement.

Central to their vision is a commitment to promote ecological principles and an awareness of the environmental impact of burial options. For instance, they encourage people to avoid embalming and promote the use of simple, biodegradable caskets.

The ultimate vision of State of Grace is to see a natural burial ground established in Auckland. Natural burial grounds can be as small as an acre, or as large as 50 acres. The plots are only 3 feet deep, decomposition is swift and non-polluting if the body has not been embalmed, and in time the area is flourishing native bush. There are over 120 such sites through Britain.

State of Grace and the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society agree there are many suitable sites, particularly in the eastern foothills of the Waitakere Ranges. Research also suggests a natural burial ground can provide a profitable use of land for the owner. Alternatively, Natural Burials, a Wellington company, are looking for land to purchase in the Auckland region: www.naturalburials.co.nz.

As well as trying to generate interest in natural burial amongst landowners, State of Grace offer a preplanning service where they will come to your home and help you plan a meaningful funeral ahead of time. For this, to discuss possible natural burial sites in Waitakere or for answers to any questions please call Deb Cairns on 021 678 948 or Fran Reilly on 817 4219.

