



Weaving the Strands

Promoting and facilitating integrated management around the Hauraki Gulf – Tikapa Moana



Making it happen

Last month on Motuihe I had the privilege of holding a little spotted kiwi prior to its release on the island sanctuary.

It was a humbling experience to hold our national icon and to contemplate the remarkable story of their comeback to the Hauraki Gulf islands, helped by thousands of volunteers and conservation experts up and down the country.

As long time Gulf advocate and forum deputy chair Mike Lee – pictured with kiwi above - said recently “it’s time we woke up to the unfulfilled potential of the Hauraki Gulf lying on Auckland’s doorstep.”

Another inspiring event this summer saw more than a thousand athletes – Mike included - making their way across the trails of Rangitoto and Motutapu in the inaugural Dual endurance event. What a great way to celebrate the natural features of our islands while at the same time contributing to their preservation.

The pest eradication operation due to start in the next few months on Rangitoto-Motutapu will create further opportunities to encounter wild New Zealand just a short boat trip from the city.

I was pleased to see the Royal Commission recognising the importance of the Hauraki Gulf in its report on Auckland’s governance and noting the threats posed by urban development and intensive agriculture. The commission listed the Hauraki Gulf Forum in the responsibilities for the proposed new Auckland Council, noted its role in providing for engagement with Maori, and stated it considered “that the governance arrangements recommended by it, together with the provisions of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000, provide an ongoing structure for the further protection of this jewel in Auckland’s crown.”

The forum’s role is to promote and facilitate integrated management around the Hauraki Gulf and it is about to publish guidance on how councils can give greater effect to the principles and management objectives of the marine park act.

It is also stimulating discussion among its members about the potential of promoting the marine park based on shared interests.

Waiheke land owners Rob Fenwick and family recently gazetted their privately-covenanted land as part of the park, symbolically supporting the vision of a widely celebrated and nationally recognised marine park.

Similarly, the forum has asked its members to consider whether the addition of other coastal land in public and private ownership would help rekindle the marine park vision ahead of its 10th anniversary in February 2010.

As Auckland reconfigures its governance over the next 12 months it’s important we realise the opportunities created by the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act.



*Mayor John Tregidga
Chair, Hauraki Gulf Forum*



Fish farms for Gulf?



Mountain bikers on Motutapu



Sea kayak trail for SE coast

EW pushes aquaculture plan change

Environment Waikato will draft changes to its regional coastal plan to allow new types of marine farming, including fish farming, in current aquaculture management areas in the Firth of Thames.

The council says it will take a precautionary approach to drafting the plan change and provide for the development of a small amount of fish farming on a trial basis.

Under the current marine farming chapter of the plan, written in 1999, shellfish farming is the only type of aquaculture allowed in the region. Environment Waikato says kingfish farming could provide returns of more than \$400,000 per hectare – at least 10 times higher than shellfish.

Industry, central government, development agencies and local authorities are keen to see aquaculture grow and develop, to boost the regional economy and create jobs.

Despite the council's resolve to support economic development in the region, councillors remain concerned about the potential for significant environmental damage caused by fish farming, which is more intensive than shellfish farming.

Environment Waikato says it will be consulting extensively on the proposed plan change.

www.ew.govt.nz/aquaculture

City council proposes coastal upgrades

Auckland City Council has included five Hauraki Gulf beaches in a \$10 million upgrade programme proposed in its 10 year plan.

Judges Bay, Herne Bay Reserve, Orakei Basin Walkway, Achilles Point and Point England beaches will be enhanced with additional sand, walkways or other facilities. The investments follow successful resanding programmes at other eastern bays over summer. The draft 10-year plan was released for a month-long public consultation on 17 April.

www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/council/documents/focus/default.asp

Motuihe welcomes kiwi

The first release of little spotted kiwi on Motuihe Island took place last month. Over 300 people welcomed the arrivals from Kapiti Island near Wellington, as part of a national strategy to further safeguard the species on predator-free islands and sanctuaries.

The Motuihe Trust hopes to have a population of 40 birds on the island in three years, enabling Aucklanders to view the national icon in a natural environment.

Since predators were eradicated from Motuihe in 2005, volunteers have planted trees, removed weeds and established walkways.

An awareness programme is in place to advise boaters that dogs are not permitted on the island.

www.motuihe.org.nz

Motutapu-Rangitoto traverse proves a winner

About 1450 participants took part in the inaugural Dual Motutapu- Rangitoto Traverse in March creating the largest crowds at Motutapu's Home Bay since picnic days in the early 1900s.

Completing a half or full marathon or a 50 km mountain biking race enabled athletes to contribute to the restoration of Motutapu Island.

The event was organised by the Motutapu Restoration Trust and events company Total Sport, with support from DoC and Fullers.

Trust chair Christine Fletcher said the event was developed to raise funds for the trust's large scale, long term ecological restoration programme. "Our vision is to plant large parts of Motutapu and reintroduce wildlife such as kiwi and tuatara, to celebrate the island's Maori, farming and military heritage and encourage public access to Home Bay."

Feedback from participants on the scenery, technical challenge and organisation of the event, and from those conducting environmental impact monitoring, has been extremely positive.

www.motutapu.org.nz



Cycleway for Firth?



Drainage upgrade will benefit Gulf



Orakei walkway among proposed city council projects

Sea kayak and waka trail

The Auckland Regional Council is looking at establishing a multi-day sea kayak and waka trail on the south east coast of the Auckland region, between Omana Regional Park and Waharau Regional Park, near Kaiāua.

The ARC says the coastal trail is a logical route from which more experienced paddlers could add off-shore destinations such as Waiheke Island.

Feedback from kayakers during a workshop last year indicated camp sites would need to be spaced 7-15 km apart, assuming a daily paddle distance of 10-45 km per day.

The ARC has seven regional parks on the route with camp sites at five of them.

The council has budgeted for upgrading of four camp sites, signage and promotion of the trail in year one of its draft Long-Term Council Community Plan.

Regional mayors welcome Muddy Feet vision

The Muddy Feet Project has released a restoration action plan and eco-tourism vision to guide the third phase of its work to protect the environment of the southern Firth of Thames.

The concept of a biking and cycle track using stopbanks around the

internationally recognised wetland and the Kopu Bridge has been welcomed by mayors of the Franklin, Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel district councils.

Franklin Mayor Mark Ball said “an integrated eco-tourism development plan is the best way to manage pressures on this fragile environment and create economic benefits.”

The restoration action plan and ecotourism vision will help encourage and prioritise central, local government and economic development agency investments in the area.

www.arc.govt.nz/environment/coastal-and-marine/hauraki-gulf-forum/muddy-feet-project.cfm

Drainage upgrade passes half way point

Clear Harbour Alliance is more than half way through a drainage upgrade to separate wastewater from stormwater in Auckland’s Kingsland and Eden Terrace suburbs.

The alliance is achieving improved results through greater alignment between project partners - Metrowater, GHD, Opus International Consultants and Downer EDI Works - and enhanced communication with the community and private owners on whose property work is being carried out.

The project will enable Metrowater to close 30 points from which polluted water - a mix of wastewater and stormwater - flows during wet weather.

It will bring environmental benefits to local waterways and the Waitemata Harbour and is due for completion in early 2010.

www.clearharbour.co.nz

Councils gear up for climate change

The Waikato can expect more extremes of flooding and droughts as the effects of climate change grow.

An Environment Waikato report released last month says the region’s councils will need to closely manage and monitor development, particularly in areas that are prone to flooding and other hazards. It says climate change could see rainfall increase by up to 16 per cent over the next 50-100 years.

Hauraki District Council has heeded such advice, using Ministry of the Environment projections and local data to stimulate discussion during consultation on its 2009-2019 long term council community plan and the first review of its district plan. Its assumptions include an average temperature increase of 2.1 degrees C and a sea level rise of 0.5 m by 2100.

Meanwhile the Auckland Regional Council plans to complete a regional response to climate change by November 2009. It will plan for how Auckland will adapt, manage and respond to risks associated with climate variability and the effects of climate change.

www.ew.govt.nz/naturalhazardreport



Okiwi School children release robins on Barrier



Schools enjoy monitoring



Cultural heritage seminar planned

New robins for Barrier

Fifty North Island robins were translocated from Mokoia Island in Lake Rotorua to Windy Hill and Glenfern Sanctuary on Great Barrier Island in March. This boosted the small population of robins that have established on the island from translocations in 2004 and 2005. Over 100 robins have fledged since then.

Robins are the first regionally extinct species to be returned to Great Barrier - after an absence of 140 years. The Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust and Glenfern Sanctuary have removed predators for over 10 years, demonstrating how private landowners can play an important role in safeguarding biodiversity.

The two sanctuaries, together covering 700 hectares, have helped engage the community in predator eradication and promote the vision of a pest-free Great Barrier.

www.gbict.co.nz

First private land added to park

The first piece of private land has been added to the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. A Gazette notice to include 318 hectares on Waiheke Island owned by Mr Rob Fenwick and his family was published by the Minister of Conservation in February.

The property is subject to a conservation covenant under Section 77 of the Reserves Act 1977 and adjoins Te Matuku Bay Marine Reserve.

Mr Fenwick has provided a public walkway through the northern part of the property to assist Auckland City Council in achieving its goal of developing a walkway around Waiheke Island.

Mr Fenwick said the property is being managed to achieve both conservation and sustainable use (through farming and oyster farm activity) outcomes and complemented the vision for the marine park as a lived in, worked in environment.

Busy summer for shellfish monitoring

Over 400 volunteers, including students from nine schools, have been involved in shellfish monitoring surveys at 12 locations in the Hauraki Gulf over summer.

The Hauraki Gulf Forum co-ordinates efforts led by local authorities, and survey results are analysed by Ministry of Fisheries scientists and stored in the Auckland Regional Council's ecological monitoring database.

Schools have been using teacher resource kits produced by the forum to teach curriculum-related units on marine biodiversity, sustainable management and statistics. Three of the surveys also contribute to NIWA's research into biomarkers of shellfish health in urban estuaries.

It expected several new survey sites will be added next year and there has been interest in adapting the school resources and model for use in other parts of the country.

www.haurakigulfforum.org.nz

Under consultation and opportunities

Aquaculture plan change	EW	www.ew.govt.nz/aquaculture
Long term council community plans		Visit council web pages
Environmental initiatives fund	ARC	www.arc.govt.nz/eif
Cultural heritage management seminar	Hauraki Gulf Forum	Contact: tim.higham@arc.govt.nz

The Hauraki Gulf Forum is a statutory body responsible for the integrated management of the Hauraki Gulf. The Forum has representation on behalf of the Ministers of Conservation, Fisheries and Maori Affairs, Auckland Regional Council and Environment Waikato, ten local authorities (Rodney, Franklin, Waikato, Hauraki, Thames Coromandel and Matamata Piako District Councils, North Shore, Waitakere, Auckland and Manukau City Councils), plus six representatives of the tangata whenua of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands.

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Photo credits: DoC, ARC, Clean Harbour Alliance, Aquaculture New Zealand, Judy Gilbert



Hauraki Gulf Forum
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