



Auckland  
Regional Council  
TE RAUHĪTANGA TAIAO

# econews

Connecting people with the environment

Summer / Autumn 2009

## 800 years of shellfish monitoring

**Ngati Whatua o Orakei has lived at Okahu Bay for over 800 years. Since their great ancestor Tuperiri, the hapu prided itself on the diversity of shellfish and hospitality shown to guests.**

Construction of a sewage pipe in 1914 and the subsequent use of this pipe to discharge stormwater from the Orakei catchment has caused irreversible effects to the mauri (life force) of the waters. In response, the variety and volume of species that inhabit the bay has decreased over the years.

In September 2008 the Auckland Regional Council (ARC), National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research (NIWA) and the rangatahi (youth) of Ngati Whatua embarked on a project to survey the environmental health of Okahu Bay.

It provided an opportunity to combine scientific tools with knowledge passed on from the ancestors of Ngati Whatua.



Ngati Whatua

The survey, part of the ARC's Community Shellfish Monitoring Project, is also linked to the Hauraki Gulf Forum.

Developing rangatahi interest in research and the continuation of monitoring by Ngati Whatua at Okahu Bay was one of the focal points of the survey. Getting young people involved in the project might also spark the choice of science at school or a future career choice.

Kaumatua Grant Hawke began the project by talking about his experiences and knowledge of Okahu Bay. He highlighted the resource that

the bay was formerly and the mana that it brought to the hapu before the sewage pipe was constructed.

Survey results indicate that there has been a detrimental change in heavy metal and contaminant content of the sediment and an overall decrease in cockle size and volume. However the survey also revealed that the actual health of the small cockles is comparable to other sites within the Waitemata Harbour.

The ARC, Ngati Whatua and NIWA intend to continue with the surveys over time so they can gauge changes and hopefully improvements, at Okahu Bay.



New Zealand Somali Women's Association



Student ranger Megan Young with an endangered pateke (brown teal) at Tawharanui Regional Park



Graeme Seymour, Managing Director, Honda

## Tawharanui Open Sanctuary: Kiwis helping kiwi

The first kiwi born in the wild on the Auckland mainland in 60 years has survived because of an innovative pest-proof fence and the dedication and labour of local volunteers and ARC staff.

Stretching 2.5km across the Tawharanui Peninsula, the fence was built in 2004 with ARC funding and money raised by volunteer group TOSSI (Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society Inc.).

The kiwi were born at the Sanctuary, a Regional Park administered by the ARC and supported by TOSSI.

TOSSI volunteers have spent hundreds of hours helping with pest eradication, providing a haven for a multitude of native fauna, including the pateke (brown teal) which have also begun breeding there.

Sanctuary Coordinator Matt Maitland says the successful hatching of kiwi at the regional park is an important milestone in the ecological restoration of the Sanctuary.

## Mahurangi Rangers on a 'Clean Streams' Crusade

The Mahurangi Rangers, a group of mainly local teenagers, are actively helping to protect the Mahurangi Harbour from run-off and sedimentation from local waterways.

"It's intriguing to find tiny little stream life just as abundant as the farm animals that romp around the land" says Ranger Sarah Thoroughgood.

Six of the rangers presented their monitoring results, showing a drop in sedimentation in the Harbour and earned them the "Excellence in Awareness of Waterways Issues" at the annual Wai Care Awards.

## Chinese New Settlers Services Trust

A gardening programme operated by the Chinese New Settlers Services Trust is helping migrants from China make a new home in New Zealand and forge new connections with Kiwis by growing good vegetables.

The Trust received an ARC Environmental Initiatives Fund grant which they used to start a sustainable living programme that encourages members to grow fruit and vegetables at home.

Retired Chinese New Zealanders and top senior growers help teach the course.

## Ngati Manuhiri Omaha Kaitiaki Ora Trust

**Arohama i nga tapu mea katoa  
Our love for all that we cherish**

Ngati Manuhiri, a hapu (sub-tribe) of Ngati Wai, established a trust in 2002 to 'care for all that it cherishes: its

land and people.'

Ngati Manuhiri Omaha Kaitiaki Ora Trust chief executive Mook Henry, who is also a trustee and kaumatua of the hapu's marae at Leigh says: "We try to work together in the parameters we have and make it a win/win situation for everyone."

In response to environmental pressures from a growing population a collaborative relationship with Rodney District Council has enabled the Trust to process all local resource consent applications. The Trust has the power to assess land proposed for development to determine the impact on sites of cultural, historical or spiritual significance (wahi tapu). It also assesses environmental effects and has the ability to impose conditions or mitigating factors if necessary. "We take this attitude with developers: now you're part of us – let's work together", says Mook.

As further testament to its obligation of Kaitiakitanga (guardianship) the trust conducts environmental monitoring and has also been involved with revegetation and protection of shell middens at the beach. ARC's Environmental Initiatives Funding (EIF) was also used for the restoration of several historic graves at the Omaha Marae damaged during storms in 2007. EIF supports projects that enhance and conserve important local environments and heritage.



### Richelle Kahui-McConnell, ARC Sustainable Communities Advisor – Eco Care Co-ordinator

My role is to co-ordinate regional support of community groups in order to build capacity of those participating in environmental action. Whilst working collaboratively with all agencies I provide training, funding, advice and practical support to enable Kaitiakitanga.

For any further questions please contact me on (09) 366 2000 ext 7018 or richelle.kahui-mcconnell@arc.govt.nz



Sarah Thoroughgood surveys the landslide on her farm



Jenny and Lance Gravatt in front of their plantings



Pukekohe East Church

## Somali Women Go Organic

The New Zealand Somali Women's Association was established to provide opportunities for refugee and migrant women, many of whom are rebuilding their lives after their husbands were killed during civil wars. According to Association Chairperson Fadumo Ahmed they provide places where the women share experiences and are united.

The Association provides education and training including ESOL language classes, sewing courses and now, with support from the ARC's Environmental Initiatives Fund, they have established community-run organic gardens in Mt Roskill and Mt Albert.

These gardens are an opportunity to learn about and link with the local environment. The grant has also enabled the women and their families to experience 'rural New Zealand', by visiting Ambury Farm Regional Park. They have also learned about beach safety at Piha.

## Restoring the land – one step at a time

When Jenny and Lance Gravatt purchased a farm at Tomarata in 2004 they saw an opportunity to reinstate the land to how it once was.

Wanting to protect the waterways, restore the land and bring back the birds, the Gravatts started an ambitious project to re-vegetate a

headwater and the wet margins of the Waitapu Stream. With advice and grants from the ARC, the Department of Conservation (DoC) and Rodney District Council along with many hours of help from neighbours and local school children, the family completed 3.5 kilometres of fencing and planted more than 10,000 native trees.

Jenny and Lance say taking the project one step at a time has kept it manageable and while they expected the results of their hard work to be rewarding, they had not anticipated some of the benefits such as their neighbours getting the restoration bug. "Our lease-holders used to spend their Sunday's slashing manuka re-growth, now they spend the weekends helping us plant them!"

## Bethell's Baiting Group – Protecting the State of the Ark

Four years ago Rachel Bebbington-Sheary formed the Bethells' Baiting Group to support Ark in the Park - a community eco-restoration project located in the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park.

The group controls pests on their own properties preventing re-invasion into the surrounding bush sanctuaries. The work has enabled the successful reintroduction of the whitehead, North Island robin and stitchbird to this mainland sanctuary. "Interest in pest control is steadily growing, as people

see the benefits of its use", says Rachel.

The group plays a very important role as Bethell's Valley is nestled between Forest and Bird's Matuku Reserve and the Cascades, the core of Ark in the Park, where animal pests are kept at low numbers to allow native birds to thrive.

## Pukekohe East Church Preservation Society

The Pukekohe East Church, built in 1863, has been the heart of the Pukekohe East community for nearly 150 years.

Peppered with historic bullet holes, the tiny wooden church bares the scars of an important battle during the New Zealand Land Wars.

The Preservation Society, a non-profit community group, was set up 16 years ago to ensure the conservation of the church and its cemetery. The Society has nearly 40 members, including seven direct descendants of the settlers who defended the church.

The Society has updated its conservation plan for the both the Church and cemetery with support from the ARC. This has led the society to initiate a project to conserve the 75 graves in the cemetery.

The church is recognised as a regionally significant historic place and is registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.



### Trudy McNie, Park Ranger in Manukau City

I am a uniformed, field-based Park Ranger facilitating public enjoyment, understanding, and security in the parks. I also help protect the parks' natural and cultural resources and supervise park operations by contractors.

For any further questions please contact me on (09) 262 8900 ext 8426 or [trudy.mcnie@manukau.govt.nz](mailto:trudy.mcnie@manukau.govt.nz)

## Beach Valley Road, Piha

A group of Piha residents are banding together to care for the environment in their street.

As well as doing weed control, the residents have a landscaping vision which combines current native species with a planting plan to create a restored ecosystem.

Bobbie Carroll, co-ordinator of the Beach Valley Road project says people are getting a better appreciation for native species. "There are environmental spin-offs for our local bird-life and it is bringing a real pride to the neighbourhood", she says.

Waitakere City Council, the majority of Beach Valley Road's residents and Piha Coast care are involved in the project.

## Green Drinks

Green Drinks occurs in Auckland each month and is an opportunity for people from different professions and backgrounds to get together to talk about sustainability.

Green Drinks in Auckland is co-ordinated by the local branch of the New Zealand Association for Environmental Education.

**For more information email [auckland@nzae.org.nz](mailto:auckland@nzae.org.nz) or phone NZAEE's Auckland chairperson, Sarah Sheeran, on 817 0092.**

## Hazmobile

Got any hazardous wastes you want to dispose of for free? The HazMobile

is a mobile hazardous waste collection service for households that covers most of the Auckland region.

Each collection runs like a 'drive through' – you drive onto the site, pop your car boot and stay in your car while staff unload for you, then you simply drive off.

Check the HazMobile website for collection dates, locations and for the list of items you can take along.

**See [www.hazmobile.govt.nz](http://www.hazmobile.govt.nz) or contact the ARC's Hazmobile co-ordinator Sandi Murray Ph 366 2000 ext 8642**

## [www.events.org.nz](http://www.events.org.nz)

Ecoevents is an updated version of the Manawa website and makes it easy for people to connect with environmental events in the local community.

Registered organisations can use ecoevents to publicise activities, events, seek volunteers or let other environmental organisations know what they are up to.

Since its re-launch in September last year the website has had great 'traffic', averaging 55-60,000 hits per month.

**For more information and free training on how to add your own events to the site contact Richelle Kahui-McConnell Ph 366 2000 ext 7018 or [richelle.kahui-mcconnell@arc.govt.nz](mailto:richelle.kahui-mcconnell@arc.govt.nz)**

## What's that bug?

Wai Care is a community-based waterway education, monitoring and action programme funded by seven

councils across the region.

The Wai Care Invertebrate Identification Guide is a waterproof field guide designed to assist communities involved in stream health monitoring projects. It includes freshwater macroinvertebrates from tiny water fleas to freshwater crayfish and mussels, caddis fly larvae, mayflies, stoneflies and dragonflies.

**The Guide costs \$40 (but is free for Wai Care groups). For a copy email the Regional Wai Care Co-ordinator [christine.henley@arc.govt.nz](mailto:christine.henley@arc.govt.nz)**

## Seaweek

Seaweek, March 1-8, 2009 is the national week of celebrating the wonders of the sea, its beauty, diversity and cultural significance for New Zealanders. Seaweek aims to raise awareness and understanding of our connection with the marine environment.

ARC Councillor Dianne Glenn, an avid supporter of the week, says we all need to protect our marine areas. In our backyard we are lucky to have some of the most amazing aquatic areas. "Unfortunately one of the biggest challenges we face is that we can't easily see the environmental impact we have on the sea."

ARC, DoC, World Wildlife Fund, Rodney District Council, Auckland Zoo and Auckland Museum all held events this year. ARC events included beach clean ups, a deep sea dive clean up and shellfish monitoring events.

## RESOURCES

### Environmental Initiatives Fund

[www.arc.govt.nz/environment/funding--awards/environmental-initiatives-fund-eif/environmental-initiatives-fund-eif\\_home.cfm](http://www.arc.govt.nz/environment/funding--awards/environmental-initiatives-fund-eif/environmental-initiatives-fund-eif_home.cfm)

**The Fund opens Monday 27 April and closes 1 July.**

### Coastal Enhancement Fund

[www.arc.govt.nz/environment/funding-awards/coastal-enhancement-fund](http://www.arc.govt.nz/environment/funding-awards/coastal-enhancement-fund) **Refer to the website for the next Funding Round.**

### For species listed in the Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy

[www.arc.govt.nz/plantsearch](http://www.arc.govt.nz/plantsearch) [www.landcare.org.nz](http://www.landcare.org.nz) [www.bush.org](http://www.bush.org)

**Biodiversity Advice Fund** [biofunds@doc.govt.nz](mailto:biofunds@doc.govt.nz)

**Protecting NZ indigenous plant** [www.nzpcn.org.nz/](http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/)

**Community Resource Kit** [www.community.net.nz](http://www.community.net.nz) (04) 916 3300

**Funding Information Service** [www.fis.org.nz](http://www.fis.org.nz) (04) 471 8900

**Keeping it Legal** [www.keepingitlegal.net.nz](http://www.keepingitlegal.net.nz) (04) 385 0981

**Fundraising Institute** [www.fundraising.org.nz](http://www.fundraising.org.nz)

**QEI National Trust** [www.openspace.org.nz](http://www.openspace.org.nz)

Ecocare News is designed to provide information, resources and profile for community groups involved in environmental projects.

It is compiled by the ARC's Ecocare Co-ordinator, Richelle Kahui-McConnell, Ph 366 2000 ext 7018 or [richelle.kahui-mcconnell@arc.govt.nz](mailto:richelle.kahui-mcconnell@arc.govt.nz).



### Chris Ferkins, Environmental Coordinator for Parks Planning at Waitakere City Council

Pioneering streamside revegetation techniques in Waitakere City is just one of the interesting things my job includes. I also get to work with community groups, landowners and businesses, run youth training programmes, provide support.

**For any further questions please contact me on (09) 836 8000 ext 8505 or [chris.ferkins@waitakere.govt.nz](mailto:chris.ferkins@waitakere.govt.nz)**