

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER
2008

Our Region

NEWS FROM THE GREATER WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL



Step outside this spring

Discover a regional park

Our very own "green" town

How clean is Wellington Harbour?



Please recycle
this magazine

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Above: And they're off! Kuranui College students compete in the Greentown wheelbarrow challenge

Cover photo: Kaitoke Regional Park Ranger Steve Edwards with visitors on the park's swingbridge

Our Region is produced sustainably

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greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL

www.gw.govt.nz

What does Greater Wellington do?

Water supply to reservoirs

Delivers high-quality treated water to the main reservoirs in each city.

Environmental management

Ensures the region's natural resources are used appropriately.

Regional parks and forests

Maintains a network of regional parks and forests for recreational use.

Metlink buses and trains

Coordinates and funds the region's Metlink public transport network.

Transport planning

Develops long-term plans for the region's transport network.

Emergency management

Coordinates civil defence emergency management for the region.

Flood protection

Helps communities protect themselves from the effects of flooding.

Pest control

Works with landowners to target pest plants and animals, and eradicate bovine Tb.

Harbour safety

Looks after navigational safety in Wellington and Porirua harbours, and the region's coastline.

Land management

Works with landowners to prevent or reduce soil erosion.

Regional economic development

Promotes the Wellington Regional Strategy – a sustainable economic-growth strategy.

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Welcome to *Our Region* – the Greater Wellington Regional Council's quarterly magazine. There's news and information on the work we are doing for a better region, and how you can participate to make our region truly sustainable. Your feedback is appreciated. Please contact Greater Wellington on 0800 496 734 or info@gw.govt.nz

Students lead Greentown challenge

Pupils from Kuranui College and Greytown Primary School led the charge during Greater Wellington's "Greentown" initiative by walking to school, planting native trees, handing out reusable shopping bags packed with environmentally friendly products and participating in their school's green events.

Drawing on the theme of World Environment Day – "kick the carbon habit" – Greater Wellington organised a month of activities in June/July to help Greytown residents become more sustainable.

Greater Wellington's Chair Fran Wilde says she was thrilled with the involvement of the students throughout the Greentown initiative.

Chair Wilde hopes that the "Greentown" concept will be applied to other communities

"I want to thank those students and their teachers for leading the community effort to become more sustainable and making Greytown greener. I am also very grateful for the support of businesses who participated in Greentown and donated prizes for our 'buy local, buy green' promotion."

Chair Wilde was hopeful that the Greytown community would continue with the Greentown initiative and that the concept would be applied to other communities in the future.

Greentown was funded by the Ministry for the Environment, Meridian subsidiary Right House Ltd and Greater Wellington.



Students from Greytown School prepare the ground for native trees at the Papawai Care Group's planting day, 25 June. Left to right: Matt Hullah, Sian Dunlop and Katelyn George

Getting rid of your old computer or mobile?



Why not come along to eDay on 4 October? It's a free and effective way to dispose of your electronic waste (e-waste) in an environmentally sustainable way.

E-waste can seriously harm the environment, wildlife and human health when dumped in landfills. Last year 2,200 Wellington households diverted 130 tonnes of e-waste from landfill (the highest total in the country) and eDay organisers expect even higher numbers this year.

You can drop off computer hardware, monitors, networking equipment, scanners, keyboards, your computer mouse, computer speakers, laptops, printers, toner and ink jet cartridges, games consoles and mobile phones. But please no TVs, stereos, appliances and furniture.

When: 9am-3pm, Saturday 4 October

Where: Westpac Stadium carpark, Waterloo Quay entrance

www.eday.org.nz

Clever carpooling

Carpooling in the Wellington region is set to become much easier

Greater Wellington's Jill Beck says many people like the idea of carpooling but the practicalities, such as finding people who work and live near you and work roughly the same hours, often make it difficult.

"We're doing a few things to make it easier. These include a web-based ride-matching service, which we're rolling out to all businesses and organisations in the Wellington region. We're also encouraging organisations to provide priority parking for carpoolers."

The carpooling programme is due to be launched next March.

www.gw.govt.nz/rideshare

EAST HARBOUR REGIONAL PARK

BEAUTIFUL LAKES

Try the Lighthouse Track and Lakes Block Circuit in the park's southern section. You'll need to walk or ride a bike from Burdans Gate in Eastbourne to reach the lakes block, but once you do it'll take your breath away. Lake Kohangatera and Lake Kohangapiripiri are stunning wetlands where you're likely to see wetland birds going about their business. You can also walk up to the Pencarrow Lighthouse for a marvellous outlook from the neck of the Wellington Harbour. Greater Wellington also offers the opportunity to visit the lakes block by bus on the Lighthouse and Lakes tour – see the summer Regional Outdoors Programme in December's *Our Region*.



Lake Kohangatera

North Island robins are back



NATIVE BIRDS AND BUSH

North Island robins are back in East Harbour Regional Park thanks to the hard work of Mainland Island Restoration Operation (MIRO) in partnership with Greater Wellington. MIRO and Greater Wellington have removed thousands of possums and rats over the past few years, allowing native birds to return and the park's rata trees to flourish. This year MIRO began introducing North Island robins and hopes it'll establish a breeding population. And thanks to the possum and rat control, visitors are also spotting birds that were rarely seen or absent a few years ago, such as bellbirds, riflemen, whiteheads and kakariki.

TAKE A WALK IN A VERY SPECIAL PARK

Straddling the hills between Eastbourne and Wainuiomata is the northern block of East Harbour Regional Park – a wealth of native forest and birds, and stunning views. You should visit this spring... it's well worth the trip

"Even if you haven't visited the park, you've probably seen this striking backdrop to Wellington Harbour from across the water," says Park Ranger Gareth Cooper.

These days the park is something of a secret to many people around the Wellington region, even though the park has tracks that were cut as far back as the 1930s and was once a very popular day-trip on the old Wellington to Eastbourne ferry back in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

"What people may not know is that the park features some of the best beech and rata forest in the Wellington region. It's also unusual to see forest coming right down to the urban fringe," says Gareth. "People may be also unaware that it's remarkably easy to get to the tracks in the park's northern block, with entrances and exits in Wainuiomata, and the bays between Seaview and Eastbourne."

The park features some of the best beech and rata forest in the Wellington region

Greater Wellington has recently upgraded and realigned the tracks, meaning visitors don't have to look at their feet all the time. Instead they can chat to friends, spot the birdlife or enjoy the amazing views.

"We've made sure there's something for everyone. There are easier tracks suitable for young families and people of all fitness levels, as well as tracks that are more challenging," says Gareth. "But wherever you're going in the park, wear suitable lace-up walking footwear, take a rain jacket and extra warm clothing, and enough food and drink for your trip."

Options range from the classic family walk through the Butterfly Creek valley to the Rata Ridge mountain bike track, which is great for experienced riders. Seasoned trampers can take advantage of off-track opportunities in Gollans Valley.

TWO TRACKS TO TRY

Hawtrey Route (Days Bay to Eastbourne)

2½ hours, some steep climbing

It's a real treat to see northern rata trees in full red bloom. But if you go along the Hawtrey Route in summer, that's what's on offer. Start in Days Bay, climb up to the Main Ridge Track via the Kereru Track, follow the Hawtrey Route along the top for about an hour, drop down to Eastbourne for a coffee, then walk back along Marine Parade to your starting point.

Puriri Track (Wainuiomata to Days Bay)

4 hours, easy-moderate

Climb the Puriri Track from Wainuiomata Road, go along the Main Ridge Track where you'll see beech and rata forest, then drop down one of the tracks to Days Bay where you can treat yourself to a well-deserved ice cream.

GETTING THERE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT

You can access all the East Harbour Regional Park entrances from Wellington, Wairarapa, Lower and Upper Hutt, Kapiti and Porirua by public transport. Find your best train and bus route by phoning Metlink on 0800 801 700 or use Metlink's online journey planner.

www.metlink.org.nz

YOUR PARK RANGER



East Harbour Regional Park
Ranger Gareth Cooper

For more information on East Harbour Regional Park, including detailed maps, see www.gw.govt.nz/eastharbour

For information on all of Greater Wellington's regional parks and forests, see www.gw.govt.nz/parks



One of many gorgeous views from the Hawtrey Route, looking out over Wellington Harbour



This map shows some of the tracks in the northern block but there are many more for you to try. See www.gw.govt.nz/eastharbour for more information and a detailed map



Honda + GW = thousands of trees

Who would have thought that buying a new car could result in 10 new trees being planted?

It's a very pleasing prospect and it's happening for real with Honda TreeFund – a scheme designed to fund the planting of native trees to offset some of the region's car emissions.

For every new car sold, Honda New Zealand Ltd funds 10 native trees via regional councils around the country. In the Wellington region, the trees are used for community planting days facilitated by Greater Wellington.

Greater Wellington's Amanda Cox says the three-year partnership with Honda TreeFund has resulted in Greater Wellington doing considerably more planting than funding would allow in the past.

"Since the scheme began in 2005, we have bought more than 30,000 extra trees, which not only helps to reduce the effects of climate change but also makes a fantastic contribution to the region's biodiversity."

Dean Blair, branch manager of Honda's Hutt dealership, mucked in during a recent planting day at Kaitoke Regional Park for Honda's staff and customers, led by Park Ranger Steve Edwards.

"Steve is phenomenal to work with – he's so passionate about the planting days and inspires everybody to really put their backs into it!"

Find out more about the fund at Honda's website and look for upcoming community planting days on Greater Wellington's website.

www.honda.co.nz
www.gw.govt.nz/events

The trees not only reduce the effects of climate change – they also make a fantastic contribution to the region's biodiversity

Dean says his customers are generally delighted that their purchase means more trees for the region and many are enthusiastic planting day participants. "This year we had a customer who phoned us several times to absolutely make sure she was invited – she enjoyed it so much last year."



Below: Honda customer Bing Luo and son Brian at the Kaitoke Regional Park planting day



Caleb Royal films eel stocks in Waimanu Stream, Otaki. Caleb has valuable experience in catchment management

Speaking up for iwi

Iwi opinions on the region's environment will get a stronger voice, with a Greater Wellington initiative to appoint iwi representatives to its committees.

"It's fantastic that Greater Wellington is taking this step," says Caleb Royal (Ngati Raukawa). "It means that iwi have more say on managing the region's resources and committee members get first-hand information on iwi values."

Caleb is one of six iwi appointees to Greater Wellington's committees and has joined the Catchment Management Committee.

"I lecture at Te Wananga Raukawa in Otaki and like to support hapu in their aspirations to protect the environment, so dealing with environmental issues like sewerage discharge and managing stormwater presents plenty of challenges," says Caleb. "This gives me a good local knowledge of pressures on our ecosystems and what the community values in our environment."

Each of the iwi appointees was chosen following a request for expressions of interest from Greater Wellington, which was circulated among iwi networks. The appointees are: Catchment Management – Caleb Royal (Ngati Raukawa); Finance, Evaluation and Risk – Te Hope Hakaraia (Ngati Raukawa, Te Arawa); Parks, Forests and Utilities – Teri Puketapu (Te Ati Awa); Regional Sustainability – Liz Mellish (Te Ati Awa, Ngati Ruanui, Taranaki, Ngati Tama); Regulatory – Nelson Rangi (Ngati Kahungunu, Rangitane); Transport and Access – Jack Rikihana (Te Ati Awa, Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Toa Rangatira). See the "Council & committees" section of Greater Wellington's website for a complete list of Council committee members, including Councillors, iwi appointees and other appointees.

www.gw.govt.nz

Fairer rating system for flood-prone land

The rating classification for landowners in the flood-prone Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme has changed following more than four years of work and consultation. From now on, landowners will pay rates according to the benefits they receive from the scheme. This has removed some inconsistencies that existed previously. Phone Greater Wellington's Ranjan Cyril on 06 378 2484 to find out more.

Walk through pristine native bush

Quick! Book your place on a day walk among majestic kahikatea, spectacular rata and towering rimu in the Wainuiomata Water Catchment Area. This easy-grade guided walk takes you through one of the best podocarp forests in the lower North Island. Book by contacting Joanne Clifford Marsh, 04 526 5332, joanne.clifford-marsh@gw.govt.nz. Dates: 12 October, 2 November, 23 November and 7 December.

Greater Wellington wins conservation award

Greater Wellington has been acknowledged for its contribution to native plant conservation in New Zealand, winning a New Zealand Plant Conservation Network (NZPCN) award. NZPCN said Greater Wellington won thanks to its leadership in a range of programmes throughout the region, including habitat protection, community restoration days, coordinating community planting groups and pest control. www.nzpcn.org.nz

Wanted: pest plant

Look out for this plant – it's a pest and we want to stop it spreading. Chilean flamecreeper (*Tropaeolum speciosum*) is a fast-growing vine that rapidly smothers and replaces vegetation. It has five-fingered leaves and red tubular flowers, consisting of five petals with a yellow centre, that turn into blue berries.

Seen it? Contact us: 0800 496 734, pest.plants@gw.govt.nz



New Metlink fares

New fares for Metlink bus, train and harbour ferry services came into effect on 1 September 2008

Fares have been increased to meet substantial cost increases in Greater Wellington's bus and train operating contracts, and to bring fares for some services into line with all other fares. Fares will now be reviewed each year to minimise the impact of increases.

More new trains coming

The number of new electric trains, due to start arriving in 2010, is bigger than originally planned. Greater Wellington has increased the number of new trains on order from 35 to 45 two-car units – 90 cars in total. The sleek, modern trains, named Matangi (Maori for "breeze"), will run on all electrified lines throughout the region.

Resurrected trains back on track

The first of three trains coming out of retirement to help meet demand is due to begin running this month. The bright red English Electric train, on loan from the Ferrymead rail museum in Christchurch, will be joined later this year by another two-car English Electric and a six-carriage train. These renovated and refurbished trains will be in service until the new trains arrive in 2011.

Just the (one) ticket

Paraparaumu and Raumati residents with monthly or quarterly train passes can now transfer between trains and Mana buses in Paraparaumu at no extra cost. Residents in the 9-zone area (Paraparaumu, Paraparaumu Beach, Raumati and Raumati South) are eligible for the new integrated KapitiPlus fare.



Greater Wellington's public transport network
0800 801 700 www.metlink.org.nz



Sustainability tips

Save the drain for rain

In urban areas, the drains that collect rainwater from your roof and yard are connected via roadside gutters, drains and underground pipes to local streams or the coast.

These stormwater drains are designed to carry rainwater runoff but they often carry other pollutants – litter, cigarette butts and dog droppings from pavements and roads; detergents from washing cars on the roadside; left-over paint and water used to wash paint brushes; and leaked oil and radiator water from cars.

When pollutants like these get into the stormwater system they can cause a lot of problems. Dog droppings increase bacteria levels in rivers and the sea. Paints (oil and water based) and thinners are toxic to aquatic life, and cause discoloration of streams. Oil causes unsightly surface slicks on the water in streams or the harbour, and in large quantities it can suffocate aquatic life. Dirt and silt smother aquatic life on stream beds, and help slime and weeds to grow.

What you can do

1. Pick up your dog's droppings
2. Clean paint brushes in the laundry sink or in a bucket that you tip somewhere in your garden
3. Wash your car on the lawn or use a carwash
4. Take household chemicals and waste oil to collection points at the landfill
5. Join a community group to help restore a stream or clean a beach.
See www.gw.govt.nz/takecare

More sustainability tips
www.bethedifference.gw.govt.nz

Calendar of events

22 SEPTEMBER

Carfree Day

www.worldcarfree.net/wcfd

27 SEPTEMBER

Opahu Stream Restoration Planting Day

Opahu Stream is accessible via Barber Grove in Moera, Lower Hutt
11am, 04 384 5708
melanie.mcelwee@gw.govt.nz

2 OCTOBER

Lion Foundation Buggywalk

The Dell, Botanical Gardens
10.30am-12noon
www.buggywalk.co.nz

4 OCTOBER

e-Day

Westpac Stadium carpark
Waterloo Quay entrance
9am-3pm
www.eday.org.nz

12 OCTOBER

Wainuiomata Water Catchment Walking Tour

Bookings essential, 04 526 5332
joanne.clifford-marsh@gw.govt.nz
www.gw.govt.nz/events

2 NOVEMBER

Wainuiomata Water Catchment Walking Tour

Bookings essential, 04 526 5332
joanne.clifford-marsh@gw.govt.nz
www.gw.govt.nz/events

6 NOVEMBER

Lion Foundation Buggywalk

Queen Elizabeth Park, MacKays Crossing – Whareroa Stream, 10.30am-12noon
www.buggywalk.co.nz

23 NOVEMBER

Wainuiomata Water Catchment Walking Tour

Bookings essential, 04 526 5332
joanne.clifford-marsh@gw.govt.nz
www.gw.govt.nz/events

4 DECEMBER

Lion Foundation Buggywalk

Harcourt Park to Totara Park Bridge
Lower Hutt, 10.30am-12noon
www.buggywalk.co.nz

7 DECEMBER

Wainuiomata Water Catchment Walking Tour

Bookings essential, 04 526 5332
joanne.clifford-marsh@gw.govt.nz
www.gw.govt.nz/events

What lies beneath...

On the best of days Wellington Harbour may look pristine, but delve beneath the surface and it's not as unspoiled as we would like it to be.

Greater Wellington's new study of the harbour's seabed sediments highlights how urban stormwater carries significant concentrations of contaminants, such as heavy metals, oil byproducts and pesticides, into the harbour.

In the more sheltered inner Lambton Basin and Evans Bay, contaminant levels exceed national sediment quality guidelines.

Greater Wellington Regulatory Committee Chair Sally Baber says although the contaminated sediment poses little risk to people, it does affect sea-floor marine life. "This study is a timely reminder of the need to protect the harbour from further contamination. Runoff from roofs and roads, and chemicals such as paint or oil, are entering the harbour. We all need to be really careful about what we allow to flow down our stormwater drains and gutters."

www.gw.govt.nz/harbourstudy

