



Peninsula Enviro News

Awhitu Peninsula Landcare Inc

Convenor's Report

**April 2007
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This is my second report as Convenor. Others have made my task a little easier by doing some work for me. I especially thank Paul Dixon and Chris Hull for reporting on a pair of field trips in my stead.

Reserves planting days are planned for early in the season to coincide with optimum planting conditions. Anne Lee is working on a date list, available soon from Kate at the Landcare office (235 1650) or watch April's Peninsularama for details.

Many locals, including Landcare members, were dismayed at Franklin District Council's apparent return to crude, ugly and inefficient "slash and crush" methods of roadside tidying.

Less than a year ago Landcare was delighted to write to FDC commending their

professional arborists work in shaping and trimming roadside trees; work which enables many trees to retain their beauty without compromising road user safety.

Slashing, apart from being an affront to all who love trees, only stimulates more growth, which will require more slashing next year. At little thought to cost-efficiency.

Preliminary work on establishing road-care teams to put this work into hands of local workers has, so far, been enmeshed in red tape. We can expect our roadsides to be at the mercy of FDC and it's contractors for the foreseeable future. We have expressed our dismay to the road department in sincere hope of an improved service next year.

"We can expect our roadsides to be at the mercy of FDC and it's contractors for the foreseeable future."



Anna McNaughton

RATS! “Hit them Now!” advises Glenn.

A pest that comes to the fore this time of the year is *rattus rattus* (and *rattus norvegicus*) or to those of us who don't care which they are, just Rats!

Rats can live for up to three years, breed every 2-3 months, producing up to 12 young each time.

Being nocturnal, we often don't see them much, but we can see their damage. The good thing is - rats don't travel far from the nest, usually staying within a 40 to 100 metres. In winter, that nest is often somewhere close to man. We like to keep warm and dry, so does Mr Rat.

To keep them out of your property, keep everything clean and tidy around the garden (that also deters rabbits) so there is nowhere for them to hide. Use traps and poison bait to kill them outside NOW, then they won't become a problem as winter gets colder and they seek drier, more comfortable quarters. You can buy waxed bait for use out doors or a fixable bait that you nail or tie into a pipe to keep it away from pets.



My bait station is a 10lt paint pail with a length of 2 inch (50mm for those under 50) drain pipe inserted horizontally about one third up from the bottom of the pail. Cut a 50mm hole in the pipe inside the pail, fill the pail with rat bait (or possum bait that has been outside and become unpalatable to possums), up to the pipe. Put the lid back on and nothing bigger than a rat can get to the bait, protecting your pets. Remember, the old saying “like a rat up a drain pipe”? They like nothing better.

They love compost heaps too, so I set a rat trap inside my compost bin. Rats invariably tunnel in, and in the pitch black inevitably step on the trap - adding themselves to the compost.

Glenn Knight
235 1501/021 108 1664



Virginia Christensen's Oystercatcher Update.

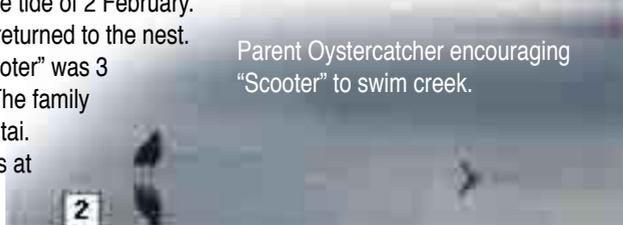
The Wattle Bay bird's two eggs began hatching in the last week of January (remember, this was the second clutch, the first 3 eggs having been crushed by a motorbike). One partially-hatched chick drowned in the 4 metre tide of 2 February.

The other egg was found nearby and gently returned to the nest.

It hatched on 7 Feb. By 17 Feb all grey “ Scooter” was 3 times hatch size. By 18 March it was flying. The family are presumed to be ‘hanging-out’ around Tipitai.

Reports of a small flock of around 30-40 birds at times between Wattle and Orua Bays.

Parent Oystercatcher encouraging “Scooter” to swim creek.



Ways to Zero Waste

Last year David Millet spent several days on a fact-finding mission into waste recycling in the South. His intention was to look at how others are turning problem waste into a resource. PEN reprints a long-awaited summary.

Terra Nova Develops Market for Recyclables.

Christchurch-based charitable trust specializing in recycling and reuse, as well as development of local markets for recovered materials. No curbside sorting. As much material as possible is processed in three city EcoDepots and transported elsewhere: reusable items to a SuperShed (reuse shop); recyclables (except paper) are sorted and baled for sale; a local marketing company composts green waste for sale. Another facility, EcoPark, is a huge industrial area set aside for commercial recycling. Apparently, they save Gib-board for possible future use as fertilizer.

Vita New Zealand Limited Recycling 90% of Furniture Waste.

Manufactures foam for furniture and carpet underlay and recycles the same stuff. Cannot get enough. Another company in Auckland does the same. Vita will collect clean dry foam from most locations in New Zealand. A 90% recoverable weight means that almost all furniture is recyclable which, for an average couch, works out at about 30kg in reusable foam, steel and rags.

Kaikoura District Council Reducing Landfill.

Innovative Waste Kaikoura is designed to extend landfill life and demonstrate (especially to tourists) Council care for the environment. Started in 1991, it now employs 18 and turns-over some \$800,000 annually. Activities include, depot with shop, composting, curbside recycle collection, skip hire, building demolition, education and 'Trees for Travelers'.

Waimakiriri District Council Reducing Landfill.

Currently their Rangiora transfer station encourages only limited recycling drop off. Most waste going direct to landfill. Plans are afoot by operators Waste Management to reverse this situation.

David Millet's 'Ways to Zero Waste' will continue in PEN issue 13.

Get Your Shovels and Rakes Ready....

the Oyster Shell clean up is on at Sergeant's Beach Matakawau on Saturday 14 April from 10 to noon. ARC is again providing some gear, but all buckets, shovels, spades, rakes and gloves will be welcome. Your reward, a BBQ and no kids with cut feet.

Carbon Emissions Control to be Explained in Person

The PEN issue 11 item on CarboNZero has resulted in readers asking for more. Good news! Awhitu Landcare and Awhitu Enterprise are jointly sponsoring a visit to the district by Landcare Research's own Martin Fryer on Sunday 22 July at 2pm. Venue yet to be confirmed. But keep that date free for a first-hand opportunity to learn how you can play your part in carbon emissions control. Plus have your questions answered. Meantime we remind all those interested in this rather baffling and challenging subject to visit www.carbonzero.co.nz.

Busy Days for Trees For Survival

Anna McNaughton reports that for Trees For Survival this period is most rewarding with all facets of the process active at once. Seed gathering and setting are already well advanced. Again she gives special mention to Awhitu Regional Park Ranger John Allen for his willingness to fit seed gathering sessions with school children, teachers and parent helpers into his already full work schedule. This year all four local schools have taken the opportunity to learn plant lifecycles at the Park under John's very knowledgeable and interesting tutelage – particularly as to the best plants for seed gathering. In the school units themselves final potting-up sessions have been completed, and the smallest plants transferred to Landcare's Shade house. While well-advanced plants are being distributed for autumn plantings.

Anna further reports that Alison Marson's recent Shade house stock take recorded 1500 plants – over half sturdy enough to be planted this season. This includes the first of the Kemp Road kauris. And in preparation for the 2008 season (Anne Lee and 3 other volunteers) recently potted-up some 500 flax plants.

Anna ends her report with a reminder that many hands will be required for the two big pottings-up – each as part of April and May working bees. She also expressed special thanks to New Zealand Steel for sponsoring the supply of vital potting mix. This, together with a generous supply of recycled pots, has enabled plant numbers and plant health to be reliably maintained.

Walking on the Wet Side

Sunday 11 March saw a small but intrepid army of 20 up to their waists in Wayne and Trish Aspin's major wetland reparation project on Hatton Road.

With Wayne breaking trail and Trish providing a botanical commentary all (including a visiting pair from Hamilton) received a through immersion (sic) in the process and pitfalls of wetland management. As visitors clambered, scrambled and leapt over and around obstacles (including gazillion-years-old Kauri stumps) the Aspin's long-term plan revealed itself. For many this was a rare opportunity to observe plants in their natural habitat. For others the invigorating walk was ample compensation for a pair of hours spent enduring mud, scratches and snagged clothing. At the conclusion all adjourned to the Aspin home where a refreshing 'smoko' was served.



Wayne blazes the trail... Trish points-out plants.

Our EcoHeroes

One of the peninsula's best friends and 2004's Grand Ecohero Winner, Geraldine Oliver, recently paid a short visit to her old planting grounds. Geraldine's win was in recognition of what the judges called her "vision, passion and persuasiveness for a number of community projects"; characteristics readers will recognise from the following abridged report. Geraldine and husband Ronnie now live in Napier where they have recently completed building their 'Eco-House'.

"There's no bush down the road here. But I've made a successful submission to Napier City Council to convert the second half of Western Hills into an Eco-Burial site. In reality this means a bit of urban bush with a recreational track through it. No lawns, no concrete, no plaques – nothing but native bush as a living memorial. It's close to the city and the Rotary Pathway so people, cyclists and dogs will all get to enjoy it."

Geraldine states that her mission in life now is "to spread more of it (native bush) around. There is a dearth of Trees for Survival units in schools here, so there's plenty of work for me to do. I've also gifted the City Council some Awhitu Pohutukawa for urban planting and one day, out on my bike as usual, I saw the council worker and his tanker watering my trees, so it's nice to know they are appreciated.

Another project I'm very keen to get the local Regional Council to adopt is a Bio-Map – a vegetation index of all the species that lived in the area before human disturbance. As our ecological footprint is measured ever more accurately, there will be pressure to use less water on inessential landscaping. What better planting guide than to be able to look up the area's natural ground cover.



The Grand EcoHero in her element.

Geraldine closes with:

"I loved coming back to Awhitu – it was like seeing an old friend – but my heart belongs to the East Coast."

Love,
Geraldine

Why Not English and Te Reo?

MOERAKI BOULDERS
KAIHINAKI

Our own Alison Marson has been representing Landcare in recent discussions with Council and other local organizations over possible implementation of dual language signage in our area. The success of this could be a New Zealand first as no code yet exists for such a programme. Although other areas, particularly Rotorua, have used bi-lingual signs for some time. The idea, still in discussion, is to use an alternative Maori or English word where either is established. For example WEST COAST ROAD might appear with Waimatuku underneath it. Nor are the combined groups planning to have everything so identified all at once. A few locations might be used to start the ball rolling, with more gradually following as local interest and budget allow. Watch for signs of change!



Striking a Blow for Sand Erosion Control

The recent sand erosion study day of Monday 5 March was most instructive, according to Chris Hull. Led by indomitable Awhitu Landcare supporter 'Doctor Dirt' (Doug Hicks) the nearly dozen-strong party (including four more ARC representatives – see Jack Harper's letter page 7) visited four

sand-blow prone properties. The objective being to understand the problem first-hand and to gauge the results of attempts at land stabilization. Solutions tried are almost as varied as the symptoms; they include ice plant, lilies and flame trees as well as blanketing with garden waste, wooden pallets and tires. The Clarke property suffers from several blows originating next door in Ports of Auckland/ARC land. Sharemilkers Swanny Swanson and Wendy Fulton explained their process of planting and fence relocation in face of encroaching sand. Some success has been achieved with marram plantings but one particular sand gulch, according to the pair, remains invincible to marram plantings, despite three attempts in the past decade. Cost in pasture loss and fencing shifts has been significant. On the other hand the next property on the tour (David and Antonia Craig's, where lunch was served in welcome shade) results were more impressive with well planted coastal margins, a high percentage of native revegetation and sand areas returned to good pasture. Afternoon tea was served at the property of Alan and Heather Makgill before the final visit - Colin Hull's land.



Inspecting one of four sand erosion sites visited.



PEN & Paper

Readers will have noticed that Peninsula Enviro News has undergone changes. Euan Craig (recent Visual Arts Graduate) explains what he has been doing with your Editor's words. "Greater use of graphics (pictures and art you might call them) has been made possible by 'hotter' software and is designed to impart a more magazine style feel without losing PEN's friendly character. That's for those who prefer their news printed. For the more computer savvy PEN is now available as a download from awhиту.org.nz Landcare members can also receive automatic email notification of new issues by registering on the same site. All this means that PEN can be read purely as text or, at the click of a button, with moving images and sound. Expect to see more Landcare news being presented with an interesting technological edge."

A Seed-saver's Secret

Stella Christoffersen Awhitu's very own 'seed lady' gets all her best seeds from her very best plants. "No sense in propagating inferior genes", she says. And another trick; she plants crops of the same variety often a week or weeks apart. The reason: each will face differing climatic challenges, which it remembers. More chance of succeeding when it next strikes those circumstances.

WE ARE NOT WINNING. Coastal erosion is worse now than 15 years ago!

Many readers will know that the size of the ARC party attending the recent Sand Blow Inspection was due to the eloquence and persuasive power of Jack Harper's pen and diligence by ARC Environmental Management Chair Dianne Glenn. Jack's letter to ARC Chair Mike Lee is reproduced verbatim:

Mr. Mike Lee
Chairman Auckland Regional Council
Private Bag 98012
Auckland

Dear Mr. Lee,

I write as a resident of Awhitu Peninsula, and also as a member of Awhitu Peninsula Landcare (A.P.L.) to draw your attention to the ongoing erosion occurring on the West Coast between the Waikato and Manukau Heads. I refer to the continued and accelerating collapse of the coastal cliffs and the equally accelerating encroachment of windblown sand onto farmland.

Since 1994 A.P.L. has encouraged and assisted landowners to undertake coastal plantings with native species, and to stabilise bare sand by planting marram grass.

For 12 years 1995-2006 Dr Doug Hicks of Ecological Research Associates has coordinated (gratis) A.P.L. revegetation trials. I enclose our leaflet no. 8, which details the findings of these trials. Dr. Hicks has also worked out monetary costs of sand rehabilitation. These are available to the Council. Dr. Hicks should be included in any future discussions and actions.

Coastal erosion was discussed at a recent meeting of A.P.L. I write with their support. These matters were raised:

1. We are not winning. Coastal erosion is worse than 15 years ago.
2. On some properties cliff collapses and/or sand blows have now become so big that owners have neither the physical nor financial resources adequate for remedial action.
3. The A.R.C. has a statutory responsibility to take the lead on erosion control.
4. This coastal erosion is a "major" which needs an A.R.C. funded action plan similar to Mahurangi Action plan.
5. A.R.C. junior staff are aware of the problem, but there seems to be no interest in coastal erosion among A.R.C. senior management, nor, with the exception of Mrs. Glenn, among elected councilors.
6. Consequently we feel that the appropriate level of approach to the council is to the chair.
7. The brevity of this letter, which is deliberate, should not disguise the concerns of local residents, nor the need for action

Yours Respectfully,
Jack Harper

Recycling Depot “ticking along nicely”

According to Gary Marson, other than bins not being available at one stage, all has been going well with Matakawau’s Recycling Depot since Awhitu Landcare assumed management. Graham and Gloria Wratt continue to transport the glass weekly to Waiuku. Residents would assist Graham & Gloria by spending time making sure appropriate items are put in the appropriate bins. Rob T continues to keep the site perimeter clean and tidy. Gary would like to thank all the volunteers who assisted in tree removal in preparation for APL’s take-over.

For The Record.

Figures released by the FDC’s Solid Waste Manager Nigel Birse, show that January’s inorganic rubbish collection handled:
9.98 tonnes of steel at Matakawau; 2.52 tonnes at Te Toro.
8.2 tonnes of refuse at Matakawau; 2.98 at Te Toro.
Many thanks to all who helped.



Kate Says.

Nearly 200 replied to the recent Landcare questionnaire. (Yours is still welcome). And though some 400 calendars have been distributed copies are still available free for collection at the office.

Attended hours are:

Monday & Tuesday	9 to 2.30
Wednesday	9.30 to 2
Thursday	Closed
Friday	9 to 12

Telephone 235 1650

Opportunity Knocks.

More information from Kate.

kate@ahwitu.org.nz

Finding the Words with Mahadevi (Norris Peel). A 6 weeks course to help you handle conflict and really say what you feel. Just 3 persons needed to make the required 10.

Starts Thursday 10 May, 10am to noon Pollok Hall. \$30.

Tractor Driving – May Instructor: Farmsafe Duration: 2 days	Agrichemicals/ Approved Handler Training - May Duration: 1 day Location: Awhitu Central Fee: \$55 for NZ residents
Indian Cooking – May FULL	
Riding ATV’s/Quads - May FULL	Animal Handling - June Instructor: Farmsafe Duration: 2 days Free to NZ residents over 16