



Peninsula Enviro News

Awhitu Peninsula Landcare Inc

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Convenor's Christmas Report

The recent final Awhitu Landcare bash of the year proved both convivial and informative. Invited FDC planners David Pentz and Leah Alexander demonstrated customer focus by answering a steady stream of questions – mostly from Landcare members. Fewer attendees meant no queues and ample time for considered answers. It appears that the Council's new planning document has removed the ability for owners to harvest titles for riparian and coastal protection work, with a view to preventing an overwhelming of countryside protection programmes. Unfortunately, the downside may be that major West Coast retirements/plantings go on the back burner; ditto riparian restoration. However, the latter may yet be balanced by the Fonterra clean streams accord.

At all times Landcare aims to offer constructive solutions to local environmental problems. The pity is, so few are adopted by other than members. This is in spite of our efforts to promote such things as CarbonZero or plastic recycling and despite our efforts promoting them and offering speakers on these and other subjects. A task for the new year will be to change this.

- In reviewing the immediate past year, highlights for me have been many. They include:
- Our well-attended wetland and bush rambles and on-going progress with these projects.
 - Handover of the Matakawau Recycling Centre as an operating entity to the Council. Gary Marson and M.L. Soong drove this project and, with Charmaine Pountney tying-up loose ends. Thanks too to Rob T, who was key player until sidelined by health problems, and to Thorsten for stepping in for Rob. Current contractors Graham and Gloria Wratt are keeping the Centre shipshape.
 - Our marram project on Douglas Road was completed on time and on budget. Despite buffeting by strong winds plant survival in sheltered areas is close to 100% at time of writing, with exposed dune plantings hanging-in at 60%. Crucial thanks go to Dr. Doug Hicks, NZ Steel Maioro, Gary Marson, Jock Patterson, Chris Hull and their planting team. The landowners are planning revegetation of destocked land next winter and baling surplus pasture for summer erosion control.
 - Glenn Knight's Pest Control project has taken a major step forward with the completion of the cross-peninsula bait and trap line. That, and a new initiative to nail coastal flax dwelling possums at home, should add to already impressive results.
 - Plantings – always at the top of the list – were exemplary as usual. Thanks in no small part to the combined diligence of Ann Lee and Nicky Reynolds.

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They were jointly responsible for deployment of some 1500 Landcare plants, with supplementary stock funded by the Environmental Initiatives Fund and FDC. With everyone raring to go in 2008 Nicky is already leading the charge by planning purchase of specialized plants with funds from FDC and EIF.

The Lighthouse plantings were particularly enjoyable, especially as an extra session late in the planting season pushed us ahead of schedule. Landcare member Sue Johns has provided impetus for Lighthouse plantings with endemic species and is undertaking organisation of appropriate signage to that effect. On another note; it was interesting to observe the numbers of Lighthouse visitors in all weathers – proving this facility is a year-round draw card.

- We are fortunate in having FDC help in purchasing specialized and often hard to grow species. NZ Steel too has kept our regular monthly potting team supplied with fresh plant mix.

I'll finish with a thanks to the whole Landcare Team for a job well done, with a special mention for Kate Fegan for making mine and everyone's life easier. Without her cheery presence in the office things could have been very tedious.

Merry Xmas All – Anna

Are Eco Bulbs To Become A Problem?

The whole world it seems has suddenly turned on to long life eco bulbs and yet no plan has yet been launched to deal with the high levels of mercury they contain; sure to become problem when they start ending their projected life of 7 years minimum. It's something to think about whenever you break an eco bulb between now and then. (Pictures from Sue and Paul's recent big adventure in Iran - Ed)



Eco Bulbed chandelier
ChakChak cave



View from ChakChak shrine

Get Your Inorganics Ready!!!!!!

Saturday 2 February is the big day when stuff you cannot stuff in the rubbish bag will be collected at Matakawau 8.30 to noon and again at Te Toro from 1 to 3.30pm. Let us see if we can better last year's 12.5 tonnes of steel and 11.18 tonnes of refuse.

Enthusiasm for Recycle Shop

At a meeting coordinated by Charmaine Pountney on 28 November to gauge interest in a recycle shop attached to the Waiuku Transfer Station, approval to proceed was almost unanimous. Representatives from ARC, FDC, Community Board, Waiuku College and Awhitu Landcare all attended and a steering committee appointed as a result. Members include Jock Patterson (Convenor), Bruce Russell, Michelle Pepper, Colin North (Waiuku College) and Gary Marson. Further appointments are pending. This much-discussed project is now closer to reality.

Wondering What You Missed???

Labour Weekend's Awhitu Landcare walk was a treat many may regret missing. The route covered an area rarely visited and not likely to be any more accessible once the Meikle subdivision goes through. About 60 walkers (fewer than expected possibly due to overcast and windy weather) caught Brian Taverner's faithful bus to and from the top of Meikle's hill. From there the inimitable David Craig set a healthy pace down Meikle's big gully and back up to the start point via Norbis' must-be-seen-to-be-believed revegetation project. Thanks to helpers – Glenn Knight, Chris Hull, Anna & Ian McNaughton. And Michelle Pepper and the Awhitu Netball girls for efficiently feeding so many hollow legs.

Team Effort Made Festival Enjoyable

Word has it that Awhitu Landcare made an impressive showing at the recent Awhitu Festival. Our strong team of representatives – Glenn Knight, Chris Katterns (of the ARC no less), Chris Hull, Charmaine Pountney, Kate Fegan, Anna McNaughton, Ian McNaughton, Jock Patterson and Jack Harper – took turns at manning the Landcare stand we shared with Awhitu Enterprise. Special thanks to Wayne and Trish Aspin for loan of the orienteering tent.



ARC takes a turn for landcare

Waimatuku /Hamilton's Gap Report

The recent meeting by interested parties with FDC's Greg Lowe failed to establish the need for a dedicated beach care group for Waimatuku. However, all assembled agreed that pressing issues like erosion control and vehicle access require management. Mr. Lowe appeared happy to allow local initiatives to continue under the guidance of Landcare. Lucy Rutherford has offered to co-ordinate these efforts. Anyone with suggestions or willing hands should contact Lucy on (09) 235 1139 or 021 1708543.

YOUR READ IT HERE FIRST!

Awhitu Landcare and ARC combine to Keep Pesky Possums Out.

Member concern at possum re-invasion from the West Coast is producing action. If you're a possum, you don't have to look far along the Coast to find food and shelter for the rest of your life. That is until a bunch of your brethren arrive to force you inland or further along the beach still.

Putting this another way, recent records of bait taken and traps sprung along the Pest Control Barrier indicate that there is a higher concentration of possums in the final 600 metres on the Western end than anywhere else along the Barrier's 7.5 kilometres length.

Accordingly, Awhitu Landcare in conjunction with ARC's Bio-security unit have devised a plan to use Feratox (Cyanide) for at least one kilometre north of the barrier for some 600 metres inland.

Obviously this not a task for amateurs so the ARC is providing their highly skilled and licensed Bio-security officer to be assisted by myself in installing bait stations along the cliff tops and in coastal flax. The stations will first be loaded with non-toxic pre-feed to encourage repeat visits. This will be done twice (but don't tell the possums) then we step in with the fearsome Feratox. After a visit to count corpses and assess effectiveness we'll decide if another round of toxin is required.

Naturally this is not a cheap undertaking and, fortunately, it is covered by rates you pay the ARC which also provides us with free possum bait/bait stations/traps etc; removal of designated plant pests (like Old Mans Beard – now almost eliminated from the peninsula) and access to free advice and support with other pests – animal and vegetable.

Glenn Knight
Pest Control Manager

Peninsula Fame Spreading

Ever since Jack Harper collected his ARC award the world seems keen on learning more about Awhitu. Some recent occasions:

- Jack, Paul Dixon (both from Landcare) and historian Clyde Hamilton were interviewed on Jim Mora's "Inside New Zealand" programme in October. A DVD recording of this event is available for audition at the Landcare Office.
- The Dominion Sunday Times gave readers a taste of Awhitu attractions.
- The New Zealand Herald devoted half a page in their Great Getaways Around NZ series on 23 October.
- Comedian Mike King and film crew appeared at the Awhitu Festival, and at the Lighthouse the following week-end, to capture local life for the forthcoming Maori TV series "Lost in Translation".

Food for Thought

Chris "Handy Hands" Hull snapped this at the Matakawau Recycling Centre recently. Chris is a much-welcomed recruit to the Trees for Survival team that now is responsible for 6 units in local schools, that's on top of Awhitu Landcare's own propagation facility. If you too would like to help with the vital job of turning seeds into trees call Kate (09) 235 1650.



'PERSEVERANCE

**Effort only fully releases its
rewards after a person
refuses to quit.'**

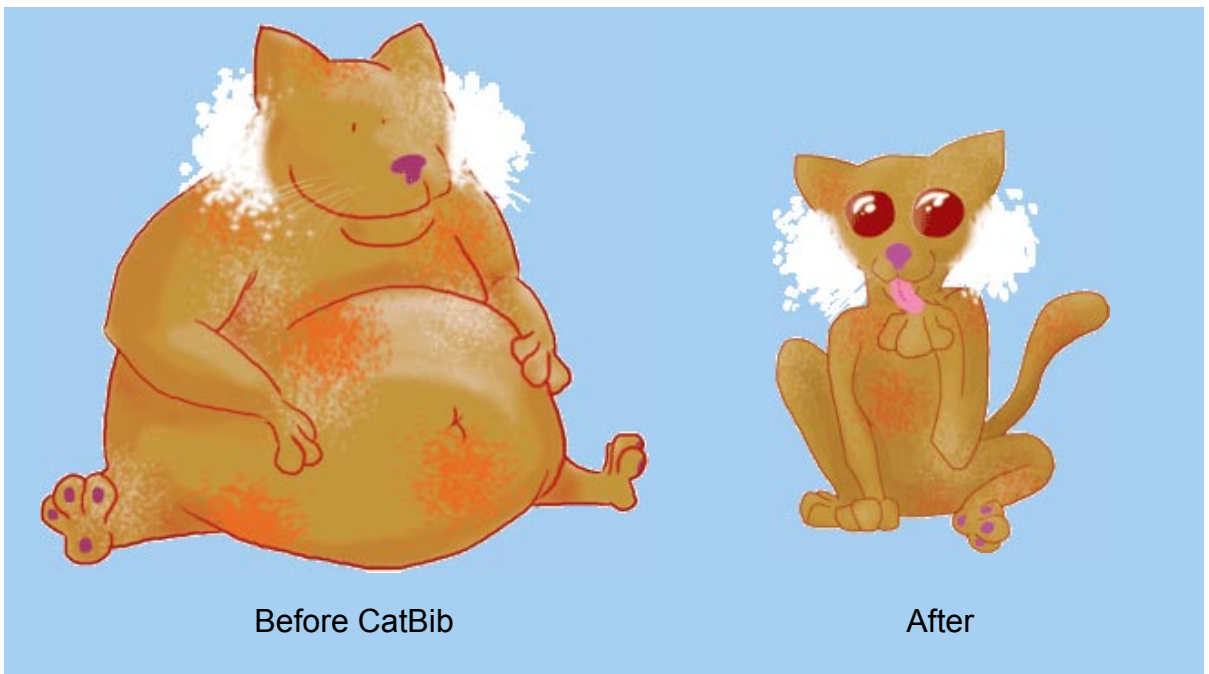
Belling the Cat

Can moggie be deterred from hunting endangered wild life? An Aussie study makes interesting reading:

Fifty -six cats identified by their owners as known hunters completed the study, which took place in Perth, over a period of six weeks during November/December 2005. Each cat spent a period of three weeks wearing a commercial product called CatBib and three weeks without it and the number of prey brought home during each period was recorded.

Participating cats caught a total of 13 bird species, five mammal species, and 11 reptiles/frogs. CatBibs stopped 81% of cats from catching birds; 45% of cats from catching mammals; 33% from catching reptiles/frogs. CatBibs in two different colours were equally effective. There was no statistically significant evidence that adding bells conferred additional protection. Most cats (86%) adjusted immediately to wearing CatBib, 10% took a day or so and only 4% took longer.

Short version complete with cats wearing pretty coloured bibs at: <http://www.catgoods.com/>



Kate's Kristmas Kwikies (Including original gift ideas)

1. Dangle unwanted/unappreciated music or games disks in the garden to scare birds.
2. Turn wrapping paper into ground cover before spreading mulch or compost.
3. Give something useful, thoughtful and cheap – a recyclable shopping bag plus handy paper-to-paper stapler, just \$2 the pair from the Landcare Office.
4. Spread the good word by gifting an Awhitu Landcare membership, which entitles the recipient to six free issues of PEN. Such a bargain!
5. Encourage planting by giving seedling trees - locally eco-sourced of course. Call Kate (09) 2351650 for details.

Thanks from the Editorial Team

We've had a lot of fun bringing you PEN over the past year – which more than compensates for the effort and late nights involved. We are particularly pleased at the way Landcare members have freely contributed material. And thank Anna, especially, for her patience. We look forward to the opportunity to do it again.

Paul Dixon & Euan Craig

Marram Planter For Hire

Born in the 1930's & 40's but proudly restored by Awhitu Landcare members and regularly employed on local sand blows. A most effective antique. Enquiries to Kate (09) 235 1560. Crew supplied by arrangement too.



Precision planting.



Takes the back-break out of Marram planting.



Gary loads-up.



Yes...it's Jock!

Welcome Back Dave

PEN's USA correspondent and past Awhitu Landcare Convenor Dave Millett gave some fresh-off-the plane impressions. "Ahhh...isn't Orua Bay magic" were his very first words as he seated himself over fresh coffee. A few random thoughts follow:

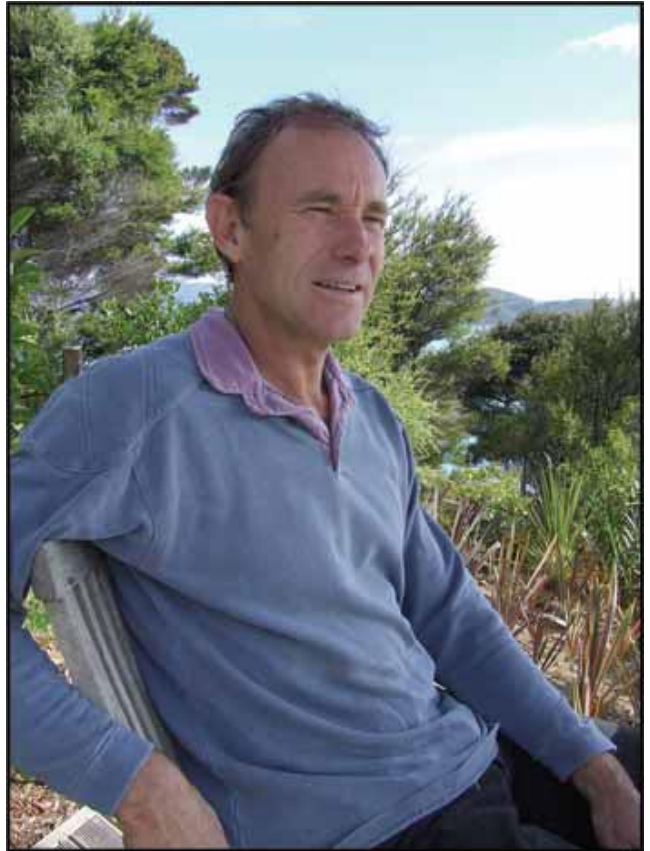
"America is in hock to China which will soon start calling the shots... teachers regularly go through terrorism attack drills with pupils, which often means practicing 'what-to-do' in the event....relieving teachers are not highly paid there...and obtaining regular work in the States is still difficult for anyone perceived as alien". Dave, however, finds his sparky skills much in demand... but was almost shocked at being offered a job at Glenbrook on his first day back.

America's love affair with guns is as strong as ever. Dave cites visiting a 'Gun and Coon Hound Swap-meet' where everyone openly paraded favourite firearms and gun purchase was relatively simple, "Alcohol was forbidden, thank God", remarked Dave. Upon returning to New Zealand he was heartened by a prominent policeman admitting to mistakes made – "Not a likely occurrence over there!"

In some instances Americans are more environmentally aware than New Zealanders. Citizens are embarrassed by the country's reputation as the world's greatest polluter. Though it has not signed the Kyoto Agreement, individual states are doing things about climate change that are much more rigorous than anything seen here in New Zealand. Still, he looks forward to reading PEN and is grateful for other local news regularly sent to him by Awhitu residents.

His first act on arrival in Auckland was to purchase a coffee machine – "because I'll miss the coffee they have over there"...and to start looking for electrical work. Wife Julie joins him at the end of the month and the couple plans to remain on the Peninsula to about May next year.

Dave can be contacted on 0274967904.



Dave Millett, happy to be home

STOP PRESS! Boneseed Bio-control Under Test

Chris Katterns, one of Awhitu Landcare's many friends, recently announced that the ARC has begun a trial of Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*) munching caterpillars over at Whatipu. Let us pray for lots of northerlies to blow the resulting moths our way. And soon.



merry pohutuxmas

**From
everyone
here at
PEN**

www.awhitu.org.nz