

OCTOBER
2010

Waikanae Estuary Care Group Inc.



Secretary: Lyn Whiley
Phone: 04 905 2748

Editor: Malcolm McLeod



Our new Chairman

The AGM

Was held at the Library Community meeting room on Monday 6th September. About forty five people attended, a full house, helped, I suspect by the presence of two very interesting guest speakers, Dr. Bruce McFadgen, who spoke about the archaeology research carried out along the coastal region between Paekakariki and Wanganui. To me, archaeology means middens, old bones and pyramids, but this talk was about old tree stumps, sea shells and sand dunes, and the evidence of significant tsunamis. Watch out.

Isobel Gabites spoke about the natural movement of river and land, particularly around estuaries and of the natural regeneration of flora. Isabel is a landscape ecologist and, after considerable research into soil types, water tables etc, is about to produce the next five year plan for the care group.

Jeff Eaton, our past chairman is stepping down. Jeff has been chairman for four years and has been responsible for the effective funding applications so necessary for our work. Thank you Jeff for all the work you have done, the committee wishes to express it's appreciation for your contribution to the Care Group.

Meet our new Chairman

Introducing Graeme Cook, our new chairman, Graeme moved here from Southland and has been with us for four years and on the committee for two years, he will be easily recognised by all who attend the various working parties. Graeme lives on the Waikanae side of the river, which is a plus as it spreads the fact that the estuary includes both sides of the river.

Chairman's report

As your new chairman I look forward to carrying on Jeff's excellent work for the group, begun in 2004. The results of your efforts are obvious and very satisfying.

Let's forget the difficult planting season and move on. Spring weed growth needs suppressing, with mulch or weeding in all plantings you may still need your gumboots for a while though!! There will be selective weeding, initially under DoCs supervision, then by our specialist weed team. "The weed busters" Committee members are looking at DoC's draft 5 year restoration plan 2011-2016 which will be ready for the 2011 planting year.

New committee, new plan, new beginning.

Graeme Cook

Shade House Drama

It is not often that you see a shade house doing hurdles over six foot fences, but that is exactly what Ed Isaacs saw when he looked out his Kotuku Drive window a couple of weeks back. The shade house, that had to be shifted to make way for earth works on Kotuku Developers land, had been moved but was unfortunately not pegged down sufficiently in its new location...

When gale force winds hit the estuary late one afternoon, the Mary Poppins impersonating shade house took off... it gained some height and speed as it jumped fences and traversed back yards (narrowly missing Jamie's chooks). Ed and Mike Hardiman chased it down Deb Finn's driveway, where it was secured to the fence until the damage could be assessed in more favorable conditions.

In the light of a new (and not so windy) day, the shade house had clearly suffered from the previous day's excitement and had transformed itself into a tangled mess of shade cloth and bent piping. With the group not having the spare cash to spend on a new shade house, the call went out for 'help!'

Greater Wellington staff managed to locate a shade house of the same vintage that has been utilised for a riparian stream restoration project at Ngati Awa Retreat up Reikorangi way.

Thanks to the generosity of the people at the Ngati Awa Retreat, it was agreed for the shade house to be relocated to the Waikanae Estuary Care Group project. This has been the answer to our quite troubled dreams, as we now look ahead to growing on thousands of new seedlings for planting in 2011.

Graeme and Mike dismantling the shade house to move it to its new home at the estuary.



The replacement shade house in place

Fitting the replacement shade house and potting up benches into the Hilux was a little tricky...



As most of you know, the owners of the land on which our shade house activities are based have decided to level the land and put in place the kerbing, and roading and reticulate the services in preparation of sales. Needless to say, this caused us some anxiety about our immediate future. However, the land owners assured us that we would be safe for another five to seven years. The contractors, Goodmans, were very helpful and offered all consideration for our enterprise. They informed us that the container, tonnes of potting mix, most plants and one shade house will need to be shifted... gulp, 'how are we going to manage that?'

'No trouble' said the boss, 'we have the gear and the muscle!' Indeed they had, in no time a couple of strops were thrown over the container and it was lifted with ease, out of the way. The potting mix was thrown into the bucket of a front end loader and that disappeared for two or three weeks, the shade house was lifted by four people and walked out of the battle zone. (See story above). Trenches dug pipes laid, ground levelled and everything was put back

The container is carefully replaced



Meet the 2010/11 committee members

We are lucky to have an energetic and committed committee of local volunteers. We also have representatives on the committee from Department of Conservation, Greater Wellington Regional Council and Kapiti Coast District Council. You'll hear more about these people in a future newsletter.



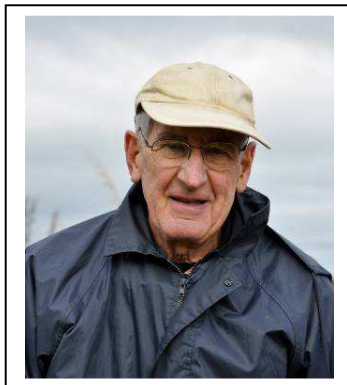
Chairman – Graeme Cook



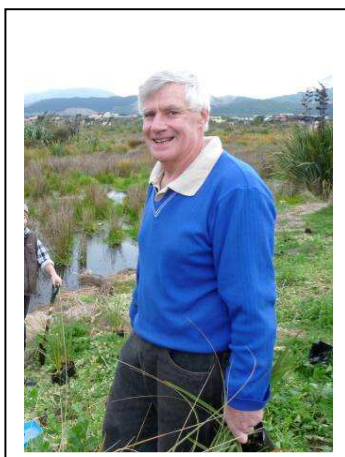
Deputy Chairman –
Ernie Stevenson



Secretary – Lyn Whiley



Treasurer – Brian Chittenden



Operations Manager –
Mike Hardiman



Publicity Officer and
Librarian – Anne Isaac



Operations Support &
Newsletter Editor –
Malcolm McLeod



Shadehouse manager – Deb Finn



Newsletter assistant – Caroline Cowie

New committee members



John Drew



Ron Smith

Monitoring pest animals and specialist weed team

DoC looking for specialist weed volunteers

Eric Stone from Department of Conservation is looking for some expressions of interest for volunteer weeding work in the estuary, beyond the Saturday work parties. It would involve sweeping areas for invasive weeds and either hand pulling or cutting the bases and applying stump treatment. The Care Group has engaged in this sort of work before but Eric is hoping to form a dedicated team which will be able to make inroads on a bigger scale.

Eric said the concept of a community based weed team concentrating on certain problem weeds has great potential. Even if the group only operated for a couple of hours a week, as long as a systematic approach was taken it would certainly be of value. If you are interested in participating in such a group, please contact Eric.

Eric's contact details are: email estone@doc.govt.nz or phone (04) 296 1392.

Here's an example of the type of work you would be engaged in.



Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera* ssp. *monilifera*)



Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*)

Boneseed is a fast growing shrub from South Africa that produces up to 50,000 seeds every year. It grows best in dry sunny conditions in coastal areas, cliffs, sand dunes and wasteland. It doesn't like heavy shade and wet soils.

Description:

- Bushy shrub up to three metres tall (most in the estuary are less than a metre).
- Leathery, paddle-shaped leaves, with toothed edges and a powdery surface.
- Yellow daisy-like flowers from September to February.
- Clusters of small fruit that turn from green to black when mature.

Impact: Boneseed replaces lower-growing native species and prevents the establishment of native plant seedlings. It colonises disturbed sites faster than native species, and creates heavy shade in otherwise open spaces.

Control: Pull shrub out including roots or if too large for this, cut off near ground level with loppers or a saw and treat the stump with vigilant.

Volunteers Matter: Caroline's thesis

As part of my Masters thesis I researched community-based ecological restoration groups around the Wellington Region to understand why people volunteer for these groups. I was lucky enough to volunteer with all of the groups in my project, including the Waikanae Estuary Care Group. My thesis found what many of you probably recognise instinctively, that these groups are made up of motivated and community-minded people who care about our local environments and are prepared to actually get out there and make things happen.

This group, and many others, are investing huge amounts of person hours and working in a range of jobs all over the Wellington Region to restore local coastal environments back to a more natural state. While many people initially join these groups to do something actively good for the environment, many become dedicated members, motivated by the new skills and knowledge they gain, the friends that they make and the visible environmental gains they can see as the result of their collective hard work.

It was great to see what a difference these groups are making and how important and volunteers are to places like the Waikanae Estuary. And like Jeff said at our recent AGM, "We need to get the community involved", so why not bring a friend or loved one along next time and help keep this great group going.

A huge thank you to Jeff for making time to talk to me, to all those who filled out and returned my questionnaire and all the others I had the pleasure of meeting, volunteering and learning with – I will hopefully see you at the next working bee!

Caroline



Local schools pitch in to help

The Care Group is very fortunate to have two local schools involved in our restoration project. Each year both Waikanae and Kenakena Schools grow on hundreds of native seedlings in their own school shade houses. The students then bring the plants down to the estuary to plant. This winter five senior classes from both schools planted close to a thousand plants each with Kenakena School planting on the south side at RPS 5 and Waikanae School planting on the north side around RPS 14.

Students from both schools are a real pleasure to work with and great ambassadors for their schools. The Care Group members who volunteer on these days always enjoy the enthusiasm and energy of these young environmentalists.



Graeme Cook planting with Dylan Stirling and Billy Provan-Monk from Waikanae School

Up-coming working bees

Please note there have been some changes to locations for working bees due to very wet site conditions in some places around the estuary

Saturday 2 October

Meet on Manly Street (opposite Hadfield Place), Paraparaumu for a varied morning of work. Some in-fill planting is required, along with weeding and mulching if time permits. Morning tea is provided. Warm clothes and sturdy footwear are essential.

Saturday 16 October

Mulching at the Honda Tree planting site. We are meeting at the end of Takahe Drive (off Kotuku Drive), Paraparaumu. Look for the Care Group flag. Warm clothes and sturdy footwear are essential. Morning tea is provided.

Saturday 30 October

Our very last planting day of the season is to be held at RPS 2. Meet on the bend of Manly Street, Paraparaumu. Look for the Care Group flag. This is a very wet site and we have been waiting for the water levels to drop so that we can plant... gumboots are highly recommended! Warm clothes and sturdy footwear are essential. Morning tea is provided.

Saturday 13 November

We are heading to the north side of the Waikanae River to weed and mulch around the salt marsh at RPS 14. Meet in the second car park (alongside the Waikanae River) at the end of Tutere Street, Waikanae. Look for the Care Group flag. Warm clothes and sturdy footwear are essential. Morning tea is provided.

Saturday 27 November

It's time to head back to our planting site at Otaihanga to release our plants from the determined weeds. Meet on the bend of Otaihanga (before the domain). Look for the Care Group flag. Warm clothes and sturdy footwear are essential. Morning tea is provided.

Saturday 11 December

We're back in Otaihanga to finish off the weeding at RPS 8. Meet on the bend of Otaihanga (before the domain). Look for the Care Group flag. Warm clothes and sturdy footwear are essential. Morning tea is provided.

Working bees are a fun and social way to spend a Saturday morning!
Come along and join in the fun!

Malcolm, Ernie and Mike enjoy a hot cuppa at a recent working bee

