



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

NEWSLETTER NO 1, APRIL 2010

Welcome

Kia ora tatou, greetings to everyone and welcome to the first Take Care Newsletter for 2010. This year is a special year, being the International Year for Biodiversity and also the year when we celebrate 10 years of our care groups programme. To help us celebrate we need your photos – see the story below.

Greater Wellington Environmental Awards

Greater Wellington's Environmental Awards are one way we can say "thanks" to the hard working volunteers working with us to improve the region's environment. This year, the winners of the community awards were the **Waikanae Estuary Care Group** (Rata Community Partnership Award) and **Peter Reimann, the Trelissick Park Group chairman** (Community Environmental Leadership Award). Below is more information about the winners.

Waikanae Estuary Care Group



Cr Barbara Donaldson (left) and Cr Fran Wilde (right) with award winners Jeff Eaton, Malcolm McLeod and Gaeme Cook from the Waikanae Estuary care group

The Waikanae Estuary Care Group's progress in restoring the Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is laying the groundwork for the group's vision of a native bird corridor from Kapiti Island to the Tararuas. Since 2004 the group has planted over 25,000 native trees and progressively

eliminated weeds to return the area closer to its pre European vegetation. The group has its own shade house and also supervises the planting of suitable native plants by local schools. Detailed planning and a commitment to monitoring and following through are strong features of the group's work. Members are hardworking and highly skilled knowledgeable about what works well in their area and also assisting local schools with their planting efforts.

Peter Reimann, Trelissick Park Group



From left, Cr Barbara Donaldson, Peter Reimann and Regional Chair Fran Wilde

Despite a humble and almost retiring personality, Peter Reimann has a steely determination to get the job done. He's been instrumental in restoration work in Trelissick Park; he has an expert eye and inspires and encourages all those he works with. Peter wears many hats, but his primary focus is achieving the environmental goals in Trelissick Park's Five Year Restoration Plan – planting streamsidings, removing weeds, pest animal control, and planting fast-growing species to suppress weed regrowth – and huge progress is being made in all areas. For more information about other award winners visit www.gw.govt.nz.

Take Care funding extensions

Moehau Stream Care, Waikanae Estuary Care Group, Nga Uruora Kapiti, Silverstream Care Group and DUNE have all applied for and been given an extension to their funding and these groups will feature in our next newsletter.

New groups in 2009

We were very pleased to be able to welcome a number of new groups to Take Care in 2009. Groups that commenced with us in July 2009 were the Peka Peka Dune Restoration Group, which is restoring native plants in an area of back dune and ephemeral wetland, and Places for Penguins, a group restoring native coastal species and creating Little Blue penguin habitat at Tarakena

Bay on the Wellington South coast. The Papawai-Mangara Stream Group, which is planting the margins of the Papawai Stream near Greytown, rejoined Take Care after a year of funding from other sources,

Groups leaving the programme

At the end of the last financial year, June 2009, four groups finished their funding cycles and it's worth reflecting on what they've achieved.

Eastbourne Dune Protection Group

The Eastbourne Dune Protection group has spent the past five years restoring dunes alongside Marine Parade and outside the cricket club. This group of residents, led by David McDougall, has turned out in numbers each week to plant or weed and the results are amazing!. Large sweeps of spinifex and pingao now occupy what was previously marram grass and coastal weeds and the group has re-introduced the threatened coastal species, Euphorbia glauca, (New Zealand Shore Spurge) These plants are showing signs that they are very happy in the gravelly sand. The group continues to hold regular working bees to maintain the planted area. David is hopeful that new groups from the community will be inspired to continue the restoration along the beach.



Top: Eastbourne Cricket Club site early planting day and bottom, Pingao and spinifex swathe in 2008



Friends of Greendale Reserve

This dedicated group, led by Phil Palmer, is made up primarily of Kapiti Forest and Bird members and local residents. It is a foundation group of the Take Care programme, having been supported by Greater Wellington since 2000, and has achieved so much. The Muaupoko Stream has been completely revegetated from pasture and Greendale Reserve has gained a much larger area of native bush. The group harnessed the energy of many young planters from Greendale School and Paraparaumu College for several years. Large amounts of mulch have been used to retain moisture around the plantings and suppress weeds during the dry Kapiti summers. Most of the plants are now so well grown that they now longer allow weeds to penetrate.



Muaupoko Stream before the plantings and after, showing extensive growth

Riversdale Beach Care

This project began in the early 1990's when local residents became concerned about the damage to the fore-dunes from motorbikes and foot traffic and erosion following easterly storms. Initially beach wardens informed locals and visitors about the problem and this was followed by planting of sand binding species such as spinifex and pingao. The group, which has been led by Trish Taylor, established walkways and sand ladders to protect the dunes in high traffic areas and planted a display area to educate beach users about the role of plants in stabilising and protecting dunes. Schools involved with this project have been Masterton Intermediate, Whareama School and Tinui School.

This year the group received \$24,000 from the Community Conservation Fund to fund more work south of the Riversdale village so did not apply for any further Take Care funding.



Riversdale Beach before and after

Waimeha Restoration Group

The Waimeha Lagoon restoration project has focused primarily on weed control and re-establishing native wetland plants. Pam Sinclair leads this group which generally has two working bees per month that are attended by up to a dozen regulars. Not only do the volunteers grow, plant and weed the wetland, they also monitor water quality, bird life, and since 2002, have run a comprehensive animal pest control programme. Group members share what they know about running a successful restoration programme with the community by hosting school, church and gardening groups.



Waimeha Lagoon planting day 2006 and the boardwalk through Waimeha Lagoon

Celebrating 10 Years of the Take Care Programme

This year we are celebrating ten years of Greater Wellington's Take Care programme, with a major planting event in Queen Elizabeth Park planned for Sunday 15 August. We will tell you more about the event closer to the time. As part of the celebration we would like to receive a few photos of your restoration project, in particular before, during and after photos, for a photographic exhibition. We do have quite a few photos here but if you have taken photos that you would like to see in the exhibition, please send them in. We would also like to recognise the people who do the work so would also like to receive photos which include your care group members as well. Our communications adviser Matt Velde is also keen, in the lead up to the event, to interview care group members about the benefits of belonging to a care group and what they've gained personally.

* Please send your photos to Juzah Zammit-Ross, email juzah.zammit-ross@gw.govt.nz or post hard copies to Juzah Zammit Ross, Environmental Education Department, Greater Wellington Regional Council, PO Box 11646, Wellington.

Health and Safety

There are several ways to help keep your group safe while carrying out your restoration work. All community groups receiving Take Care funding from Greater Wellington should already have:

- a first aid kit to take to working bees
- a copy of the 'Health and Safety for Care Groups' document, and
- a Site Safety Report

Please contact Jo Fagan on 04 801 1027 or email jo.fagan@gw.govt.nz if your group is missing any of these. Before the planting season begins you should check the first aid kit and let us know if it needs to be restocked.

The Health and Safety for Care Groups document is currently being rewritten and we will send you a copy as soon as it's available. We are also in the process of updating all care groups' site safety reports. These list any potential hazards on your site and the steps you should take to deal with them. We will involve you in this process to ensure all the known hazards are covered and you are aware of what you need to do.

We recommend that one person within your group takes on the responsibility for looking after Health and Safety. As well as being responsible for the first aid kit, they should do a quick site check before each working bee for hazards, and inform new volunteers of any hazards on-site.

Some groups like to rotate this role so that everyone gets a turn.

The Convolvulus family

The convolvulus family in New Zealand is comprised of 4 native species and one weed species. One of native species, *Calystegia marginata*, is only found in the far north. Two of our native species are commonly seen. One is shore bindweed, *Calystegia soldanella*, below, which grows mainly on the shores of lakes or the sea and has a bright pink flower with white stripes and kidney shaped very leathery leaves. The plant dies away in winter but pops up again in spring.



The third is *Calystegia tuguriorum*, below left, the climbing convolvulus, which scrambles over forest edges or scrub. It has a white flower and triangular shaped leaves and is easy to grow from seed, although there is a caterpillar which attacks the seed so often the pods are empty.



The fourth species, *Calystegia sepium subsp. Roseate*, above right, is known as pink bindweed. This species is also found throughout New Zealand and is typically found on the edges of coastal or lowland forest or on the edges of wetlands. This species can be aggressive and is not recommended for planting in restoration sites.

A weed many of us have to deal with in our restoration projects is *Calystegia silvatica* subspecies *disjuncta*. Commonly known as convolvulus, this weed tends to invade sites soon after planting. It can very quickly smother small plants and is difficult to get rid of. It can also hybridise with native pink bindweed. These hybrids produce plants with pink flowers with white stripes. Greater Wellington pest plant officer Darryl Kee recommends unwinding the vines off all plants and laying them down on the ground to enable a qualified contractor to carefully spray with Banvine at a rate of 12ml per litre of water. Otherwise, if the vines are snapped off repeatedly over the course of several years the underground tuber will exhaust itself trying to regrow. But if you leave it for too long the plant will recover and you are back to square one!



Calystegia silvatica subspecies *disjuncta*.

Summer/ early Autumn Care Group 'To Do' List

Summer and early Autumn are usually much slower, more relaxed time for care groups. However, there are a few important things that should be done now to make sure you are ready for planting season in winter.

Planning

It is a good time to set dates for working bees for the coming year, particularly if you need Greater Wellington tools or staff. We work with 35 care groups across the region so by planning now and getting in early, you can be sure your group will have what it needs for working bees.

Plant ordering/site preparation/plant releasing

By now your group should have:

- ordered the plants you will need for this coming planting season, and
- organised site preparation (weed control) for your planting site.

If you haven't finished these yet, they should be done as soon as possible.

Site preparation and plant releasing is essential to the success of restoration. Different weeds need to be sprayed at different times of the year, and many weeds need to be sprayed more than once for total control. Greater Wellington has pest plant experts so if you need advice please phone 04 526 5325.

Seed Collection

If you are growing your own plants, most species produce seed over the summer/autumn months. Make sure you have permission from the landowner before collecting seed. It is important to ensure that the seed you collect is from naturally occurring wild plants. If collected from plants near to urban areas it is likely that hybrids could occur from cross-pollination of wild and planted areas of unknown origin. Collecting a small amount of seed from many different plants rather than a lot from a few plants will give you a good genetic spread which will help your plant population to be robust and less vulnerable to disease. Only take as much as you need as there may be others collecting seed from what are often limited wild populations. Plants need to be left with enough seed to increase their numbers naturally as well as supply a food source to native

birds, lizards and insects. If you need any advice on seed collecting please phone Robyn Smith on 04 803 0367.

Animal pests

Summer is also a good time to sort out a plan of attack for any animal pests that your group is up against. Greater Wellington has useful pamphlets about the best ways of getting rid of the following animal pests: rats, mice, feral goats, pigs and deer, possums, wasps, feral or unwanted cats, rooks, mustelids, rabbits or hares and magpies. For a copy of any of these please phone (04) 526-5328.

Pollution Reporting

Greater Wellington's Environmental Protection team manages pollution via a 24-hour, 7-day incident response service. To report an incident phone the environmental protection team on freephone 0800 4WGN REG (0800 496 734) or email environmental.protection@gw.govt.nz

If possible, take photographs (without being seen to avoid confrontation). Do not take any risks or put yourself in danger. It can also be useful to note down the following:

- Names on trucks/vehicles, if any
- Vehicle registration number (this will allow us to find the potential offender)
- Date and time of incident
- Location of incident

Staff News

Part way through 2009 we were pleased to see the return of Jo Fagan from maternity leave to the position of Community Environmental Projects Coordinator. Jo and Juzah now job share a full-time position. We have also added Richard Morgan to our line-up. Richard is an Environmental Educator with the Take Action programme, however, we have his assistance for one and a half days per week. Of course the Take Care team cannot facilitate 35 groups on its own; there are a further fifteen staff in Greater Wellington who also work with Take Care groups.

Facebook page

Internet social networking sites such as facebook and twitter are changing the way we share information and the speed with which we share it. With that in mind GW is interested in setting up a facebook page for our care groups so that we can share information with you more regularly, and so that you can share your group's successes, photos and ideas. What we don't know is how many people within groups or groups themselves have facebook pages and we would like to find out! A facebook page for care groups is also a way we can share our successes and stories with a much wider audience beyond care group members. Please email matt.velde@gw.govt.nz if you're already on facebook.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Greater Wellington
Regional Council
Wellington
PO Box 11646

Greater Wellington
Regional Council
Masterton
PO Box 41

T 04 384 5708
F 04 385 6960
www.gw.govt.nz

T 06 378 2484
F 06 378 2146
www.gw.govt.nz

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