

Waikanae Estuary Care Group Inc.

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Chairman's Report

Welcome to 2010, hopefully wiser and rested!

Hard to believe that we are into the last year of the first decade. The summer so far has favoured plants rather than sunbathing, and a lot of our plants are looking good. Unfortunately the weeds have enjoyed regular waterings too, and we'll need to work hard to keep on top of weedgrowth.

We are now back into fortnightly working bees on plant releasing (weeding) and our weekly Shadehouse working bees on Thursdays have a busy programme ahead and are popular.

Please get involved. DoC are continuing to make a significant contribution with weed control, and site preparation for next year.

We also have another corporate group of approximately 50 people from the Environmental Risk Management Authority coming to work for us next Friday 26 February – if you want to get involved in organising / managing this, please get in touch.

Jeff Eaton



Rata Community Partnership Award

On 2 December 2009, Graham Cook, Malcolm McLeod and Jeff Eaton attended the annual Greater Wellington Rata Awards in Wellington. The huge effort by the Caregroup has achieved major public recognition – we won the Community Partnership Award over other great contestants spread from Foxton to Southern Wairarapa.

We have had lots of publicity – articles and photos in local papers, the Dominion Post, and a \$500 prize which will be put to good use.

So congratulations to us all!

Of equal significance is the success of Kenakena School in receiving a merit award in the Meridian Sustainable Project category. The Enviro Club of the school is doing fantastic things, including a vegetable garden, worm farming, school recycling systems, a shadehouse for growing-on Caregroup plants, and annual planting days in the estuary.

Their achievement is significant – community buy-in is everything, and it starts at school. Well done!

“As the original shadehouse was full of plants for the Caregroup, it was decided to investigate the purchase of a further shadehouse”

Kenakena School update

Throughout last year, the year 7/8 students of Kenakena School (the ‘Enviro Club’) have been releasing, mulching and planting into the Waikanae Estuary as part of the Caregroup programme. They also took part in the Take Action for Water programme that was put together by the Wellington Regional Council.

They were inspired by these actions and decided to beautify their school and community by building their own shadehouse and cold frames for young plants to grow.

As the original shadehouse was full of plants for the Caregroup, it was decided to investigate the purchase of a further shadehouse. A group of students went out to MITRE 10,

Creighton’s Building Centre and Placemakers to get prices for the costs of timber, tools and other related materials that they would need. The total price of \$1,900 was then funded by Meridian Energy which is fantastic.

The Enviro Club also purchased seed holders to sell the seedlings and vegetables at the Kenakena Fire Works in November. They also prepared the site for the new shadehouse and this term are buying the materials needed to build the new shadehouse and cold frames.

Wouldn’t it have been great to have gone to a school like that?!

Pest Animal Monitoring Programme

This project has advanced a further stage with four lines of five tunnels being put in the south side of the river and two on the north side. They have been placed in positions that are reasonably accessible but out of sight for the casual passerby, the locations of each tunnel have been

identified by GPS and marked on a map. The Kenakena School have taken charge of two lines, including monitoring and report writing.

Eric (DoC) will be introducing us to the next stage of the programme later this month.

Boobiella - Weed of the month

We’ve recently been having problems in sourcing true ngaio seed, so it seemed an appropriate time to talk about Boobiella. The introduced Tasmanian Boobiella (plant on the left) looks a lot like our native ngaio (on the right). In fact it is closely related, but genetically different.

The danger with planting it is that it readily hybridises and competes with our native ngaio. Plant nurseries shouldn’t sell Boobiella, although unfortunately many do, mistakenly believing it to be true ngaio.

Things to look for in a true ngaio: the growing tip will be darker (as opposed to green); the white spotted glands are very visible (in Boobiella only just visible); the leaf margin is finely serrated (in Boobiella just the tips are so).



Shade house Update

The shade house group meet regularly each Thursday 9.30-12 noon.

We are currently collecting and sowing seeds from the estuary and environs. It has been very helpful having Matt Ward (Environmental Restoration Officer at KCDC) share his knowledge and input into seed collection. Thanks Matt.

At last, under the direction of Mike Hardiman, a watering system has been purchased and installed around the shade houses and plant storage areas. It will save many hours of hand-watering plants over summer.

A concession from the council to use the watering system has been obtained.



Up-coming working bees

February 2010

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| Friday 26 February | Corporate volunteer working bee with ERMA
Meet at Hadfield Street entrance at 9am. Morning tea provided. |
| Saturday 27 February | Releasing / weeding working bee. Meet on the bend of Manly Street to work at RPS 2. Morning tea provided. |

March 2010

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| Friday 5 March | Back up day for ERMA working bee (in case of bad weather on the planned 26 February date) |
| Saturday 13 March | Releasing / weeding working bee on the north side. at the second car park at Waikanae River / beach at end of Tutere Street, Waikanae. |
| Saturday 27 March | Working site to be confirmed... |

Don't forget to wear sturdy footwear to all working bees.

Sunhats if it's sunny and warm clothing if it's not!

Receiving our newsletter

If you would no longer like to receive this newsletter **or** you would prefer to receive it electronically (in you inbox) rather than a hard copy (in your mail box), please contact Kerryn Penny phone 04 801 1029 or email kerryn.penny@gw.govt.nz