

Our Region

Dec 2009/Jan 2010



News from the Greater Wellington Regional Council

www.gw.govt.nz

Cycle, step, summer!

Explore our stunning region

Wairarapa Moana
Momentum builds to make it better

On eMission
Wellington City New World
"walking the talk"

Remove the ooze
Transforming Lower Hutt's
Waiwhetu Stream

INSIDE

GREAT OUTDOORS
summer events 2010

Pukerua Bay local Stuart Kilmister and son Jacob out for a spin at Queen Elizabeth Park on the Kapiti Coast

New regional "rule book"

Greater Wellington is taking a new approach to protecting the region's air, land, rivers, streams and coastline



Greater Wellington's Chair Fran Wilde

In an historic step for Greater Wellington, a new committee (Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resource Plan Committee) will take a bottom-up approach to developing a regional plan. Regional plans are essentially "rule books" for managing the region's natural resources and are reviewed by regional councils every 10 years.

Te Upoko Taiao has seven Regional Councillors and seven people appointed by our Council from the region's "mana whenua" iwi. Te Upoko Taiao was named by Ara Tahi, Greater Wellington's inter-iwi representative group. "Upoko", meaning "head", refers to both the Wellington region and the quality of leadership. "Taiao" refers to the environment.

"We're doing what's required by law – but we're also doing more," says Greater Wellington's Chair Fran Wilde. "A deeper engagement is necessary for the wider community to take ownership of the plan. So we'll be actively seeking input from community groups, industry, farmers, NGOs, iwi and, of course, city and district councils and government agencies."

The committee's co-chair, Te Waari Carkeek (Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga, Ngāti Toa Rangatira), says: "We've no other comparisons at a local or regional level in Aotearoa. By involving iwi at the committee level, we are being 'spoken with' rather than 'spoken to'."

Te Waari says the committee will seek innovative ways of bringing iwi values to the process. "It's all about getting the best plan so our environment is protected and the region has a sustainable future."

The community engagement programme will begin next year.



Te Waari Carkeek, co-chair of Te Upoko Taiao - Natural Resource Plan Committee

News in brief

Low-cost camping

Have a great summer holiday without spending a fortune on fuel. Camping at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park (in Pauatahanui) and Kaitoke Regional Park is low-cost and less than an hour's drive from most parts of the region. Relax in beautiful surroundings with great birdlife, and excellent opportunities close at hand for walking, mountain biking and swimming.

www.gw.govt.nz/camping

Air – check!

Interested in the state of the region's environment? Check out Greater Wellington's annual environmental report cards. You'll find out about the state of the region's air, rivers, streams, groundwater, soils, coasts, and what we're doing to protect and enhance these natural resources.

www.gw.govt.nz/environmental-report-cards

Safe summer swimming

How safe is your favourite swimming spot? Greater Wellington posts weekly water quality results online for 100 popular beach and river swimming spots around the region. Using a traffic light system, green is for "go" and means the health risk is low. A red light means it isn't safe to swim.

www.gw.govt.nz/on-the-beaches

Algae alert

Watch out for potentially toxic blue-green algae in rivers and streams this summer. Dogs are particularly at risk because they like to scavenge by the water's edge and are attracted to the earthy odour of the algae. Greater Wellington, in association with local authorities, will post warning signs along affected parts of rivers. For more information, including any current warnings, see:

www.gw.govt.nz/toxic-algae



WANTED: PEST PLANT

Woolly nightshade (*Solanum mauritianum*) is a tree that can grow up to 10 metres tall and is usually found on forest edges, pasture and wasteland. Its grey-green leaves are furry on top and light green underneath, with fine hairs that may cause an allergic reaction to some people. It has purple flowers with a yellow centre producing round green berries that later turn yellow. Woolly nightshade forms dense stands, which can displace native species.

Seen it?

Contact us: 0800 496 734,
pest.plants@gw.govt.nz



Photo: Carolyn Lewis

Woolly nightshade

Welcome to Our Region – the Greater Wellington Regional Council's quarterly magazine. There's news and information on the work we are doing for a better region, and how you can participate to make our region truly sustainable. Your feedback is appreciated – 0800 496 734 or info@gw.govt.nz

Remove the ooze

The Waiwhetu Stream is undergoing a massive transformation from a bed of thick black contaminated ooze to a safe and healthy recreational waterway

The lower reaches of the stream meander through Lower Hutt's industrial area of Seaview, and were used as a dumping ground for trade waste for decades up until the 1970s. Samples have shown high concentrations of harmful compounds (such as

lead, zinc and pesticides) up to 1.5 metres deep. Now the past has caught up with us and it's time to get proactive, says Project Manager John Eyles.

"This is the most heavily contaminated waterway in the country, and it's great news that the Hutt City Council and Ministry for the Environment are willing to team up and help us with the cleanup."

The stream could have a whole new lease of life

Starting from the Bell Road bridge and working downstream, individual sections of the stream are pumped dry and the ooze is scooped out, placed in sealed units and trucked off to the Silverstream landfill. Special sections are in place to catch any nasty chemicals and prevent them from re-entering the stream. Testing will show when the healthy stream bed has been revealed.

Another part of the project is to protect the area from flooding. The lower part of the stream is being widened and deepened to increase its capacity by 50%. Infrastructure such as stormwater outlets and sewer crossings is also being upgraded.

The cleanup and most of the flood protection works will be completed part way through 2010, with planting and restoration occurring over the next few years. In five years time the Waiwhetu Stream could have a whole new lease of life.



The cleanup's underway. Greater Wellington's John Eyles at Waiwhetu Stream

Sustainability tips



Composting made easy

Composting your food scraps reduces waste going to landfill and nourishes soil. You'll need:

- A lidded indoor container (a small bucket with a handle is ideal)
- A closed outdoor container, eg, a large plastic rubbish bin with a clip-on lid
- A large, bottomless compost bin with a lid

The lids keep flies away and rainwater out. You can replace the first two containers with a Bokashi bin (designed to speed up composting and reduce unpleasant odours). You'll need a bait station to trap rats and mice.

Compost recipe

- Put your food scraps in the indoor container
- When it's full, empty the contents into the closed outdoor container. They will begin to decompose
- Once this container is full, layer the contents in the large compost bin with garden waste. Put the bait station nearby and check weekly if the bait needs replacing

Find out more about composting:
www.bethedifference.gw.govt.nz

Summer brings a risk of water shortages

Greater Wellington supplies water to the Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt, Porirua and Wellington city councils from several rivers, backed up by an aquifer beneath Lower Hutt and two water storage lakes.

The system relies on regular rainfall and there's a greater risk of serious shortages in summer months when rainfall is low. As recently as 2008, our rivers couldn't keep up with water demand during summer, forcing a ban on sprinklers and irrigation systems.

WIN!

Be in to win \$300 worth of water-smart prizes for your garden by entering our prize draw and answering some easy water conservation questions. Enter the competition at: www.bethedifference.gw.govt.nz

Households are our biggest users of tap water. Outdoor jobs – particularly garden watering – are behind surging summer water use. Please help to make our summer water supplies go further by conserving water in the garden:

- Mulch your garden (keeps moisture locked in)
- Check whether your soil needs water before you turn on the tap
- Apply water slowly and close to the soil at your plants' roots
- Time watering for 30-minute sessions

Your local council has looked at how it manages water for the services it provides and will be doing more to help make our water go further.

Momentum builds for Wairarapa wetland

A project to enhance the environment, and the recreation and economic opportunities on reserve land around Wairarapa Moana has made impressive advances in recent months.

"Wairarapa Moana is the largest wetland area in the lower North Island and presents a fantastic opportunity to create a wetland park that benefits nature and the community," says Greater Wellington Chair Fran Wilde.

Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, Rangitane o Wairarapa, Department of Conservation, South Wairarapa District Council and Greater Wellington have been working together on plans to make the most of the publicly owned land around the lakes.

They've started fencing and planting Barton's Lagoon on the northern shore of Lake Wairarapa, trialled heli-spraying invasive alder trees that are spreading down the eastern side of the lake, and put together a report on the area's heritage. There has been a native fish survey in Lake Wairarapa and there are plans to build a viewing shelter to improve the chance of visitors seeing the various wetland birds at Boggy Pond.



Wairarapa Moana

"People are already getting excited about this project. We will try and talk with everyone who has an interest in Wairarapa Moana so we can improve the environment and meet the needs of the community," says Chair Wilde.



January is a great time for a **car-free commute**

CYCLE, STEP, SUMMER!

Ten-year-old Angus Lewry of Tawa has serious plans for some cycling fun this summer. "I want to do the BMX track in Tawa and the Kenepuru Stream cycleway." Angus recently discovered the joy of cycling after completing a cyclist safety skills course at Redwood School. Learning how to be safe on his bicycle has given Angus confidence to ride to and from school every day.



"I love going down hills and not having to wait for Mum to pick me up from school. My cycling skills course showed me that it's really important to be aware of what's around me, to look out for cars and to concentrate on what I'm doing," says Angus.



Angus Lewry of Tawa has learnt how to cycle safely to school

Whether you're as young as Angus or a bit older, there's no time like summer to get on your bike or put on your walking shoes and explore our stunning region.

Planning your summer adventures is easy, thanks to Greater Wellington's new cycling and walking journey planner. Simply go to www.journeyplanner.org.nz, key in details about where you want to start and where you want to finish, and you're on your way.



Planning your summer adventures is easy, with the new cycling and walking journey planner

As well as mapping out your journey, the planner (a list of step-by-step directions) appears down the left-hand side of the page. You'll also be able to see a weather forecast and how hilly parts of your journey will be, plus a range of other features including drinking fountains, toilets, reserves and playgrounds. And if you've gained a few Christmas kilos, the planner also shows how many calories you'll burn on your journey.



If part way through your journey planning you decide to make a detour, just click on "Add destination" and your new route will be created.

Simon Kennett, Greater Wellington's Active Transport and Road Safety Coordinator, says the beauty of the online planner is its ability to create a tailor-made journey. "It helps you work out exactly how you're going to get where you want to go, gives you written directions, and then you can simply print it off and have your very own customised map."



Lisa Hannam and her daughter Jordyn enjoy a walk from their home in Lansdowne to work and school in central Masterton

If your planned adventure is longer than 5km, a link to Metlink (Greater Wellington's public transport network) appears automatically below the step-by-step directions. Public transport helps you explore parts of the region further away from your home.



Several of the region's superb regional parks are accessible by public transport. To find out what you can do at each regional park, see www.gw.govt.nz/parks or pick up some brochures from your local library. You can plan your public transport travel to the regional parks at www.metlink.org.nz.

Public transport helps you explore parts of the region further away from home

If you're working over January, it could be a great time to explore a car-free commute. You can enjoy the summer sun and fresh air by walking, cycling or taking public transport part of the way and walking the rest. And you can take your bike on the train for free – but remember, this depends on there being room available.

Whether you're at work or play in the Wellington region this summer, get out there and

GET ACTIVE!

Stay safe on your cycle – tips for young and old

Be bright

Poor observation by drivers is the number one cause of injury crashes on roads in the Wellington region. Bright clothing and even brighter lights are sure signs of a smart cyclist.

Be predictable

Signalling and making eye contact with drivers significantly reduces your chance of a collision at intersections. Also, riding a steady line a safe distance out from parked cars, rather than darting in and out from the road edge, makes it easier for drivers to give you a safe passing gap.

Tune your bike

If you have a bike you use mainly for street riding, set it up with durable commuter tyres that will laugh at potholes and resist punctures. Flat handlebars put you in an upright position, making you more visible to traffic, as well as putting the brakes and gears at your fingertips. Regularly check your bike for wear and tear, especially the brakes.



Lisa Malones commutes by bike from Raumati to her teaching job at Paekakariki School

Plan your car-free trip – and be in to

WIN!



Using Greater Wellington's cycling and walking journey planner, tell us how you got to one of our great destinations and enter the weekly prize draw. Simply follow the link to the competition from the website.

The competition runs until March 2010.
www.journeyplanner.org.nz

Contact your Regional Councillor

KAPITI

Nigel Wilson

T 04 905 0583, 027 242 4105
nigel.wilson@gw.govt.nz



LOWER HUTT

Peter Glensor

T 04 586 4119, F 04 586 4118
027 241 5152
peter.glensor@gw.govt.nz



Sandra Greig

T/F 04 586 0847, 027 640 8681
sandra.greig@gw.govt.nz



Prue Lamason

T 04 566 7283, F 04 566 2606
021 858 964
prue.lamason@gw.govt.nz



PORIRUA-TAWA

John Burke

T 04 233 0377, F 04 233 0317
027 444 1483
john.burke@gw.govt.nz



Barbara Donaldson

T/F 04 237 0773, 021 976 747
barbara.donaldson@gw.govt.nz



UPPER HUTT

Rex Kirton

T/F 04 528 4751, 021 435 277
rex.kirton@gw.govt.nz



WAIRARAPA

Ian Buchanan

T 06 304 9553, F 06 304 9546
027 282 2833
ian.buchanan@gw.govt.nz



WELLINGTON

Judith Aitken

T 04 475 8969, 027 769 6424
judith.aitken@gw.govt.nz



Sally Baber

T 04 476 3116, 027 476 3116
sally.baber@gw.govt.nz



Paul Bruce

T/F 04 972 8699
021 027 19370
paul.bruce@gw.govt.nz



Chris Laidlaw

T 04 934 3143, F 04 934 3148
027 425 4668
chris.laidlaw@gw.govt.nz



Fran Wilde, Chair

T 04 802 0346, F 04 384 5023
021 888 075
fran.wilde@gw.govt.nz



Wellington Zoo do well

Wellington Zoo is a great place to work on any day. But now staff have even more reason to be smiling after the zoo was named the region's most sustainable business at the Sustainable Business Network's central region awards.

Staff are essential to sustainability efforts

The zoo also took out the not-for-profit category, with judges commending a top-down commitment to sustainable business practices and the many innovative ways it is demonstrated.

The zoo's achievements over the past three years include reducing waste to landfill from 93% of waste to just 19%, cutting water use by nearly 24 million litres (the equivalent of 120 households' water use per year), boosting water storage areas and planting more than 1,300 native trees.

Staff are essential to the sustainability efforts, participating in "sustainable transport" days, removing individual office rubbish bins, recycling batteries and ensuring computer monitors are switched off at night.

"We are acutely aware of the opportunity we have to advocate for the environment... to show our visitors what can be done with a little thought and a lot of determination," says Chief Executive Karen Fifield.

Greater Wellington was principal sponsor of the central region Get Sustainable Challenge and awards. The challenge is run by the Sustainable Business Network – www.sustainable.org.nz.

Learn more about Wellington Zoo's recycling journey: www.wellingtonzoo.com



Wellington Zoo's Beth Houston, Karen Fifield and Shane Whittaker. Staff compost all organic waste, including bones and animal waste that were previously sent to landfill

On eMission

It's been only eight months since the Wellington City New World supermarket joined Greater Wellington's eMission business sustainability programme but the benefits are already showing

"Taking part in the programme makes excellent business sense," says Loren Parker, New World's Compliance Manager. "We're working smarter, saving money, doing our bit to protect the environment and 'walking the talk' for our customers."

eMission is a one-year, subsidised programme that helps businesses achieve the nationally recognised EnviroMark certification and reduce their carbon footprint. Greater Wellington provides businesses with access to a business sustainability adviser, carbon emission calculations and advice on how to reduce them, and audits for waste, energy and transport.



Wellington City New World's Loren Parker. Recycling has resulted in huge waste reductions

So far the supermarket is saving more than \$2,000 in power a month (that's about 2,738 kilowatts) with initiatives such as installing a timer for the basement carpark lights (set to switch off between midnight and 7am) and installing new switches for grocery aisles and produce cabinets so they can all be turned off at the end of the day. Waste initiatives have also been successful, with a 2.5 tonne a month reduction of waste in the compactor.

Taking part makes excellent business sense

Next up, Loren and her co-workers plan to do more to reduce electricity usage and replace checkout waste bins with recycling bins for dockets. "We've still got some way to go but staff are really behind this so I'm expecting even better results over the coming months," says Loren.

Nineteen other businesses around the region are taking part in eMission.

Find out more about the programme: www.gw.govt.nz/emission



What does Greater Wellington do?

Water supply to reservoirs
Delivers high-quality treated water to the main reservoirs in each city.

Environmental management
Ensures the region's natural resources are used appropriately.

Regional parks and forests
Maintains a network of regional parks and forests for recreational use.

Metlink buses and trains
Coordinates and funds the region's Metlink public transport network.

Transport planning
Develops long-term plans for the region's transport network.

Emergency management
Coordinates civil defence emergency management for the region.

Flood protection
Helps communities protect themselves from the effects of flooding.

Pest control
Works with landowners to target pest plants and animals, and eradicate bovine Tb.

Harbour safety
Looks after navigational safety in Wellington and Porirua harbours, and the region's coastline.

Land management
Works with landowners to prevent or reduce soil erosion.

Regional economic development
Promotes the Wellington Regional Strategy – a sustainable economic growth strategy.



Please recycle
Produced sustainably

Full steam ahead for rail work

The year may be winding down for most of us, but it's full steam ahead for the upgrade of our rail network in preparation for the brand new trains due to start arriving from the middle of next year. Simla Crescent and Pukerua Bay stations are temporarily closed so platforms can be rebuilt for the new trains. Early in 2010, Tawa's Redwood Station will close temporarily for major work on the platforms. Buses will replace trains on all lines from 27 December 2009 to 5 January 2010 so work can continue on building a third line into Wellington Railway Station from Kaiwharawhara to reduce queuing and congestion.

Metlink information line – Christmas and New Year hours

Operating hours for the Metlink information line over Christmas and New Year are as follows: Christmas Eve 7am-8pm, Christmas Day closed, Saturday 26 December 2009 to Monday 4 January 2010 the information line will be open from 8am-8pm. Normal operating hours will resume from Tuesday 5 January. You can also get timetable information at www.metlink.org.nz and via txtBUS and txtTRAIN.

Christmas timetables

A special holiday timetable for train, bus and harbour ferry services will run over the Christmas period from Thursday 24 December. Bus services will return to their regular timetables on Tuesday 5 January 2010, normal train services will resume on Wednesday 6 January and harbour ferry services will return to regular timetables on Saturday 9 January. You can pick up a Christmas timetable from your local Metlink timetable stockist or see www.metlink.org.nz or phone 0800 801 700.



Greater Wellington's public transport network
0800 801 700 www.metlink.org.nz