

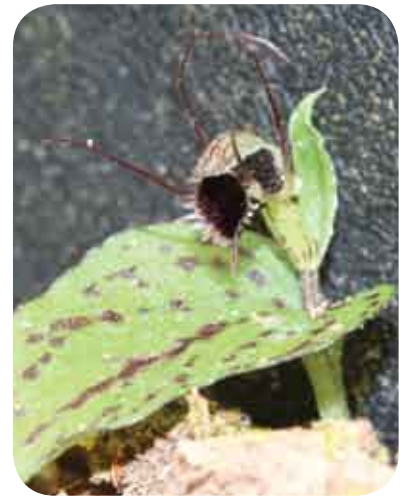
# Regional Parks Annual Report

FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2010

Quality for Life



greater WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL | Parks



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# Introduction

Welcome to the Greater Wellington Regional Council's *Regional Parks Annual Report*, a publication that informs you of the achievements and issues in Wellington's network of regional parks and forests.

Guided walks continue to be popular events in our parks with walks in East Harbour Regional Park, Kaitoke Regional Park and the Wainuiomata Water Catchment Area commonly requested.

Another activity that remained popular was the collection of natural resources and research with 19 permits being issued. All applications were given to iwi to consider. The permits were for a range of activities including collecting watercress, seismic research and plant propagation.

Schools involved in Greater Wellington's *Take Action* programme (an environmental education programme aimed at Years 4-8) are frequent visitors to Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, Belmont Regional Park, Pakuratahi Forest, and the Wainuiomata Recreation Area. The students look at our parks' streams and catchments and compare them to other areas that may be heavily impacted by human activity.

However there was a significant drop in the number of visits to our parks and forests this year with 17% fewer than last year. We believe the main reason for the drop was the very poor summer weather this year.

There are a number of areas within the parks network where ownership may transfer to Māori as part of Treaty of Waitangi settlement negotiations with the Crown. This year the parks network has seen the handing back of the lakes within the Parangarahu Lakes Area in East Harbour Regional Park to Māori. Other claims are progressing that may affect ownership of land within Queen Elizabeth Park, Whitireia Park and Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Park.

Greater Wellington acquired 284 hectares at Baring Head for inclusion into the East Harbour Regional Park with funding assistance from the Nature Heritage Fund, Department of Conservation, Hutt City Council and a private benefactor. This property is adjacent to the 11 hectare lighthouse block at Baring Head, which is already part of East Harbour Regional Park. Prior to the purchase of the additional land, the lighthouse block was only accessible via a right-of-way that did not permit public access. Greater Wellington is planning to open the Baring Head section of East Harbour Regional Park to the public in January 2011.

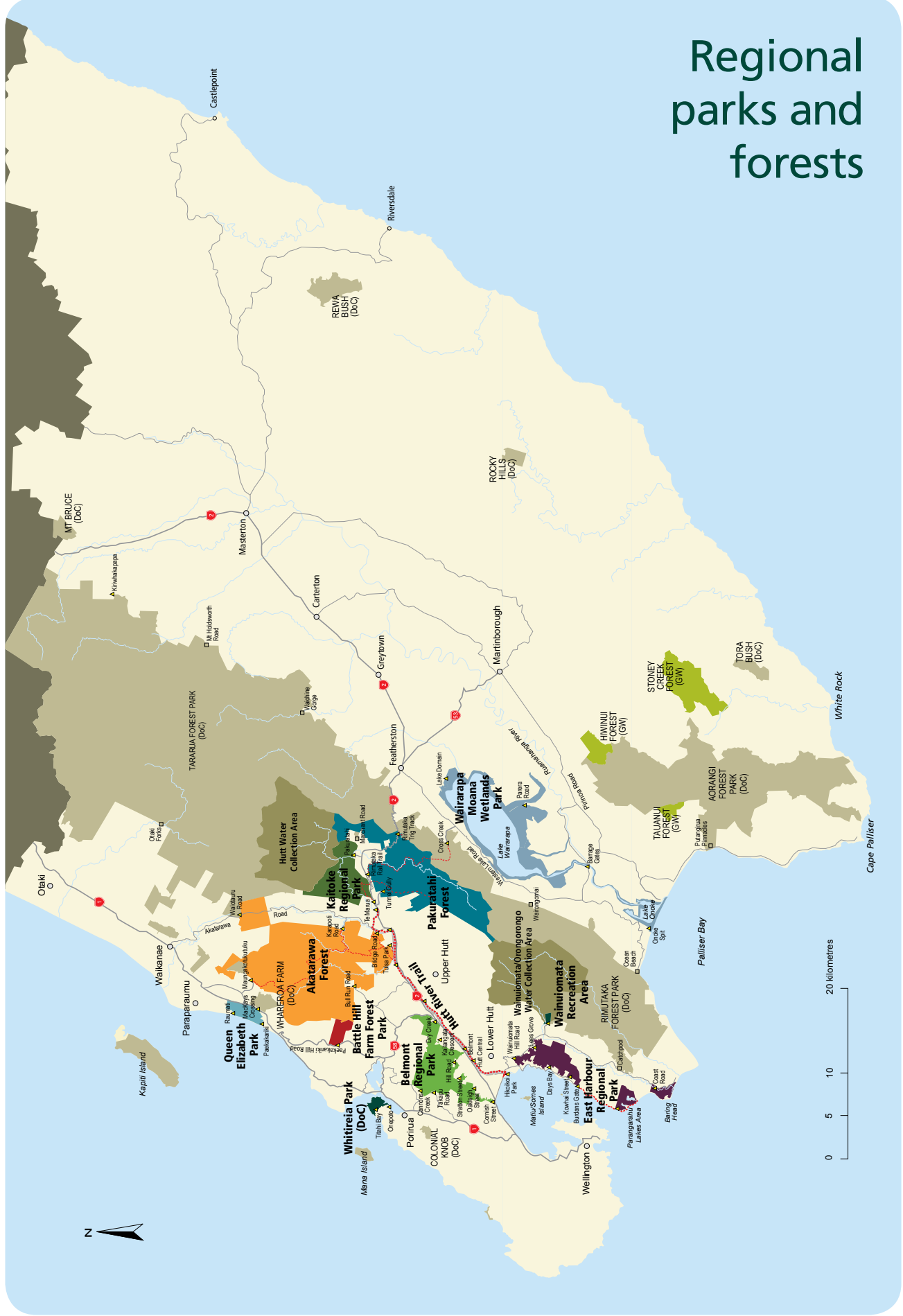


A falcon in East Harbour Regional Park



Great Outdoors buggy walk in Queen Elizabeth Park

# Regional parks and forests





## Projects 2009-10

- There were an estimated 800,544 visits to our parks and forests over the past year – a drop of 17% from last year. We believe that Wellington’s poor summer weather was a significant factor in the lower numbers
- A telephone survey of regional residents indicated that 53% of the population visited at least one regional park in the past 12 months, an increase of 1% from last year
- The Great Outdoors summer events programme (formerly known as the Regional Outdoors Programme) was completed with 66 events attracting 12,234 people (a drop of 3,620 from last year). Total attendance at Greater Wellington led events was 4,730 – an average of 91 people per event
- Our Parks “Friends” groups and other community groups remain heavily involved in the parks. The *Green Shoots* newsletter (a community newsletter produced by Greater Wellington) was published twice during the year and sent out to over 1,300 people and organisations
- The monthly Sport Wellington Buggy Walks continue to be popular with around 2,475 mums, dads, grandparents and babies participating throughout the year. During the summer months, walks are held within the regional parks and led by park rangers. The winter series (June – September) tends to be urban-based
- Greater Wellington, together with Hutt City and Upper Hutt City councils, received a “Highly Commended” award in the Outstanding Event category at the New Zealand Recreation Association’s national conference for the *Bike the Trail* event
- At the inaugural Living Streets Aotearoa Golden Foot Awards, the monthly Sport Wellington Buggy Walks won the Small Project category
- In 2009, the Draft Parks Network Strategy was presented to Council. This document outlined the vision, mission and principles for our regional parks. Subsequent to this, Council agreed to review the suite of management plans covering our parks and forests. In December 2009, Greater Wellington signalled its intent to prepare a plan and asked for public input into how the plan should be developed. The *Greater Wellington Parks Network Plan - Draft* will replace all current management plans for the regional parks (including Battle Hill, Belmont, East Harbour, Kaitoke, and Queen Elizabeth), the Pakuratahi and Akatarawa forests and Wainuiomata Recreation Area. The content of the strategy now forms part of the *Greater Wellington Parks Network Plan - Draft*. The *Greater Wellington Parks Network Plan - Draft* was released for public consultation at the end of May

### How much does it cost?

Total Parks operational expenditure 2009/10: \$6 million

Expenditure attributable to each park is identified in the relevant sections

## Sustainable land use plans

Over the past two years, Greater Wellington has been developing sustainable land use plans for the farmed areas of the regional parks. This work has been driven by the general aim of the *Regional Parks Network Management Plan* to sustainably manage modified environments and by Policy 57<sup>1</sup> of the plan.

Developing a sustainable land use plan involves matching the land's capability with land use. Land capability measures the land's agricultural yield potential based on characteristics such as soil fertility and topography. The plan considers all factors that could have an impact on how Greater Wellington manages park land, eg how can we best facilitate public access? Are there landscape and heritage features on the land? Is there biodiversity needing protection?

The first step in developing the plan involves mapping the land capability of areas that are currently being farmed. A map, such as the land use amalgamation map shown here for Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, is then developed. The map identifies areas that are ideal for farming and areas that may not be suitable because they are too steep, infertile or wet.

Land use for activities other than farming – such as biodiversity, recreation and production forestry – can be overlaid on the land use amalgamation map and decisions made on the most suitable uses for different land types. Sometimes it may be best to retire an area of farmland, eg steep hill country, where greater benefits would be gained from biodiversity and waterways than would be possible from continuing to farm marginal land.

The planning process to develop a sustainable land use plan involves talking to key stakeholders, such as officers from relevant territorial authorities, the Department of Conservation, iwi, farm leaseholders and Parks' Friends groups.

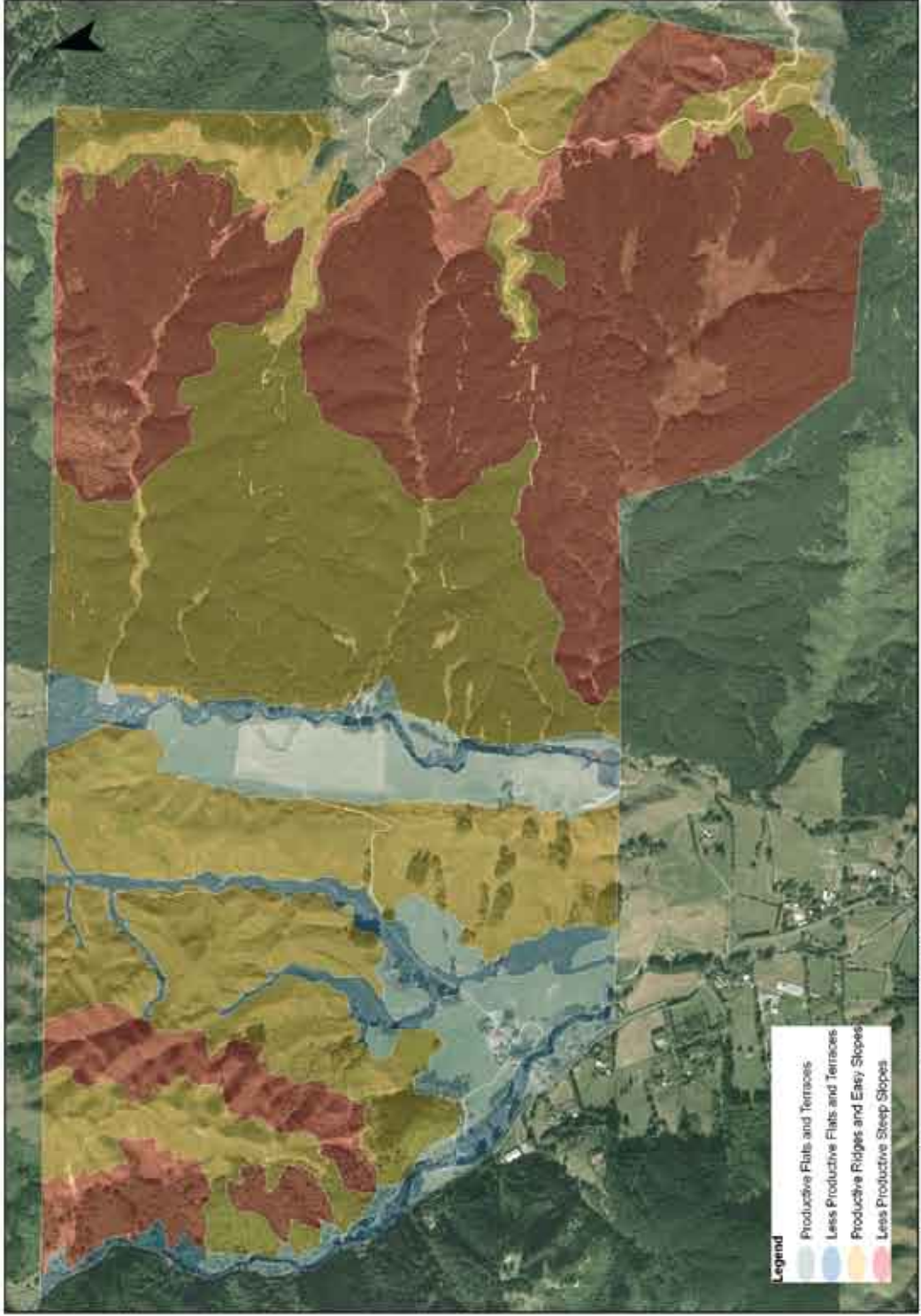
A sustainable land use plan has been developed for Battle Hill Farm Forest Park and plans are currently being developed for Belmont Regional Park and Whitireia Park<sup>2</sup>. Work will begin in 2011 on plans for Queen Elizabeth Park and the farmed area of the recently-acquired Baring Head block at East Harbour Regional Park.

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1. Policy 57 states that farming is to be allowed on regional parks where it contributes to the public use, enjoyment and educational potential of those parks, and that it needs to be consistent with objectives for protecting and managing natural and cultural resources of the parks, and with good land management practices.

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2. In the case of Whitireia Park, the community was invited to take part as there was heightened public interest following the fire in February 2010. Whitireia Park's sustainable land use plan will assist in the development of a restoration plan, as it will determine which areas should be set aside for planting or regeneration of native vegetation.



**Battle Hill - Land Use Amalgamation**

# Akatarawa Forest



**Akatarawa**  
FOREST



A future water collection area, this steep forested hill country contains original lowland podocarp and remnants of montane forest, exotic plantings, regenerating native forest and several wetlands. The bird and insect life is highly diverse with all the region's surviving indigenous bird species found here. The forest forms links and ecological corridors with other public land in the Akatarawa, Tararua, Rimutaka and Orongorongo ranges.

Akatarawa Forest is important for mountain biking (featuring the internationally renowned Karapoti Classic course), hunting and motorised recreation (4WD and motorcycling). The Cannon Point Walkway is popular for walking and running. We continue to work with the Akatarawa Recreational Access Committee (ARAC) to facilitate recreation in the forest and resolve management and planning issues.

- The Great Outdoors events held in the Akatarawa Forest included *The Akatarawa Attack* (mountain biking event), the annual *Karapoti Classic*, and the *4WD Back Country Akatarawa*
- Consents to enter the forest issued: 107 for 4WD clubs, 83 for motorcycle events and 22 for army training/police training/driver training
- A 1080 possum control operation was completed in the Akatarawa Saddle block of the forest in August. A post operation monitor gave a result of 1% RTC (Residual Trap Catch). This is a good result
- A large slip occurred during July. After negotiations with United Gooder (Transpower's maintenance contractor), work was completed on clearing the slip on a shared cost basis
- Bird counts were completed for the second year in the Akatarawa Forest. The relative abundance of silvereyes, kereru and rifleman had increased since the previous year whereas tomtits, grey warblers, bellbirds and whiteheads had decreased. The nationally vulnerable New Zealand falcon was recorded in the forest again this year
- A sighting of a flock of rare red-crowned kakariki confirmed the presence of this regionally rare species in the forest
- Parks' pest plant team carried out follow-up control on historic infestation sites and continued to find new infestations of a range of pest plant species including cotoneaster, Japanese honeysuckle, pampas, old man's beard, Darwin's barberry and buddleia
- A ground-based possum control operation in the Cannon Point area has been maintained on an ongoing basis, with bait stations being re-filled every three months
- Professional goat control operations in September and February culled 54 goats

Annual expenditure: \$195,000





Great Outdoors Akatarawa Attack – photo courtesy of Hutt Valley Mountain Bike Club



Trampers making their way up Matai Creek



Mountain foxglove (*ourisia lactea var drucei*)



Great Outdoors Karapoti Classic

# Battle Hill Farm Forest Park



A mix of pasture, plantation forestry, wetlands and a small remnant of native forest, Battle Hill is the site of the last significant confrontation between Māori and early colonial forces in the region. The combination of flat, rolling and steep hill country make it popular for walking, horse riding, mountain biking, camping and picnicking.

- The *Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Management Plan* was adopted in November following community consultation. The plan guides Greater Wellington when managing the park and making decisions about land use, development and activities
- Ten events were held at the park as part of the Great Outdoors summer events programme. All were a great success. The public especially appreciated the opportunity to climb the ridge to Mt Wainui and down through Whareroa Farm to Queen Elizabeth Park
- The usual concession activities have continued including school cross-country championships, orienteering, history field trips, harrier events and the very busy programme of equestrian events
- The swimming hole in the campground was re-established and much appreciated by summer visitors and campers
- Arbor Day saw over 100 students taking part in planting in Swampy Gully. This was the last piece of the wetland to need planting and ties up nine years of restoration work in this area
- There have been no significant vandalism or enforcement issues. A repeat rubbish dumper at the park was fined by Porirua City Council
- A footbridge in the campground that was a safety concern has been upgraded with handrails and moved upstream to protect it from further erosion
- Most of the northern farm boundary was re-fenced, improving biosecurity of the bush reserve. Goats are not getting in and the understorey has seen considerable regeneration. Maintenance work and repairs have occurred throughout the farm including fencing, roading and fertiliser application
- Parks' pest plant team controlled banana passionfruit infestations beside the camp ground and a large old man's beard infestation in the plantation forest
- Volunteers carried out possum control in the bush remnant throughout the year using a network of bait stations. Rats were controlled as by-kill of the possum control. Rodent monitoring in the reserve showed rat numbers fell from 60% tracking in July 2009 to an average of 3% for the rest of the year

- Monthly mustelid and cat trapping was continued in the remnant and on the farmland by volunteers from Mana Boat Club and Mana Lions. They trapped four cats, two possums, 34 stoats, 62 hedgehogs and 65 rats

Annual expenditure: \$264,000



Arbor Day planting



Battle Hill's tame eels



Equestrian event



Great Outdoors Farm to Coast participants admire the view



# Belmont Regional Park



Based on a central plateau that is part of an ancient rolling peneplain, the park offers views over the Hutt Valley, Wellington and Porirua harbours. Its wide open spaces and hidden valleys make it popular for walking, tramping, running, mountain biking and horse riding. The park features the historic Korokoro Dam, World War II munitions bunkers and the original coach road from Lower Hutt to Pauatahanui. The 22km Puke Ariki/Haywards Korokoro Traverse takes in Boulder Hill (442m) and Belmont Trig (457m). The Friends of Belmont Regional Park and the Friends of Maara Roa remain very active advocacy groups who help to represent community views on planning and management issues.

- In addition to the regular Great Outdoors events, two new events were held: *Belmont Regional Park Open Day* and *Human Birds*. Over 350 people took part in the Open Day organised by the Friends of Belmont, with events ranging from guided walks and 4WD trips to live music. The Friends of Maara Roa organised the *Human Birds* event, which showed people how to gather seeds for seed balls before throwing the seed balls into the bush
- In June, 800 trees were planted by the Friends of Maara Roa as part of the Honda Tree Fund programme. Hill Road residents planted around 400 trees in the upper part of the park's Hill Road entrance
- A draft *Pest Plant Control Plan* for the park was completed. The new plan identifies priorities for pest plant control work for the next five years
- Annual bird monitoring showed a big increase in total bird numbers recorded, from 314 in 2008 to 791 in 2009. There were increases in a number of species including grey warbler, tui, bellbird, fantail, kereru and especially silvereye
- The Friends of Belmont Regional Park secured a \$7,000 grant from Hutt City Council for a wetland/riparian restoration project near the Hill Road entrance to the park
- Maintenance work in the park included cutbacks of the Dry Creek Loop Track and the Kelson Track. Rebenching of the Oakleigh Street to Korokoro Dam track has been completed and new water run-offs installed to manage water run-off over the winter period
- A lizard survey failed to find any healthy populations of either skinks or geckos in the areas surveyed
- Parks' pest plant team continued controlling old man's beard, Japanese honeysuckle, cathedral bells, banana passionfruit, climbing asparagus, holly, buddleia and hydrangea infestations at various locations within the park
- Contractors controlled tradescantia, selaginella and a number of other species in the area surrounding Korokoro Dam and along a one kilometre stretch of the track below the dam
- Volunteers from the Friends of Maara Roa have continued to carry out possum control using bait stations in the Cannon's Creek bush remnant
- Ongoing possum control operations in Dry Creek, Speedys Reserve and Korokoro Valley have been maintained, with bait stations being re-filled every three months



- Rodent monitoring completed by Korokoro Environmental Group volunteers showed that rat tracking in the Korokoro valley fell from 28% in June 2009 to an average 2% throughout this financial year
- Eighteen goats were culled across the upper Korokoro valley and Dry Creek areas of the park during two professional hunts. No goats were found on the western side of the Korokoro valley or in Sweetacres Reserve

Annual expenditure: \$565,000



World War II munitions bunkers



Great Outdoors Kev the Wandering Kiwi participants at the Korokoro Dam



Great Outdoors Real Cannons Creek participants



East Harbour  
REGIONAL PARK

# East Harbour Regional Park



Beech/rata on the hills and lowland podocarp/broadleaf in the valleys of the Northern Forest provide the eastern backdrop to Wellington harbour and excellent walking, tramping and picnicking opportunities. The Parangarahu (formerly Pencarrow) Lakes Area contains the nationally significant freshwater Kohangapiripiri and Kohangatera lakes, home to a wealth of native plants and wildlife. The Mainland Island Restoration Operation (MIRO) maintains an intensive pest control network in the Northern Forest.



A rare and endangered forest ringlet butterfly was spotted

- There were numerous events held in East Harbour throughout the year, including the *Butterfly Creek Night-time Madness* event (360 participants), the *Crazyman* event (285 participants) and the annual duck shooting season

## Northern Forest

- Two interesting discoveries were made during the year: the first recording within the park of the native celery pine and the first sighting of a forest ringlet butterfly in the park for 30 years
- A walking bridge on the Mackenzie Track in the Butterfly Creek Valley suffered major structural damage following the fall of a large beech tree in July. A replacement bridge had to be lifted in by helicopter
- There were difficulties in keeping rats at low numbers in the Mainland Island site this year due to the beech mast (a heavy seeding year for beech, which provides a lot of food for the rodents). Rodent monitoring in the Mainland Island during May was at 18%, well above the optimum 5% that is desirable for effective management of the robin population
- Hinau fruit-fall monitoring showed that it was a very heavy fruiting year for hinau. Very few possum-damaged fruit were recorded while over a third of the fruit in the plots had been damaged by rodents
- Three permanent vegetation plots were re-measured in the Northern Forest this year. These plots provide information on forest dynamics and the impacts of browsing mammal species such as possums, goats and deer. Little evidence of recent browsing damage was found. The data collected has been added to the National Vegetation Survey database maintained by Landcare Research
- A lizard survey completed this year failed to find evidence of healthy populations of either skinks or geckos in the Northern Forest
- We have continued to support members of Mainland Island Restoration Organisation (MIRO) with their ongoing possum trapping operation. Volunteers trapped over 322 possums (over 2,400 possums have been trapped since MIRO began trapping)
- Parks' pest plant team carried out follow-up control work on many historical infestation sites located at road ends, track starts and behind houses. The team also continued reducing the spread of climbing asparagus into the park
- A professional deer hunter culled two deer in the peripheral areas of the Northern Forest block

### Parangarahu Lakes Area (formerly Pencarrow Lakes Block)

- Sheep and cattle stops have been installed on the wetland boardwalks to try and keep out neighbouring stock
- Six permanent vegetation plots were re-measured in the Parangarahu Lakes Area this year. A good increase in seedling growth was recorded. The data collected has been added to the National Vegetation Survey database
- A lizard survey found healthy populations of common gecko and common skink in the area. A copper skink was also found, the first time this species has been identified in this area
- Another restoration planting plot was established and planted by MIRO volunteers. In-fill planting was done in the two previously established plots
- The wetland pest plant Beggar's tick was again controlled at Lake Kohangatera
- Follow-up spraying of gorse was carried out on the ecologically significant coastal escarpment between lakes Kohangapiripiri and Kohangatera
- Boneseed on the harbour escarpment was controlled from a set point beyond Burdan's Gate to stop the spread of this pest plant further southwards
- Mustelids and other pests were controlled throughout the area by the use of a network of traps. 35 mustelids (28 weasels and seven stoats), 19 hedgehogs and 39 rats were trapped. These pests prey on ground-dwelling birds, such as those that nest around Lakes Kohangatera and Kohangapiripiri
- Eighteen goats and one pig were culled during ongoing pest surveillance and control activities

Annual expenditure: \$364,000



The replacement Mackenzie Track bridge being installed



The Ferry Road track was upgraded





# Hutt River Trail



Running from Hikoikoi Reserve on the Petone foreshore to Birchville, Upper Hutt, the 30km Hutt River Trail provides easily accessible recreational opportunities. Linking to parks and sports fields and with tracks often on both sides of the river, this lengthy, flat and scenic terrain is not readily available in the western side of the Wellington region. Off-road links are planned to the Rimutaka Rail Trail and thus to the Wairarapa. Other stakeholders include the Rotary clubs of the Hutt Valley, the Phoenix Trust, and the Upper Hutt City and Hutt City councils.

- The Great Outdoors events were as popular as always on the Hutt River Trail. Over 100 people attended *Kev the Wandering Kiwi* at Poets Park while the *Hutt Gravel Grab* saw more river stones than last year being taken away. *Have a Go Fly Fishing* was booked out and *Bike the Trail* saw over 1,400 participants, despite the tsunami warning the morning of the event (the finish was moved from Petone to Stokes Valley). Participation in *Walk the Trail* increased by 40% over the previous year
- Other events throughout the year ranged from school athletic days to annual fun runs and walks
- Schools continue to be active along the river with Hutt Intermediate planting, mulching and picking up rubbish, and Randwick School continuing its work along the Randwick berms
- A Segway concession, based at Poets Park, was established on the river trail
- Trail bike riders continue to be a problem, along with people dumping rubbish and green waste. Vandalism is also an ongoing concern with stolen cars being used to cause damage. During May, a number of trail and berm signs were removed for repair and replacement due to constant tagging and general wear and tear. They will be replaced with new graphics and more advanced graffiti protection
- Hutt City Probation Services volunteered their work crews to paint out graffiti and tagging on the floodwalls along the river
- The Rotary clubs have designed a new seat and picnic table for the trail, using gabion baskets with a wooden seat. They have received many positive comments, and the first one was installed at Whakatikei in March
- During October, Poets Park got a makeover. Bollards were installed, totara were planted and a culvert with a new river rock headwall was installed. This work completed the re-vamp of the Poets Park to Whakatikei section
- Hutt City Council installed a new multi-use river path from Kennedy Good Bridge to Melling
- 800 metres of river trail was laid north of Whakatiki and an upgraded car park was installed along the Harcourt Werry berms
- Planting days involving the community were held. In August, several hundred coastal shrubs were planted in the sandplank at the river mouth. In June, the Whirinaki community planted 170 native plants on their stopbank



- The annual charity races were held on the river including the Petone Workingmen’s Club plastic duck race and the Upper Hutt Cosmopolitan Club’s plastic boat race
- A fish passage, installed two years ago at Hulls Creek, was repaired after it was damaged during a storm
- The TV show *Good Morning* filmed at Avalon during November and a documentary film crew filmed a piece at Harcourt Park about the Hutt fault line

Annual expenditure: \$66,000



Great Outdoors Bike The Trail



Great Outdoors Have A Go Fly Fishing participants



Mulching at Strand Park



New river trail seat



**Kaitoke**  
REGIONAL PARK

## Kaitoke Regional Park



Easily accessible podocarp/broadleaf and beech forests and a matai/totara remnant near Te Marua contain an abundance of native birds. Fish are plentiful and there are extensive opportunities to swim, picnic and walk near the Hutt and Pakuratahi rivers. Kayaking through the Hutt River Gorge is both scenic and challenging. There is a large, landscaped camping ground near the main entrance. Kaitoke Regional Park is a significant location for outdoor commercial filming – the Lord of the Rings “Rivendell” site is particularly popular with visitors. Nearly half of metropolitan Wellington’s water is drawn from the Hutt River and treated within Kaitoke Regional Park.

- One of the new Great Outdoors events held at Kaitoke Regional Park was the *Take a Kid Tramping* event. This was an opportunity for parents and their children to learn essential outdoor safety skills. The feedback from those involved was very positive
- Another event held at Kaitoke was *Wild Rivers* – a day to celebrate the wild rivers of New Zealand. The 700 participants were able to try kayaking, fly fishing and electric fishing
- A 1080 possum control operation was completed in August. The post operation monitoring result of 0% RTC (residual trap catch) was an excellent outcome
- The annual bird monitoring indicated that grey warbler, silveryeye and fantail were the most common bird species in the park
- During April, a 25,000L water storage tank for the campground was installed as part of our Public Health Risk Management Plan. This water storage tank gives the park a reserve supply of water. The replacement septic tank for the campground facility building was also installed
- The Flume Bridge has been water blasted, restoring the structure to an almost new condition
- The Te Marua end of the park was the focus of several plantings throughout the year. Corporate volunteers planted trees at the Stuart Macaskill Lakes lookout and Maidstone School pupils worked on a restoration site near the Te Marua Water Treatment Plant. Overall, 2,400 plants were planted by corporate groups in Kaitoke during the year, funded by the Honda Tree Fund programme
- Anti-social behaviour continues to be a problem with people having to be evicted and in some cases trespassed for damage to park assets. At Te Marua, 15m of fencing was driven into and smashed
- The film company *Sauce* spent two days filming an interpretation film for Zealandia Wildlife Sanctuary
- Members of the Wellington Botanical Society continued to carry out restoration work within Te Marua bush. Members also carried out pest plant control. A contractor carried out control of tradescantia, wild strawberry, broom and blackberry

- Parks' pest plant team carried out follow-up control of old man's beard, broom and gorse in the other bush remnants at Te Marua
- Thirteen goats, six pigs and two deer were culled in a professional hunting operation in March, making use of the Judas goats present in the area

Annual expenditure: \$421,000



American car owners picnic



Great Outdoors Ridge Track Adventure



Great Outdoors Take A Kid Tramping – learning how to cross a stream safely



Rata flowers



# Pakuratahi Forest



**Pakuratahi**  
FOREST



Managed as a future water collection area, the forest comprises one large, steep river catchment. It forms an ecological link between the Hutt and Wainuiomata water collection areas and the Tararua and Rimutaka ranges. The wetland at Ladle Bend, beech stands in the upper catchment and the only snow tussock in the Rimutaka Ranges are all regionally significant. Of national significance is the original railway line formation between Wellington and Wairarapa, now popular for biking, walking and picnicking. The area contains 775ha of exotic plantation forest.

- The Great Outdoors events continue to be popular with the *Hutt Valley Gliding Club Open Weekend* almost booking out and *Paws in the Park* attracting 92 people with their dogs. Unfortunately the first two *Rimutaka Rail Trail* walks were cancelled due to poor weather. However, a third day was scheduled and 55 keen people walked the trail
- The closing time for the Tunnel Gully gate was moved to one hour after dusk. This has significantly reduced the number of calls to the Park Ranger to let trapped people out of the park
- Volunteers completed bird monitoring in Tunnel Gully in September. The most common species observed were grey warbler, silvereye, fantail and tui
- A large kahikatea was uprooted by wind during summer and landed on the water supply pipe for the Tunnel Gully toilets. The kahikatea was approximately 1.5m in diameter. Water was restored to the toilets within two days
- Approximately 300m<sup>3</sup> of asphalt millings were used to surface the Rimutaka Rail Trail entrance. This has been very successful as the asphalt millings provide a harder wearing and smoother surface that will result in reduced maintenance costs
- The original brick work in the roof of the Maymorn Tunnel has been regouted as the century-old grouting had deteriorated in several places
- A historic bricked culvert on the Rimutaka Incline (installed over 100 years ago) was buried by approximately 3-4m of sediment. A new culvert had to be installed two metres above the old culvert
- Over 20 dying eucalyptus trees in Tunnel Gully have been removed with more to go. Succession planting of the Tunnel Gully area is continuing with young eucalyptus trees raised at the Upper Hutt Depot
- Vandalism continues to be a problem. In June we had to replace not only the padlock but also the chain securing one of our internal gates leading to the Rimutaka Rail Trail
- Parks' pest plant team targeted infestations of hakea, pampas, cotoneaster, sycamore, wilding pine and buddleia. The Collins Stream catchment was intensively searched for buddleia



- Volunteers continued to maintain a network of possum traps in Tunnel Gully
- 39 goats and three pigs were culled in two professional hunting operations, and 33 goats were removed by the park ranger during the year

Annual expenditure: \$251,000



One of the happy participants in the Great Outdoors Paws in the Park event



Great Outdoors Kev the Wandering Kiwi and his friends



Moss and lichen



A Great Outdoors Gliding participant gets her instructions

## Queen Elizabeth Park



Containing the last remaining area of relatively unmodified dunes on the Kapiti coastline, Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP) offers easily accessible opportunities for walking, cycling, horse riding, group picnics, sports events and festivals. During the 19th century there were significant Māori villages at Wainui and Whareroa, and the park is rich in the histories of Tangata Whenua and Europeans alike. During World War II it served as a US Marine encampment and has been a public park since 1953. Facilities include the Wellington Tramway Museum, camping at Paekakariki and commercial horse riding. The Friends of QEP are active on several fronts.

- Events in the park continued with over 200 people participating in the Great Outdoors *Sport Wellington Buggy Walk*. The NZ Equestrian Federation had their autumn event in March which attracted 150 riders and the Aero Modellers' Rally attracted enthusiasts from around the North Island
- The last planting day of the 2009 season saw over 70 people plant around 1,500 trees and shrubs in the park's bush remnant
- The water supply system was upgraded. A new bore was drilled, ultraviolet light filters installed and the old chlorine treatment plant was decommissioned. Significant cost savings are expected from this upgrade
- A draft *Pest Plant Control Plan* for the park was completed. The new plan identifies priorities for pest plant control work for the next five years
- New landscape interpretation signs, funded by the New Zealand Transport Agency, have been installed on the MacKays Crossing Wetland Walk. The signs note the geological features of the area and how it has been impacted by human use over the last several hundred years
- A lizard survey failed to find any healthy populations of skinks or geckos in the park
- The Tramways Museum has partially completed a new visitor building, permitted as part of its licence to operate in the park. The Tramways Museum received approval to extend its track. This will improve passenger safety as a tight bend in the track will be eased
- Around 700 trees were planted in the first *Green Footprint* planting day in August at Whareroa Stream
- Vandalism and trail bikes continue to be a problem. A gate which was rammed at the MacKays Crossing entrance required extensive repairs and there have been instances of tagging throughout the park. There have been several successful prosecutions of trail bike riders
- The annual Arbor Day event saw 150 students and parents plant 1,500 plants
- Friends of QEP and Greater Wellington staff planted 6,000 spinifex to help manage coastal erosion on the foredunes



- Two grants were awarded by the Department of Conservation's Community Conservation Fund for projects in the park. The Raumati South Residents Association secured one for \$36,567 for the Poplar Avenue wetland. The group has worked with Greater Wellington to set up and carry out a number of planting days, as well as completing monitoring associated with the restoration. The Friends of QEP secured a \$34,125 grant to purchase 10,000 plants for a major wetland planting in August 2010
- A grid-search of the dunes for boneseed was carried out by Parks' pest plant team and contractors. Boxthorn, brush wattle, elderberry, cherry, pampas, German ivy, broom, Japanese honeysuckle and climbing asparagus were controlled
- A volunteer has continued to carry out predator and possum trapping within the park. Eleven stoats, 36 weasels, 52 hedgehogs, 84 rats, 196 mice and five possums were trapped
- Night shooting has continued to keep rabbits and hares at low levels across the park
- Rodent monitoring in the dunes showed rat tracking at 10% in August 2009 but 0% for the rest of the year

Annual expenditure: \$872,000



Great Outdoors Nature Day participants



One of the littlest planters at Arbor Day this year



New landscape interpretation sign



**Wainuiomata**  
RECREATION AREA

## Wainuiomata Recreation Area



A peaceful and sheltered valley east of Wainuiomata, the Wainuiomata Recreation Area is a popular spot for family outings, picnics and dog walking. There are numerous swimming holes in the Wainuiomata River and easy walking and mountain biking tracks along the valley floor.

Although the recreation area itself was once logged and most of the bush is now regenerating, it lies at the foot of one of the largest and most pristine lowland forests in the lower North Island – the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area.

- The Great Outdoors event *Kev the Wandering Kiwi* had over 300 participants on a beautiful Wainuiomata day
- Following the successful corporate Honda Tree planting day at the lower dam in June 2009, a second corporate Honda Tree planting day was held in October with 500 native trees planted
- Vandalism continues to be a problem with excessive tagging taking place at the main kiosk. Bollards have been ripped out and the grass area trashed on several occasions. Mini bike riders have had to be escorted from the tracks
- In November, 62 new bollards were installed in the recreation area in an effort to curb vandalism
- A new stoat trapping track down Solomon's Track was completed. The track will be maintained by Rimutaka Forest Park volunteers
- The walking track to Ultimate Pool has been prepared, metalled and compacted. This swimming hole is very popular on hot days
- A ramp has been installed on the Truss Bridge to help people with buggies to access the bridge
- Contractors completed initial control work and follow-up control of tradescantia infestations within an extended control area
- Parks' pest plant team carried out follow-up control of a range of species as well as discovering new infestations of cotoneaster, barberry, Japanese honeysuckle, old man's beard and cherry

Annual expenditure: \$81,000





Wainuiomata Lower Dam

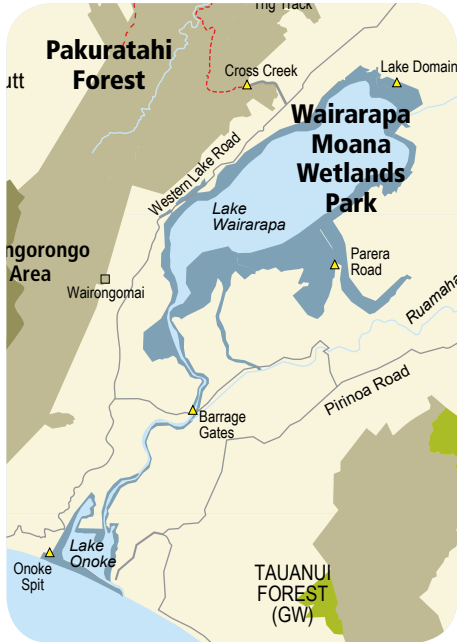


Reusing old water supply pipes as a feature near the Education Centre



Great Outdoors Kev the Wandering Kiwi and a new friend

# Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Park



Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Park comprises of the Wairarapa and Onoke lakes and their associated wetlands. It includes the third largest lake and one of the largest wetland complexes in the North Island, and is internationally recognised for its migratory birds.

Greater Wellington is one of the management partners in Wairarapa Moana, along with the Department of Conservation, South Wairarapa District Council, Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Kahungunu ki Wairarapa. An establishment board of representatives of all the partners was set up in 2008 and has been planning the first stages for creating a wetland park.

- A successful public planting day was held at Barton’s Lagoon in August, attracting around 65 people
- The results of the alder trial in 2009 have been analysed. Both herbicides used had a significant impact on the alder trees but one herbicide in particular caused less damage to any native vegetation. This herbicide will be the one used in any further alder/ willow control work
- The official launch of the park took place in mid-June. The two-day event included a planting event at the yacht club involving 30 locals planting 1,200 trees courtesy of the Honda Tree Fund. A book on tuna (eels) was launched, an “open day” was held at Featherston, and a formal ceremony took place at Kohunui Marae. A new park brochure was completed ready for distribution at the open day
- The fencing has been completed at Lake Domain to keep stock out of the wetland areas
- A new toilet was installed at the Lake Domain entrance. The old concrete toilet block was demolished and removed
- Wetland bird monitoring on the eastern side of the lake was re-instigated. This monitoring was initially established to determine the lake levels for the Lower Wairarapa Valley Drainage Scheme
- Further fish surveys of Wairarapa Moana and the surrounding wetlands were carried out. It was found that some wetlands had higher fish biodiversity than others. This is useful information for determining how to prioritise habitat protection
- Parks’ pest plant team checked the re-growth of willow and pampas and controlled newly discovered climbing asparagus and buddleia in the relatively pristine Pounui Wetland on the western side of the lake
- The design of a trial involving controlling shoreline vegetation to halt shoreline accretion was completed. The trial will be carried out next year

Annual expenditure: \$75,000



A couple of Great Outdoors Explore Wairarapa Moana participants



Hardy souls planting at the Lake Domain



Surveying Lake Wairarapa's alder plot



# Water Collection Areas

## Hutt



Encompassing the headwaters of the Hutt River at the southern end of the Tararua Ranges, the Hutt Water Collection Area (WCA) supplies nearly half of the Wellington urban region's drinking water. It contains extensive areas of unmodified silver beech, red beech, and valley floor podocarp forest, alpine tussock lands, alpine wet turf and sub-alpine sphagnum bog. One of the few areas in the region containing southern rata, the forest is home to a great variety of indigenous forest birds, including the rare kaka, kakariki and NZ falcon (karearea). Some hunting and tramping takes place here but the terrain is rugged and mountainous, broken by many streams and narrow, steep-sided ridges. The hilltops are extremely exposed and have a reputation for high winds, fog and sudden weather changes.

- A 1080 possum control operation was completed in August in the Hutt Water Collection Area. Possum monitoring after the 1080 operation showed a 0% residual trap catch (RTC). Rodent tracking before the 1080 operation was at 55%, which then fell to 1% after the 1080 operation
- Bird numbers remained low but we hope to see an increase in bird abundance next year as the 1080 operation will have suppressed rat numbers
- Greater Wellington officers joined forces with Department of Conservation officers to work on Project Kaka Tararua Forest Recovery, a significant pest control and monitoring project in the Tararua Ranges. This involved carrying out bird, rodent, mustelid and possum monitoring in the Hutt catchment
- Rata photography showed improvements in the health of these indicator trees
- Parks' pest plant team controlled Himalayan honeysuckle and lotus in the Hutt Forks and access road area. They also carried out follow-up control of gorse infestations in the Eastern Hutt and the Hutt Forks area
- A professional hunting operation in March culled 14 goats, 11 deer and four pigs

Annual expenditure: \$6,000



A native weevil in the Hutt Water Collection Area

## Wainuiomata/Orongorongo



The lush native forests and clear rivers of the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo water collection areas were recognised early on for their water supply potential. In 1878 a dam was constructed and a pipeline laid to Wellington. Today the Wainuiomata Water Treatment Plant supplies about 20% of the water used by the four cities in the region. The forests in the Water Collection Area include superb rata podocarp, sub-tropical emergent forest above a canopy of hinau, kamahi, rewa rewa and tree ferns. Some black beech is found on drier sites, and silver beech on the high ridge-tops.



Professional hunting team goes to work

- Native snail surveying in the Wainuiomata Mainland Island resulted in the discovery of a new species, the first ever recording of this species world-wide. It has been identified as one of the *Allodiscus* species. These litter dwelling snails feed on decaying plant and animal material
- North Island brown kiwi bred in the Wainuiomata Water Collection Area for the first time in over a century this year. A pair of kiwi from the recently re-established population in the Rimutaka Forest Park laid two clutches of eggs in the catchment in late 2009. We have ensured that only kiwi-aversion trained dogs are used for hunting in this area and stoat traps are being placed to assist the survival of the kiwi
- Total bird numbers in the Wainuiomata Mainland Island have increased significantly since 2008 and bird numbers continue to be much higher in the intensively managed mainland island than the nearby non-treatment area
- New hinau fruitfall plots have been established inside and outside the Mainland Island to better reflect the habitats within these areas. There was no hinau fruit damaged by possums but other damage to 2% of the fruit was recorded inside the Mainland Island (20% of the fruit was damaged outside the Mainland Island)
- An analysis of the condition of rata trees monitored in the Wainuiomata Catchment shows some improvement over time in the condition of these trees. Rata foliage is very palatable to possums
- The 1080 operation planned for 2009/10 was postponed for at least a year as the current possum numbers are low (2% RTC)
- The pest plant buddleia was intensively searched for and controlled within the Wainuiomata catchment by our pest plants team
- The annual hunting ballot had 74 entrants. The winners of the ballot culled five deer and four goats
- Professional hunting operations were carried out in October, January and June. A total of 22 goats, 59 pigs and 12 deer were culled. There is little sign of goats in the Wainuiomata Catchment. Most of the goats destroyed were found in the southern part of the Orongorongo Catchment
- We have continued to carry out intensive and comprehensive pest control within the Wainuiomata Mainland Island. 86 possums, 78 hedgehogs, 26 stoats, one weasel, four rabbits and one cat were trapped, while poisoning has kept rats and mice at low numbers

# Preparation for new parks

## Whitireia Park



- A major gorse fire broke out in the park in February 2010. Over 60 hectares of the park was burnt
- The Onehunga Bay Restoration Group has planted 7,500 plants since the fire in two community planting days, with over 80 people attending both days
- A sustainable land use plan is currently being developed with input from interest groups as well as iwi and relevant public agencies

Annual expenditure: \$38,000



Onehunga Bay after the fire in February 2010



Community planting day after the fire



# Regional Sustainability Committee members

The Regional Sustainability Committee comprises eight members. Its membership for the year to 30 June 2010 was:

**Chris Laidlaw** (Chair)

**Paul Bruce** (Deputy Chair)

**Judith Aitken**

**Sally Baber**

**John Burke**

**Barbara Donaldson**

**Rex Kirton**

**Fran Wilde**

**Alan McKenzie**

Appointee, representing the Department of Conservation, with speaking rights only

**Liz Mellish**

Appointee, representing the interests of the Iwi of the Wellington region

## Parks management team

At 30 June 2010, the management team members of the Utilities and Services group with responsibilities for parks were:

**Murray Kennedy**

(Group general manager)

**Murray Waititi**

(Parks manager)

**Amanda Cox**

(Marketing and Design manager)

**Richard Waddy**

(Finance and Support manager)

Water, air, earth and energy – elements in Greater Wellington’s logo combine to create and sustain life. Greater Wellington promotes **Quality for Life** by ensuring your environment is protected while meeting the economic, cultural and social needs of the community

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