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Waikanae estuary update



SEPTEMBER 2007

There have been many exciting changes happening in the Waikanae estuary as the restoration work progresses. This newsletter endeavours to inform you about work achieved during the last year and projects that are planned for the near future.

Removal of pest species

The Department of Conservation, Kapiti Coast District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council are following a restoration plan for the Waikanae estuary. This plan sets out a vision for restoring the Waikanae estuary to as close to its natural state as possible through removal of weeds and the systematic planting of eco-sourced native plants. Aerial- and hand-spraying of herbicides have removed large patches of gorse, boxthorn, periwinkle and blackberry. To protect newly planted native plants from rabbits, the Department of Conservation and Regional Council laid Pindone in May and June 2007. The poison was laid by hand in small amounts near rabbit sign such as droppings, tracks, or where rabbits had been feeding on plants. The project appears to have been successful as no rabbit damage has been observed at new plantings.

Native plantings with the Waikanae Estuary Care Group

The aim of the Waikanae Estuary Care Group is to involve the local community in caring for and restoring native flora and fauna in the estuary. The group has received funding and plants from Greater Wellington Regional Council, Ministry for the Environment and the Honda TreeFund. They have regular working bees planting native species at specific sites identified in the restoration plan. This winter they planted nearly 8,000 plants in various areas. Students from Waikanae and Kenakena School also assisted. Native species include: spinifex, pingao, ngaio, toetoe, hebe, flax, coprosma, kahikatea, taupata, five finger, cabbage tree, umbrella

sedge, coastal tree daisy, karamu, *Carex secta*, and kanuka. You may have seen weed mats placed in some areas to aid in repressing invasive plants.

All plantings are completed with neighbours in mind; low or sparse growing species are planted near the road and borders so as not to block neighbours' views in the future.

Tree planting across generations: Maureen Kortens and Sean Eaton.

Photo: Kerry Penny, Greater Wellington Regional Council



Future work

This summer, Department of Conservation staff will hand spray weeds around the newly planted native species. You may see a pink colour where weeds have been selectively sprayed. Next autumn, specific areas at the northern side of the estuary will be sprayed to clear small areas for restoration plantings.

If the summer is dry, council staff may periodically water some of the newly planted areas to assist plants in getting a good start.

How you can help

The Waikanae Estuary Care Group has regular working bees at their two shade houses where they grow native plants from eco-sourced seed stock. They welcome anyone interested in volunteering in the estuary or at the shade house. Contact Maureen Kortens at:

04-902-4892 or see:

www.gw.govt.nz/waikanaeestuary.

We appreciate your support of restoration work in the estuary.

You can lend a hand by disposing garden weeds safely (composting or taking to the green waste). People can help protect wildlife by keeping dogs under control and keeping cats inside overnight.

Please feel free to contact the Department of Conservation or councils if you have any questions:

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Get your feet wet and enjoy!
Photo: Kerryn Penny, GWRC.



Enthusiastic helper, Graeme Cook.
Photo: Stacy Moore, DOC.



Enjoying good company and warm food.
Photo: Stacy Moore, DOC.