

Our Region

NEWS FROM THE GREATER WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

A sense of community

Volunteers making
a difference

On constant watch

Who keeps our coastline safe?

A trip at your fingertips

A walking or cycling trip in a few
mouse clicks

Enjoy the outdoors this winter

Join a planting day



Please recycle
Produced sustainably

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Above: Planting day at Greater Wellington's Battle Hill Farm Forest Park (off Paekakariki Hill Road)
Cover: People power! Mike Hardiman and Caroline Cowie get stuck in at a Waikanae Estuary Care Group working bee

Our Region is produced sustainably

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greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL

www.gw.govt.nz

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.

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Tea and camaraderie

Five years after setting up, the Waikanae Estuary Care Group's efforts are bearing fruit

On a stunning Saturday morning, dedicated volunteers don boots and gloves to rip out weeds from the Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve – one of the largest estuaries in New Zealand and a nationally significant wetland.

Group member Ron Smith lives across the road from the estuary. "It's like having an extension of our garden. If we want this to look good, we have to do the work." He says the weeding is difficult "but the cup of tea, camaraderie and results are worth it".

Blackberry, gorse, pampas grass and willows are being removed, making way for toetoe, pingao, shrub daisies and other coastal trees. The group's chair, Jeff Eaton, says their vision is to provide a corridor for native birds to travel from Kapiti Island to the Tararua ranges. "We're already seeing tui, a sign that other native birds may soon follow."

The benefits aren't just environmental. The care group promotes a sense of community and members gain knowledge about coastal planting and growing seeds (the group maintains a shade house where 8,000 plants are grown each year from locally collected seeds).

"Many of us joined because we loved the project," says operations manager Mike Hardiman. "We didn't know much about coastal planting but we've learned a lot by being involved."

The Waikanae Estuary Care Group is supported by Greater Wellington, the Kapiti Coast District Council, Department of Conservation (who also manage the estuary) and Ministry for the Environment.

To join the care group, email kerryn.penny@gw.govt.nz



Weeding can be fun! David Carruthers (left) and Ron Smith at a Waikanae Estuary Care Group working bee

Dig this

From June to September, Greater Wellington organises both community and corporate planting days... and we're inviting you to join in



Lucy Koteka and her son Joshua at a Battle Hill Farm Forest Park planting day

Planting native trees and shrubs is essential for protecting and enhancing our environment. But it's a lot of work – thousands of plants are needed to sustain an ecosystem. So we need as many helping hands as possible.

"People from all walks of life join community planting days," says Greater Wellington's Robyn Smith. "We have environmental groups, schoolchildren, families and individuals wanting to make a difference. Even if you go just once a year, you're making an important contribution."

Businesses can take part in corporate planting days. It's great for team building and benefits the wider community. Contact us if your business would like to get involved.

Planting days are held at regional parks, rivers, streams, wetlands, estuaries and coastal dunes.

Community planting days:

www.gw.govt.nz/events

Corporate planting days: 04 801 1027

or email caregroups@gw.govt.nz

Winner!



Saving water over summer will be easier for Robert McClymont of the Wellington suburb Highbury. He was one of 10 gardeners who won a water timer (with a moisture detector to prevent over-watering) and soak hose as part of Greater Wellington's summer water conservation campaign.

www.gw.govt.nz/water

On constant watch

Many of us have a childhood vision of the man who lived in a lighthouse, keeping boats safe on stormy nights. But who makes sure our rocky shores are safe in this hi-tech age? That's where Greater Wellington's Harbours team comes in...

With the 2008-09 summer season now behind them, the Harbours team has reason to be satisfied. There was a welcome absence of boating fatalities or serious accidents in a season that has seen, nationally, a larger than usual number of fatalities, accidents and near misses.

But "nothing" doesn't just happen. "We have to work at ensuring that activities on the water – from shipping to recreation – are safe for everyone, and that our rules and regulations are effective," says Regional Harbourmaster, Captain Mike Pryce.

In fact, ensuring navigational safety for all our harbour and coastline users means the Harbours team is on constant watch. It's a big task for the team, working in a region whose waters extend from the Otaki River in the west to the Matakona River north of Castlepoint in the east, and include both Porirua and Wellington harbours.



Regional Harbourmaster, Captain Mike Pryce

Harbour Rangers out on patrol.
Grant Nalder (left) and John Tattersall



Harbours is in charge of:

- ⚓ Maintaining the main navigation lights in Wellington Harbour (many are solar powered) and smaller navigation aids throughout the region
- ⚓ Mooring areas for boats
- ⚓ Protecting the marine environment and responding to oil pollution
- ⚓ Helping to prevent accidents by educating the public
- ⚓ Operating the Beacon Hill Communications Station
- ⚓ Working with CentrePort to operate a safe commercial port
- ⚓ Making sure commercial ships follow regulations



What a view! Harbour Communications Officer Khaled Abdalla at Beacon Hill, with Wellington's harbour entrance in the background

THE SHIPPING NEWS

"Harbours never sleep," says Captain Mike Pryce. And indeed the Beacon Hill Communications Station operates 24 hours a day, every day, throughout the year. At 131 metres above the entrance of Wellington Harbour, and staffed by a roster of six dedicated people, it's the "eyes and ears" of the Harbourmaster.

Beacon Hill is the first and last point of contact for ships arriving and departing the harbour. Its tracking systems record and monitor ship movements inside the harbour day and night. Once contact with a ship is made, Beacon Hill transmits information on shipping movements, weather conditions and any navigation warnings. The station also works closely with CentrePort to organise berths, pilots, tugs and other services.

Check out Beacon Hill's webcam for weather and shipping during daylight hours
www.gw.govt.nz/beaconhill

www.gw.govt.nz/harbours

POLLUTION RESPONSE

What happens to old, abandoned boats? The Harbours team makes sure our harbours and coastline are protected from major pollution by removing rusting harbour hulks (abandoned ships), cars, large logs, drums or other large floating objects that may present a hazard to vessels. It also responds to oil spills.

The team has removed three hulks over the past two years that were a pollution risk and hazard to navigational safety. It's also assisting to move a fourth hulk from Wellington Harbour for scuttling (sinking) as a dive site. "It's quite a process but essential to reducing the likelihood of any environmental damage to the harbour," says Captain Mike Pryce.

Check out a video of the Harbours team sinking two trawlers in Cook Strait
www.gw.govt.nz/harbours



BRIGHT LIGHT

Regular seafarers passing near Wellington's Pencarrow Coast may have noticed the Pencarrow lighthouse at sea level looking considerably brighter. That's because it got a spruce-up late last year – its first repaint in 15 years. Get a closer look by walking or biking from Burdans Gate in Eastbourne to the lighthouse.



WEAR YOUR LIFEJACKET

Changes to safety bylaws mean it's compulsory to use lifejackets in boats and other vessels less than six metres long, unless the skipper considers it safe not to wear one. Another change to the bylaws requires all vessels to carry a device to attract attention – such as a whistle for kayakers close to shore or a distress radio beacon for boats heading out to Cook Strait or beyond.

Find out about other safety bylaws changes
www.gw.govt.nz/harbours

PLANNING AN EVENT ON THE WATER?

The Harbours team helps organisations plan events on the water. It does this by advising on safety requirements, ensuring the safety of other water users, and also other safety precautions, such as checking the weather and shipping movements during the event.

If you'd like to run an event on the water, contact Harbours during office hours on 04 381 7760 or harbours@gw.govt.nz



Prepare to survive

The 6.3 magnitude earthquake that hit the Italian town of L'Aquila at 3.30am on 6 April 2009 is a powerful reminder that disasters happen suddenly and without warning. In this case, 295 people died and more than 1,000 were injured.

"Not knowing when the next major disaster will occur is the best reason to be prepared, so now is a good time to make sure you have enough supplies to see you and your family through an emergency," says Greater Wellington's Chris Killeen.

Three days worth of the following items at your home are essential for any type of disaster, whether it's an earthquake, flood or flu pandemic.

- Emergency water (at least three litres per person per day for at least three days) and water-purification tablets. More water (at least another 10 litres per person per day) is needed for hygiene and food preparation
- Non-perishable food
- First aid kit and essential medications
- Emergency lighting (eg, torch and spare batteries)
- Toilet paper, large bucket and large plastic bags (for making toilets)



- Blankets and warm clothing
- Alternative cooking methods (gas cooker, barbeque)
- Baby supplies
- Pet and animal supplies
- A household emergency plan (so each person knows what to do before, during and after an emergency)

Be prepared at work, too. Though most workplaces have first aid supplies, you should have a personal kit with food, water and supplies to last three days, as well as a spare pair of comfortable shoes and a warm item of clothing in case you have to walk home.

www.wrcdemg.govt.nz

Calling our environmental partners

Nominations are now open for the annual Greater Wellington Environmental Awards

These awards recognise and reward the community groups, schools, resource consent holders and businesses working in partnership with Greater Wellington to protect and enhance the region's environment.



Last year's Meridian School Sustainable Project Award winner – Room 6 of Masterton's Fernridge School

Meridian School Sustainable Project Award

For schools working with us to improve the health of the environment or promote sustainability through environmental education

Meridian School Environmental Leadership Award

Recognises a person's leadership on a school-wide environmental project that involves students as active participants

Rata Community Partnership Award

For groups working in our Take Care programme, regional parks projects, sustainable transport initiatives, flood protection and land management programmes

Community Environmental Leadership Award

Recognises the contribution of a community member who has been working with us to improve the environmental health of their community and the Wellington region

Nikau Award for Compliance Excellence

For consent holders with Greater Wellington who go beyond the

conditions of their consent and develop innovative, inspiring solutions to reduce the impact of their activities on the environment

Environmental Protection Award

Acknowledges small and medium-sized businesses working with us to prevent pollution and improve environmental management

Green Business Award

For businesses that have recently started working with us (less than one year) but are nevertheless making significant improvements in their sustainability

Business Environmental Leadership Award

For businesses working with us to improve their environmental performance and reduce their carbon emissions

Does this sound like you or your organisation? Download a nomination form and send it to us by 4 September 2009

www.gw.govt.nz/environmentalawards

Porirua Stream under threat

The Porirua Stream and catchment are under serious threat from pollution, litter and erosion according to a recent study. You can help by securing your rubbish and recycling on collection day and calling our Pollution Hotline if you see somebody dumping waste into a stormwater drain. The study is part of a joint Greater Wellington, and Porirua and Wellington city council project to improve the health of the catchment.

Pollution Hotline 0800 496 734

Buggy walking this winter

Come to a Lion Foundation buggy walk this winter and enjoy the region's beautiful parks. "New mums and caregivers have told us it's a great way to get out of the house and meet other parents," says Greater Wellington's Amanda Cox. There's no need to register, just turn up. The buggy walks are a joint initiative between Greater Wellington and Sport Wellington, sponsored by the Lion Foundation.

www.buggywalk.co.nz

Environmental protection reports

How many pollution incidents does Greater Wellington's Environmental Protection team respond to? How many businesses are meeting their resource consent conditions? How many aren't? Greater Wellington's environmental regulation reports for 2007-08 provide detailed information on its environmental enforcement and pollution prevention work. The report cards are available at:

www.gw.govt.nz/regulationreportcards

Wanted: pest plant

Look out for this plant – it's a pest and we want to stop it spreading. White-edged nightshade (*Solanum marginatum*) is a shrub that's covered in spikes and can grow up to five metres. It has green leaves with white veins and edges on top, and is entirely white underneath. It produces tomato-like fruit that are yellow when ripe and contain many seeds. It's toxic to livestock and therefore reduces available grazing area.

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



White-edged nightshade



Take public transport to hospital

Finding out how to take public transport to the hospital has just been made easier. Metlink's *Travelling to Hospital* brochure tells you how to get to the Wellington, Hutt and Kenepuru hospitals by bus and train. No driving stress or parking worries! The brochure is available from all Metlink timetable stockists.

Kapiti bus changes coming soon

Changes are on the way for Kapiti bus travellers. These include a more direct bus route from Paraparaumu Station to Paraparaumu and Raumati beach suburbs, more weekend and evening services, and a new Paraparaumu East service. These changes, which people were consulted about last year, will be introduced soon.

Better bus services for Porirua

More than 400 submissions were received on proposed changes to make Porirua bus services better. The comments and submissions are now being evaluated. Greater Wellington will then work with the bus operator and Porirua City Council to finalise new bus routes, timetables and changes to bus stops. Look out for more information over the next few months.

Metlink makeover

The Metlink website (www.metlink.org.nz – with complete information on buses, trains and the harbour ferry) is getting a makeover. The new-look website is due to be up and running in July. It will have new maps, features to make it easier for people with disabilities to get information, and enable you to receive emails about timetable changes.



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



Sustainability tips

The calm, cool days and frosty nights of winter are perfect for getting cosy by the wood burner. But bear in mind that fires cause air pollution, so check out these handy tips to fire-up more sustainably.

What you can do

- Wrap up your house. Subsidies for insulation are available through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority. See www.energywise.govt.nz
- Use dry wood in your wood burner. This will give more heat and cause less pollution
- Never burn treated wood or household rubbish. These products can give off hazardous substances
- Fires should burn hot and fast, as a smouldering fire gives off more pollution

Greater Wellington monitors air quality around the region. We also work with school children through our Take Action for Air programme to educate them about how they can reduce air pollution.

More sustainability tips
www.bethedifference.govt.nz

Calendar of events

20 JUNE

Belmont Regional Park planting day

9.30am-12noon
 Warspite Ave (behind the shops), Cannons Creek
www.gw.govt.nz/events

11 JULY

Belmont Regional Park planting day

9.30am-12noon
 Stratton St, Normandale, Lower Hutt
www.gw.govt.nz/events

12 JULY

Queen Elizabeth Park (northern wetland) planting day

9.30am-12noon
 Matai Rd, Raumati
www.gw.govt.nz/events

8 AUGUST

Butterfly Creek Night-Time Madness

Adventure running/walking
 East Harbour Regional Park
www.paardekooper.co.nz

22 AUGUST

Whareroa Stream planting day

9.30am-12noon
 MacKays Crossing entrance to Queen Elizabeth Park
www.gw.govt.nz/events

13-20 SEPTEMBER

Conservation Week

www.doc.govt.nz/events

11 OCTOBER

Wainuiomata Water Catchment Walking Tour

Bookings essential, 04 526 5332
joanne.hunwick@gw.govt.nz
www.gw.govt.nz/events

There are many more planting days organised by community groups around the region. See www.gw.govt.nz/takecare for a planting day near you

A trip at your fingertips

Planning a walking or cycling trip in the region will soon be as easy as a couple of mouse clicks

Instead of having to pull out a myriad of maps and spread them over the floor, you'll soon be able to simply click on a website and key in your starting and finishing points. In seconds you'll have all the information you need about your particular journey.

As well as seeing how long your journey will take, you'll also see how steep the trip is and how many calories you'll burn!

Keen Wellington cyclist Claire Pascoe says the new website will make it easy and fun to plan a trip.



Wellington cyclist Claire Pascoe

"It will also encourage people to try walking or cycling by making people more aware of different ways to get from A to B."

www.gw.govt.nz/journeyplanner