

MARCH/APRIL 2009

Our Region

NEWS FROM THE GREATER WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

Share your ride

Our future – your say
Shopping with the stars
Love NZ – love recycling



Please recycle
this magazine



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Left: Janet Hay takes in a stunning view of Transmission Gully at the Battle Hill Heli Tramp, a Regional Outdoors Programme event. Janet's husband Peter took this great photo

Cover: Let's Carpool! Delia Small (left) and Steph Weller choose the sustainable way to get to work

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What does Greater Wellington do?

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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.



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. Please contact Greater Wellington on 0800 496 734 or info@gw.govt.nz

www.gw.govt.nz



Keen carpoolers Steph Weller (left), Delia Small and Alan White. A new website will make it easier to share your ride to work

Share your ride

Let's Carpool, an easy way to commute by carpool, comes to all workplaces in the Wellington region next month

Greater Wellington's Jill Beck says the scheme is aimed at people who live or work in places that are not easily accessible by public transport. "Let's Carpool offers these people a viable alternative to driving solo and it takes the hassle out of finding other people to carpool with. Just enter some details and preferences on the secure website and the computer programme does the searching for you."

Delia Small from the Department of Conservation's Manners Street office in Wellington took up carpooling three months ago. She travels from Newlands with two others. "Carpooling is great because it's good for the environment, plus I save petrol and parking money. And I enjoy chatting to my fellow carpoolers on the way to work."

Greater Wellington is encouraging employers to promote the scheme to their staff. Employers can register now by phoning 04 381 7983 or going to the carpooling website.

www.gw.govt.nz/carpool

In-house action

Greater Wellington is aiming to curb its in-house greenhouse gas emissions in a plan to help reduce the effects of climate change in the region

"We've been asking the community to adopt more sustainable lifestyles, so it's vital that we 'walk the talk'," says Greater Wellington's Chief Executive Dave Benham.

In 2005-06 Greater Wellington produced 6,300 tonnes of greenhouse gas. We aim to reduce our emissions by 18% by 2012, 28% by 2020 and 41% by 2050.

It's vital that we walk the talk

More than three-quarters of the greenhouse gas Greater Wellington produces comes from the electricity needed to pump water to the region's four cities. We'll be investigating more renewable energy options for pumping this water and ways to reduce demand for water.

Other areas for savings are our vehicle fleet, staff commuting, energy used in our buildings and waste.

www.gw.govt.nz/climatechange

Record numbers for summer fun

On one of the best days in January, a record-breaking 390 people turned up to meet Kev the Wandering Kiwi at the Lion Foundation Buggy Walk in Tunnel Gully, Upper Hutt

There have been many successes at this year's Regional Outdoors Programme.

"The third Anything Vintage Festival at Queen Elizabeth Park drew 9,000 people and looks like becoming an end-of-year feature for the Kapiti Coast. And the great weather brought consistently high numbers to all the Kev walks, with the Tunnel Gully walk beating last year's record by more than 100," says Greater Wellington's Amanda Cox.

"I'm especially pleased with the popularity of the Rongoa Maori Medicine Walk at Kaitoke Regional Park – the interest was so high that we could easily have booked out two more of these walks."

Though autumn is approaching, there are still some great events to check out before the programme finishes in April (see the calendar of events on the back page) and many more opportunities for fun in Greater Wellington's parks and forests throughout the year.

Greater Wellington is also encouraging more clubs, schools and community organisations to use the region's parks and forests by waiving concessions fees for most non-commercial groups with under 150 participants.

Regional Outdoors Programme: www.gw.govt.nz/events

Concessions: www.gw.govt.nz/concessions



Our future - your say

We have some big issues and questions facing our region, such as last summer's serious water shortage – how will we make sure there's enough water for our growing population? Or how do we meet people's public transport needs while keeping it affordable?

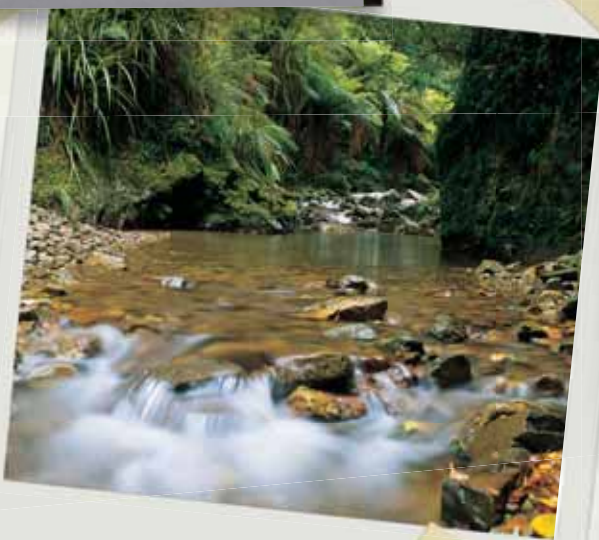
And we're also in tough financial times. It's more important than ever to future-proof our region, but it must be at a cost we can afford.

It's vital that we discuss our plans and ideas with you.

This year there are

FIVE MAJOR CONSULTATIONS

coming up, which we've signposted here. We hope you take the opportunity to have your say.



What's the 10-year plan?

Greater Wellington's major commitments for the next 10 years are outlined in our *10-Year Plan 2009-19*, which has targets, timeframes and funding for all work programmes, ranging from public transport to flood protection. The *10-Year Plan* is also known as the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). By law, we must produce a *10-Year Plan* every three years.

The *10-Year Plan* will cover these issues:

- **Water supply** – We'll need a major new water source in the future for our growing population. It will be expensive but could be delayed if we use less water
- **Public transport** – We want to get more people on public transport, especially during peak times. We're buying new trains and improving the Metlink public transport network by introducing real-time information
- **Regional parks and forests** – The community wants new regional parks at Whitireia and Lake Wairarapa. We're planning to slowly bring these sites into our park network so we can keep costs down
- **Land management** – The way we manage our land, both urban and agricultural, affects our quality of life and underpins our economic prosperity. We'd like to continue with projects that improve the quality of our soils and control pest plants and animals
- **Climate change** – We're currently working with the region's councils on climate change issues. We'd like to continue supporting renewable energy in the region
- **Flood protection** – We'd like to continue with our flood protection programme across the region

HAVE YOUR SAY – Every household in the region will receive a summary of the proposed *10-Year Plan* before the end of March. We'll be asking if you agree with what we plan to do or if there are things you think should be done differently

Our investment in transport

Better roads, improved public transport, and safer cycling and walking are essential for a sustainable regional transport system.

We've put together a list of major transport activities for the next three years, in priority order. These are in the draft *Regional Land Transport Programme*. High on the list is an upgrade of Muldoon's Corner on the Rimutaka Hill Road and a project for more trains on the tracks during peak times. The draft includes other local roading projects, State Highway improvements, and local council projects for cycle lanes and footpaths.

HAVE YOUR SAY – Every household in the region will receive a summary of the draft *Regional Land Transport Programme* before the end of March, so you can tell us what you think about priorities for the region's transport system

Using our resources wisely

Over the past century, changes in land use have altered our coastlines, many of our native ecosystems have been lost, and the water quality in many of our rivers and streams is poor.

The *Regional Policy Statement* aims to address issues like these by requiring Greater Wellington and local councils to manage the region's air, water, land, soil, minerals and energy in a way that doesn't compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

HAVE YOUR SAY – We will consult on the proposed *Regional Policy Statement* from 23 March. To have your say, see www.gw.govt.nz/rps or email rps@gw.govt.nz

A 20-year vision for parks

The community's leisure and recreation needs have changed since regional parks were first developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. And we are more aware of the role that parks can play in promoting good health. How can our parks meet the needs of the region's communities? We're gathering information from the public to help us develop a draft *Regional Parks Network Strategy*, which will guide how we manage our parks for the next 20 years.

HAVE YOUR SAY – The draft *Regional Parks Network Strategy* will go out for public consultation later this year. For more information, see www.gw.govt.nz/networkstrategy



Bringing the region's water issues together

Water is something we so often take for granted. But last year's water shortages were a reminder that it's a limited resource.

Currently, Greater Wellington supplies water in bulk to the region's four cities (Wellington, Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt and Porirua) and also has responsibility for surface and groundwater for the entire region. With the *Regional Water Strategy*, we propose bringing all water management issues together. This will allow Greater Wellington and local councils to work towards long-term sustainability by taking a shared approach to water quality, water conservation and water supply.

HAVE YOUR SAY – We plan to complete a draft *Regional Water Strategy* to go out for consultation by the end of the year

For more information, see www.gw.govt.nz

Waiwhetu Stream comes clean

Remember the chorus of "ooh, poeey!" from the kids in the back when you'd drive past Waiwhetu Stream in Lower Hutt? That wasn't so long ago – but the future of the stream is looking good

Right through to the 1970s the stream was a de facto sewer for trade waste from industry in Gracefield because there wasn't anywhere else for it to go.

"Things improved in the late 1970s when a trade waste system was set up," says Greater Wellington's John Eyles. "But the lower reaches of the stream are still heavily contaminated with a legacy of industrial waste that is hazardous to human and ecological health, such as heavy metals, copper, zinc and pesticides."

Fortunately, the residents of Waiwhetu, both human and aquatic, can look forward to a cleaner stream as the Waiwhetu Project comes to fruition, with cleanup works likely to start by mid-year following a successful trial last year.



Waiwhetu Stream is going to get better

Greater Wellington will also use the cleanup as an opportunity to reduce the flooding risk by widening and deepening the lower reaches of Waiwhetu Stream at the same time. "In February 2004 there was a one in 40-year flood which flooded about 70 dwellings. It shows just how damaging a larger flood can be," says John.

Prue Lamason, who is a Greater Wellington Councillor and Chair of the Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Subcommittee, is delighted with the progress being made to improve the stream. "It's fantastic that what has been an eyesore for so long will eventually become an attractive, healthy place for everyone to enjoy."

The cleanup is a joint project between Greater Wellington, the Hutt City Council and Ministry for the Environment, following extensive community consultation.



Above: What does "Colonel Sanders" think of Westpac Stadium's new recycling bins? "They're fantastic." Below: It's easy being green for Fred Dagg lookalikes Lenora Prosser (left) and Binh Ngo



Love NZ – love recycling

"Fantastic", "a ripper", "about time" and "we love New Zealand and we care" were among the comments from Flash Gordons, fairies, Lego men, car fresheners and leprechauns enjoying Wellington's NZI Rugby Sevens tournament – but they weren't talking about the rugby

The flamboyantly dressed spectators were expressing their support for a Greater Wellington, Stadium Trust and Ministry for the Environment partnership to encourage recycling at stadium events.

Forty-two recycling bins displaying the Ministry's "Love NZ – Recycle with Care" logo were dotted around the Westpac Stadium for the tournament, and they'll be there for future events as well. It's hoped the bins will reduce waste going from the stadium into landfills by 40%.

"I've been using these bins for all my bottles – they're fantastic," well-known Sevens spectator "Colonel Sanders" said at the event.

It's hoped the bins will reduce waste going into landfills by 40%

Greater Wellington Chair Fran Wilde says that by reducing waste going into landfills, we save money on disposal costs, extend the life of existing landfills (to avoid creating new ones) and reuse potentially valuable resources.

This initiative is funded by the stadium and a grant from the Ministry for the Environment's "Recycling in Public Places Initiative".

Funding for forestry

Are you a landowner thinking about getting into forestry or protecting native bush on your land? You may be eligible for funding under the Government's Afforestation Grant Scheme. The fund promotes forestry as a way to reduce the impact of climate change, and is managed by regional councils and central government. Forestry plantings or native bush must be five hectares to qualify, and priority will go to initiatives that control erosion and fertiliser run-off or benefit native biodiversity.

Contact Greater Wellington's David Cameron on 06 370 5662

Feet First every week

Get active with Feet First – encouraging children to walk to school safely, have fun, and learn about their community and environment. Schools can access full curriculum materials at any time of the year.

Register at www.feetfirst.govt.nz

Free event for conservation volunteers

It's time to register for Restoration Day – a day of free seminars and workshops held each year for individuals and community groups who are interested in caring for their environment. This year's theme is Ki Uta Ki Tai (from the mountains to the sea) and focuses on a "whole-of-catchment" approach to environmental restoration. The event takes place on Saturday 9 May at Te Wananga O Aotearoa in Porirua. Restoration Day is organised by Greater Wellington, the Department of Conservation, Wellington City Council and Porirua City Council. Registrations are essential.

See the calendar of events on the back page for details

Wanted: pest plant

Look out for this plant – it's a pest and we want to stop it spreading. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) is found around waterways and grows up to three metres tall. It produces millions of seeds, forming large patches that displace native plants. It has lance-shaped leaves, clusters of pink/purple flowers and red-to-green square-shaped stems.

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



Purple loosestrife



Kapiti improvements on track

Double tracking and electrification of the railway line to Waikanae has begun. This will allow trains to run to and from Waikanae at the same time. Most of the initial work will occur at a safe distance from the existing railway lines and State Highway 1.

txtTRAIN

You can now get train timetable information by text. To find out when your next two trains are scheduled to depart, simply send a text message to TRN (876) on your mobile phone. Key in the first four letters of the station you are departing from and your destination (eg, "JOHN WELL" for a journey from Johnsonville to Wellington) and you will receive a reply with the next two scheduled train departure times. All text messages to txtTRAIN cost 20c.

Spotlight on Porirua buses

A review of Porirua's bus services is being carried out to make improvements, set up some new routes and better match frequency with demand. Porirua bus users will be asked for their input. Consultation begins on 23 March.

Metlink City Safari

This unique orienteering event – where Metlink buses, trains and the harbour ferry help get you where you need to go – is on Sunday 17 May. It's open to all ages, and can be as fun or as fierce as you want to make it. For more information: www.citysafari.org.nz



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



Sustainability tips

★★★★ Shopping with the stars ★☆☆★★★★

You're making a major purchase like a fridge or a washing machine... so how do you know which product's best for the environment?

"Efficiency labels" can help you to make the right choice. The familiar red and yellow rating label tells you the energy efficiency of an appliance and indicates how much electricity it might use over a year.

Less familiar is the blue water rating label. These currently appear on appliances produced for the Australian market (see above left for an example) and tell you how efficient an appliance is at using water.

What you can do

1. Look for the efficiency rating label or swing tag when shopping for new appliances, including showers and toilet cisterns
2. Is the washer in your toilet cistern old and perished? This is a big water waster as it causes water to continually leak into the toilet bowl
3. Do you need to replace your fridge or freezer? Make sure you get rid of your old one at your local landfill as it is likely to contain harmful CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons – these damage the earth's ozone layer) and be very inefficient
4. Remember, saving water saves energy – it takes a lot of electricity to supply the water that goes through our household appliances, especially hot water

★★★★ More sustainability tips ★☆☆★★★★ www.bethedifference.gw.govt.nz

Calendar of events

21 MARCH

The Real Cannons Creek 2

10am-12noon

Take a walk in the Cannons Creek Valley
 Meet: Champions Street entrance to Cannons Creek

Bookings essential, 04 237 4760
www.gw.govt.nz/events

28 MARCH

4WD Back Country Akatarawa

Bring your vehicle for a trip through the Akatarawa Forest

Bookings essential, 04 801 1041
www.gw.govt.nz/events

29 MARCH

Walk the Trail

10am start

Walk along the Hutt River Trail
 Meet: Trentham Memorial Park
www.walkthetrail.co.nz

2 APRIL

Lion Foundation Buggy Walk

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park
 10.30am-12noon
www.buggywalk.co.nz

4-5 APRIL

Kapiti Coast Sustainable Home and Garden Show

www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/sustainability/events.htm

5 APRIL

Grand Traverse

Multisport event
 Whitireia Park, Battle Hill,
 Belmont Regional Park
www.poriuagrandtraverse.co.nz

9 MAY

Restoration Day – Ki Uta Ki Tai – from the mountains to the sea

Te Wananga O Aotearoa in Porirua
 8.30am-5pm
 Registrations essential, 04 803 0367

17 MAY

Metlink City Safari

Orienteering event (see p7)
 04 566 2645
www.citysafari.org.nz

Cycling safely

Be bright on your bike and stand out at night is the message from Greater Wellington as the daylight hours get shorter

Peter Reynolds, who runs cycling skills and safety courses, says it's about being as visible as possible.

"You can see lights and reflective clothing, such as hi-visibility jackets, from a good distance. That's really important for other road users like trucks and buses because they need more time to give you space on the road."

Greater Wellington's Ian Kirkman says cyclists need to know that although you may see a car coming in dark conditions, the driver may not see you. "And to motorists – please, always look out for cyclists."

For visibility in dark or dull conditions, cyclists need:

- White front lights
- Red rear lights
- Bright and reflective clothing

And remember to check your lights to make sure they're visible and fit fresh batteries regularly.

www.gw.govt.nz/cycling



Use lights and reflective clothing when it's dark or dull