

an alternative newsletter whilst the regular editor is away....

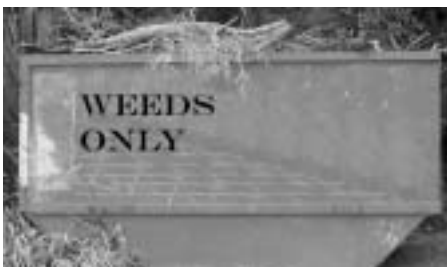


Next Landcare Day Sunday 13 October 2002

October Landcare vigilante weeding day is Pea plant. We have moved the waterfall planting until November to avoid another wash out. Meet just up from the entrance to the pohutakawa glade at 10am. We will be targeting the spring growth of cape pea under the cave. Contact Caroline Groves for more information 8128760.

Karekare Landcare meets the second Sunday of each month at 10am to tackle weeding or planting projects according to the season. Come and meet some locals, and become familiar with the special native plants in our area.

For more information on other and coming conservation projects see the Landcare section on Karekare website: www.karekare.org.nz/landcare



Weed bins

Spring has sprung, and a not very inconspicuous, yellow weed bin has arrived. If you haven't already been blinded by its colour, it is parked in the small carpark near the Pohutakawa Glade. We hope another bin will be placed on Farm Road. Waitakere Weed Free have provided these, and they are strictly to dispose of noxious weeds from your property, so please, no rubbish. We hope they will stay in Karekare between 3rd and 17th October.

Any queries about the bins contact Robin Binsley, who has spent a lot of time organising for them to be here. Phone: 8128420

Webby news

Our newly designed site is now functioning. The web team wishes to thank Mary Gardner for setting up the website and managing it until now. The new team, hopes that the whole community will be involved with contributions to the site. We welcome articles for publication on the site and suggestions for additional features to add to the site.

The website will continue to focus on community news. We will have future sections on the Karekare Surf club and Karekare First Reponse. Pages can be created for any com-

munity group in Karekare. We are adding more back issues of the Karekare billboard and KKRRT committee minutes to keep people in touch with what is happening .

Two new features that have been added to the site are the environment and history sections. In the environment section we intend to gather anecdotal stories of changes to the Karekare environment, we have started to build a diary of what's happening. We intend to add more to the environment section, with articles on the shellfish ban/rahui, and any research that is relevant to the west coast environment. Similarly in the history section, we wish to build a complete history of the Karekare valley. Initially this contains the "official" history, but we hope to add stories from people living in the valley and build an extensive history.

For those of you who are regular FreeSpeak users (the virtual discussion chatroom) this part of the site will now be moved under the control of WeDG (Waitakere E-democracy Group), as the issues discussed are much bigger than a local community site. There will still be a link the from Karekare site to FreeSpeak.

Enjoy the site, and please email any comments to: webeditor@karekare.org.nz





Money for nothing...

This financial year each of the four Community Boards has a small discretionary fund available to use on minor park development projects of less than \$10,000 in cost. Council would like to seek your input as to appropriate use of these funds. The sum of money is limited - approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000 in total for each ward, but the Community Boards believe that carefully spent on small projects, this money can make a significant difference to places like Karekare beach and the environment. If you

have any proposals for projects that you would like the local Karekare Residents and Ratepayers Trust committee to consider, then please forward these to KKRRT chairman, Dave Munro, on 8128696 or email; david.munro@tmp.com before Tuesday the 8th October, so the KKRRT has time to put in a proposal to the council board meetings. Successful past Karekare proposals include the waterfall restoration project and work on the drainage of the green carpark.

the toilet talk continues...

After six open community meetings in Karekare over several months, Peter Sewell, Waitakere City Council Park Asset & Contracts Engineer, presented his report to the Community Board at the Waitakere City Council Chambers on Tuesday 3rd September (view his report on the web). WWC officers recommended that the Community Board approve of the option of installing an on-site packed bed reactor wastewater treatment system, with a drip irrigation disposal system. The disposal area proposed is in the southern sand dunes, near the picnic area and the ARC long drop toilet on the pohutakawa glade walk to the beach. Four Karekare residents stood and spoke in the Public Forum about the process undertaken over several months, and how they didn't think the decision was representative of the whole community. The strongest point of objection was placing the wastewater in the sand dunes. Two Karekare residents suggested individually that wastewater should be trucked out of the area until the issue was resolved. The other two were strongly against any type of structures being introduced into the coastal beach sand dune area, and that the alternative site that Peter Sewell had investigated amongst some old pine trees in the valley, would be more



appropriate.

The Community Board's response was that they felt the majority of the Karekare community was against placing the dispersal field in the pine area, as this was the general feeling in the last few meetings, so the sand dunes are the only other option from an engineering point of view. But the Community Board members did consider differing points of view. Kevin Healy came out to the last community toilet

meeting and looked at the site with some locals that were for the position in the sand dunes, but thought it unusual that Karekare would want to place the dispersal field in such a position, and was not aware there were residents that were against this area who did not want to turn up to this meeting. Betty Hanson wanted to know more about the community meetings, how opinions were canvassed, and was concerned that some locals felt their opinions were not represented. Denise Yates had the opinion that Karekare was not "wilderness" so it did not matter if dispersal field was placed in an open recreational area. It was noted that Rob Taylor stood down from comment on these issues, as he has had a strong opinion in local community meetings. Other members had not been to the beach, did not know the area, and so it was decided for all members of the Community Board to accept Peter Sewell's report, but to come and have a look at the site for themselves.

There are many differing points of view in Karekare on this issue. If you want to have your say you can write or speak to all or any of the members on the local community board.

Julia Moore, written for Karekare website

the last word..

Mary Gardner a long time resident, has officially resigned the KKRRT, as she has moved down to Raglan. We all wish her well and thank her for her contribution to Karekare community life. She has recently sent her feelings on the toilet issue...

Why driplines with high quality effluent should not be set in the southern dunes of Karekare Beach, or a rationalist defense of the irrational

The proposal of the Waitakere city council officers to the community board is to upgrade the toilets at Karekare with a system that produces a high quality effluent, which is to be discharged via driplines over the southern dunes on the beach. The officers say that the public do not frequent the southern dunes and that original community resistance to the idea has been diminished.

Among community members who have participated in the process facilitated by council are mixed responses. Some say this process and recommendation is democratic, robust and a fair solution to a problem.

Others say the process came apart when some neighbours by the "pine plantation", another proposed disposal area up Karekare Valley Rd, responded very angrily to the suggestion of any such works set out on ARC parkland near their properties. Having attended most of six meetings, they feel that the council side in this process of "education and discussion" immediately ruled out that area, rather than following through with these irate neighbours, who, by and large, attended only one meeting.

Another criticism of this process is that the values for which the dunes are held to be so special have counted for naught. These were articulated with words such as "special character", "wildness" and "spiritual". These words themselves were often considered inadequate and explanations were put forward about how these intangibles were unique, important, defying quantitatatives.

In one round of discussion, supporters of the dune disposal plan said that it was irrational to object to either the pine area

or the dunes. But given the property values argument that can be made by the neighbours to the pine area, the only rational thing to do is to use the dunes.

Faced by this, those with "irrational" ideas went very quiet. What to say now?

Allow me to speak in defense of the "irrational".

Our present society is a sucker for the label "rational". The label "rational" transforms every sort of string of words. The criteria for rational is merely "logic" which is surprisingly arbitrary. Everyone has thrown together perfectly logical sentences which leave us all shattered with laughter by the absurdities shown up when compared with reality.

At the same time, our society is frightened of being labeled "irrational". "Irrational" is the stinging label that is applied to "someone else's" indubitably inferior thought process. There are many classic examples: the "natives", the "women", the "adherents of that other race or religion", the "citizens of that other country", the "ones too young or too old to know better". Our history is one of campaign after campaign by "irrationals" casting off that very label.

Irrational is also a label used as viciously within the ranks of the professions such as law, science, medicine, engineering and more. Again, there are classic examples of its both use and its rejection.

Perhaps, as Terry Pratchett's Discworld character Death observed, what is so fascinating about humans is, in spite of all this, they hold a dogged devotion to the irrational. For instance, they hold to the irrational values of justice, peace, equality, friendship, and compassion in a

universe where these values appear to be strictly optional. If we look closely at the history of "irrational" and "rational" in our society, it is often in the very name of these types of irrational values that the "irrational" labels are finally discarded.

In these times there is, as highlighted by this sewage issue, another irrational value on the ascendant: a sense of place. An idea that there is a quality to an area that makes it what it is and that this quality can be both protected or damaged.

Karekare Beach is an example of a place with a very strong sense about it, which has its expression in the salt twisted slant of the manuka on the seaside cliffs, the tumble of the spinifex, the toss of the toi toi, the canopy of the pohutakawa blooms. The lagoon and stream that writhe back and forth across the beach as tonnes of sand move left and right over the years, changing the position of the mouth of the stream at the sea. Tonnes of sand also fill chasms and bury boulders, trains and old surf club buildings. That sand will shift yet again and again. Waterfalls and temporary ponds appear and disappear in a variety of places throughout the dunes from one winter to the next.

Over time, counting either geologic epochs or human generations, much has happened to this beachscape. It is not possible to pick any point, say "this is the original beachscape" and use it as a conservation benchmark. It is not possible to rate what exists now as better than it once was. Nor is it entirely possible to predict what will happen next on the beachscape, left to itself, let alone what



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billboard news

with additional enriched water pumped over the weeds and native vegetation of the dunes.

What is possible is to put affirmative action to the irrational value of "the sense of place". If we used our imagination and could animate the many beachscape changes of even the last fifty years as a mental film clip, we would see something of the dynamics that are so hard to put into words. These dynamics are an active feature of what we sense of the place.

That dynamic is what I seek to defend when I say that I oppose driplines on the Karekare dunes. Call it irrational, if you will, but you only mark out the campaign.

But bear with me a bit more and visualize this dynamic. Then take a panoramic view and consider the Whatipu Peninsula. Karekare is one of the locations that acts as a gateway to this wild area, managed by ARC as one with few amenities so as to limit causal use.

In spite of that, the pressures on the place are enormous, and of an international level - Tourism NZ promotes Karekare, the beach with a piano on it, as a "must see" icon of the NZ experience. Tourism at Karekare is quite raw: there are no shops, no cafes, little if any overnight accommodation. There is no financial gain to the local community and a great deal of day visitor impact which must be absorbed somehow.

Now consider the Waitakere Ranges as a whole. This entire area is long overdue for national protection as a heritage landscape, securing it from the vagaries of

development driven local councils. The regeneration of the rainforest is an unexpected gift to the region and the country. The discussions leading to such protection are heating up again.

With this dripline proposal, the dynamic of a small beach on the edge of the last westerly tarseal road out of Auckland and into the Whatipu is being threatened again. Last year the threat was a roading proposal to the surf club. Before it was a land sale. Bulldozers. Parking lots. A scheme to pipe Auckland sewage for off-shore disposal. Logging. Fire. Even war. And always, very quietly, there are the weeds and pests.

In whatever forms, the threats continue. Although some are defeated and some are compromised, each leaves an itchy scar on the land. Water features and trees lost. Now carparks needing maintenance. Now structures of various kinds needing upgrading. Now patches of weeds treated as lawns needing mowing. A cumulative change occurs anyway.

The other scar is on the local people. Some far apart from the land in grief. Some, just several hundred households, on the land, as hosts of sorts to the million visitors who travel the Piha Road each year. They do the unseen dirty work of committees and lobbying, of fundraising, weeding and pest control, of rubbish clean-ups. The local housework never ends. In addition, each threat rubs locals raw first with each other and then with authorities.

The dripline disposal on the Karekare

dunes is a proposal requiring resource consent. This will take the burden of discussion off the back of the local community and place it onto the greater Auckland region and even the country.

The sense of place at Karekare, experienced in part as that dynamic, is an irrational which needs protection. A line of sorts must be drawn out, firmly protecting this Waitakere heritage, on the edge of the wildness of Whatipu. The line must say "STOP" to the whole variety of threats and the endless wear and tear on the local community as they struggle to do their best.

That same line also says "START" to a whole new era of human behaviours and activities. Some have begun: many people take rubbish away themselves, plant trees, kill pests and enshrine properties as parks and covenants. All once considered quite irrational. Whatever it takes to avoid the driplines on the dunes may sound irrational just now, but wait.

That's hardly the worry any more, is it?

By Mary Gardner



Beach Races 1st December The races are soon, and plans are underway to get the event organised. Any offers of help please contact Phil Parks on 8128 537. Dean Buchanan's beautifully illustrated Race Day T-shirts are still available from Jenny Taylor, contact her on 8128 506. Both the Race Day and the sale of the T-shirts provide much needed fundraising for the local Karekare school, Karekare Surf Club and Karekare Fire Party.



Billboard contact details: Ingrid O'Hanlon Ph/Fax 812 8454 , Vanessa Ferguson Ph 812 8153 Fax 812 8062 Deadline is always 30th of the month. Delivery is first week of month. Send copy to vanf@nznet.gen.nz, please use Arial size 9 with no formatting.