

# RANGITIKEI ENVIRONMENT

*Treasured Natural Environment Group*

## Marton Childcare becomes a bronze enviroschool

*Ron Fisher, Enviroschools Facilitator*

Marton Childcare has been formally acknowledged as a bronze level Enviroschool at a recent reflection and celebration day held at the centre. The day included a number of guests being taken on a tour of the centre to be shown the various environmental projects the centre staff and students have undertaken over the last two years since they started the Enviroschools programme.



*Erina and Mayor Andy Watson*

Guests were shown the extensive work done on the outdoors environment including landscaping with eco materials such as old pallets to create a playhouse, fencing and strawberry planters; an old tree trunk made into a table and chairs; bricks repurposed into paving; and a new native planting area which the children can walk through and hunt for native wildlife – all of which the students were involved in making.

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An obvious highlight for the centre was the introduction of a worm farm and the subsequent variations on design and size. Staff and students have now set up a large worm farm using an old bath that is big enough to take all the waste created from lunchbox scraps.

The day ended with the Mayor, Andy Watson arriving to the sound of the bagpipes as he was ushered into the centre to the delight of the children. The Mayor then presented the bronze level certificate to the centres' lead Enviroschool teacher, Erina Hainsworth before everyone celebrated with a shared outdoor lunch.



*Erina – lead enviro teacher*

Local Enviroschools facilitator, Ron Fisher says he was proud to see how far the centre has come and all the hard work put in by staff and students. *“Its very rewarding to see the fun the kids are having and the amount of learning that is coming out of*

*the programme. The kind of things that are happening at Marton Childcare are helping to create a more sustainable future for all”.*

One of the next focus areas for the centre will be on water conservation and may include catching rainwater from the roof.

There are five Enviroschools in the Rangitikei and this was the first one to go through this reflection process. Marton Childcare are already looking forward to going through the process to gain their silver status and are well on their way to achieving that.

*Ron Fisher - Enviroschools facilitator 0276444884*

*Erina Hainsworth - Marton childcare lead enviro teacher 06 3277570*

## Whio Fun

*By, Abi Wightman, Department of Conservation*

April was Whio Awareness month and in the Rangitikei area we are lucky that there are remnant populations of these unique waterfowl in the fast flowing rivers of the Ruahine ranges.



*Whio fun*

On April 24, DOC Manawatū held an event which raised awareness of Whio at one of our Toyota Kiwi Guardian sites. Toyota Kiwi Guardians is an

initiative which encourages families to get outside and explore, featuring special posts to find in certain locations. The posts display a code word that can be emailed away so that kids can receive a certificate or medal.

The track leading down to the Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge and the Oroua River is a Toyota Kiwi Guardian site, and the river here is home to 10–12 whio. We set up a trail of brightly coloured facts for children to find and provided lots of giveaways on the way. Although the weather wasn't sunny, the families dressed up warmly and had a great time, as did the volunteers who assisted on the day. Many thanks to them for giving up their time.

## Forest Education

*Abi Wightman, Department of Conservation*

At Bruce Park, we have set out some DOC 200 traps to protect the abundant wildlife there and to train others who are interested in conservation. The idea is that people or groups can go to Bruce Park to up-skill in trapping, monitoring, identification or other aspects of forest habitat that they may be interested in.



*DoC 200 trap*

Nga Tawa School has shown an interest in predator control and painted our traps in camo for us, so don't be surprised if they are tricky to find!

Please contact me on [awightman@doc.govt.nz](mailto:awightman@doc.govt.nz) if you want to learn about this site and it's possibilities.

The impending construction of a new toilet at Bruce Park will make it even more visitor friendly!

## Conservation Week Planting at Memorial Park, Taihape

*Athol Sanson, Parks and Reserves Team Leader*

Late 2017, 500 ecosourced plants were planted by local school children at Memorial Park Taihape. This planting had been planned for 18 months with seed being collected from a number of species in March/April 2016.

This planting was organised by the Treasured Natural Environment Group in conjunction with Conservation week 2017. Our thanks go out to everyone that was involved in making this planting happen.

The children of Mataroa School had a great morning in this incredible Park and our thanks go out to the children and parents for making this day so rewarding for everyone involved.



*Conservation week planting with Mataroa School*

I thought I would highlight why we have chosen ecosourcing as our preferred method of plant production and supply.

### **What is ecosourcing?**

Using native plants grown from locally grown seeds. Ecosourced plants help to preserve the ecological distinctiveness of an area, and ecosourced plants fare better and are adapted to survive in the local conditions.

### **Native**

Naturally occurring in New Zealand (i.e. not introduced accidentally or deliberately by humans).

### **Why ecosource?**

Ecosourcing is often used in restoration projects because locally sourced plants are thought to be more likely to survive than those from further away. This is because species are often better adapted to local conditions. For example, if you plant an Auckland sourced plant in Taihape this plant may not show the frost resistant properties of the same Taihape plant.

If ecosourcing principles are not followed then we may see gene pools mixed and could lead to the possible hybridism of a species.

For environmentally sensitive areas the Rangitikei District Council has adopted ecosourcing as its main method for plant supply.

Our guidelines for seed collecting:

Seed is to be harvested from naturally occurring native species

- Seed is to be collected off 10 plus plants to maintain biodiversity
- Seed is to be collected within 20 km of the planting site

- Seed is to be labelled with date collected, species, GPS location and number collected.

The plants chosen for planting were mostly understory plants due to the forest having a mature canopy. The plants have to be carefully placed to ensure the correct plant location for that species.

The following species were planted:

Lophomytus obcordata: A small upright shrub that is common in the Taihape area. Has large red berries during April, berries contain 100's of seeds.

Myrsine divaricata: A small upright tree with divaricating branches. Small berries are hidden in the tree and contain 4 seeds.

Sophora godleyii: The Rangitikei Kowhai, can grow to a height of 15m. Seeds are produced in long capsules and will stay on the tree for many months.

Melicytus ramiflorus: Our common whiteywood or Mahoe produces deep purple fruit containing 50 plus seeds

Hoheria sextulosa: Our native lacebark, produces seeds for a short period of time due to weevil damage.

Coprosma rhamnoides: Small growing divaricating shrub, fruit are black – red producing 2 seeds per berry.

It is hoped that though the Treasured Natural Environment Group all plantings in the Rangitikei region in the future could be ecosourced. It is a simple process and all that is needed is coordination between all members of this group. This would be a step forward in the long term environmental health of our region.

## Community Contacts

### Treasured Natural Environment Group Meeting

Contact Katrina Gray

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### Bulls River Users Group

Contact Jan Harris – [bulls.community@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bulls.community@xtra.co.nz)

### Tutaenui Stream Restoration Group

Contact Greg Carlyon– 021 327774

### Paengaroa Road Environment Group

Contact Phyllis Leigh – 06 388 016

### Hautapu Catchment Care Group

Contact Angus Gordon – [angusg@xtra.co.nz](mailto:angusg@xtra.co.nz)

### Enviroschools

Contact Ron Fisher – Ron Fisher

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If you have any contributions to the newsletter, any questions, or wish to subscribe please contact

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