

New Deputy Harbourmaster for Northland

As the Bay of Islands gears up for its traditional summer influx of boaties and other holidaymakers, Northland's new Deputy Harbourmaster will be taking more than a passing interest in the region's increasingly busy waterways.

Opuua-based Jim Lyle joined the Regional Council earlier this year and is looking forward to the summer months in his new role, which centres on navigational safety but also includes involvement with the region's main port at Marsden Pt.

A member of the Regional Council's six-member Opuua team, Mr Lyle is also currently training to pilot overseas cruise ships into Opuua.

The 40-year-old has worked as a consultant on maritime matters for a number of Government agencies around New Zealand.

He has a long involvement with the sea, beginning his working life in the 1970s at a small marina near Falmouth in the United Kingdom, before spending 18 years at sea in the Merchant Navy and the North Sea oil industry.

Mr Lyle says Regional Council staff will be out on the water doing their regular summer patrols of Northland harbours from Boxing Day this year.



New Opuua-based Deputy Harbourmaster Jim Lyle.

While they will be checking navigation safety across the board, they will be placing a special emphasis on correct use of dive flags and ensuring boats are operating safely around people and other vessels.

Northland

Regional Report

Issue 6 – December 2005

Welcome

Nau mai haere mai

The recent discovery of sea squirt at Tutukaka serves to illustrate the very real and constant risks to Northland's precious environment. Ironically, this marine invader was found just as an article on biosecurity was being completed for this publication.

Please take the time to read this item (Page 3) and remember to report any strange insects, plants or diseases to the appropriate authorities.

On a positive note, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate all those who successfully applied for a share of the \$300,000 available from this year's Northland Regional Council Environment Fund.

Lastly, may I take this opportunity to wish all Northlanders - and all visitors to the region - a safe and happy festive season break.

Best wishes,

Mark Farnsworth
Chairman



In this issue

Environment Fund grows P1
\$300,000 allocated this year

Annual Report Summary approved P2
Copies now available

Northland: Our Place, Our Future P2
Regional Community Outcomes identified

Biosecurity issues P3
Help keep unwanted visitors out

New Deputy Harbourmaster P4
Jim Lyle, based at Opuua

Environment Fund grows

At first glance, plans to control wild cats at Awanui and work to fence wetlands and forest remnants at Kaipara's Batley Peninsula share little in common.

However, linking the two initiatives is an innovative Northland Regional Council Environment Fund that will this year help finance them - and more than 80 other worthy projects - to the tune of \$300,000.

The Regional Council has invested more than \$1 million into the community since the fund began in 1996 - typically providing about \$100,000 annually to help people improve and protect Northland's natural environment.

This year's Fund was significantly boosted to about \$300,000 through increased Council funding and partnerships with industry. Partners include Honda NZ, which has contributed \$11,360 for Northland-based native revegetation projects.

Regional Council Chairman Mark Farnsworth says applications were up about 50 percent on previous years and saw 116 requests for nearly \$1 million funding. Funded projects must be of long-term benefit to the local environment and show clear evidence of good resource management.

Typically the Fund meets up to 50 percent of a project's total cost, with applicants expected to meet the balance in time, cash, other funding or 'in-kind' contributions like voluntary labour and donated materials.

The full value (from all sources) of this year's projects is estimated at more than \$2 million. Of the 88 projects funded, 40 are based in the Far North District, 28 in the Whangarei District and 20 from the Kaipara District.

This year's funding has been split across five basic areas; general, wetland protection and enhancement, pest animal and plant control, revegetation and enhancement with native plants, and dairy farm projects supporting Clean Streams Accord targets.

The largest single grant of \$20,600 is to help fence off riparian areas around Lake Omapere, while the smallest - just \$275 - will help control pests in the North Hokianga area. Mr Farnsworth says Regional Councillors were delighted with the interest Northlanders had shown in the Fund this year and pleased to be able to help so many worthwhile projects. The benefits of many of these projects will continue to be felt for many years.



Northern Honda General Manager Geoff Pointon, left, with NRC Chairman Mark Farnsworth... partnerships with industry have helped boost the Environment Fund to about \$300,000.

To find out more about the Environment Fund, visit the Northland Regional Council website: www.nrc.govt.nz/land/environmental_funds.shtml

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24/7 Environmental Hotline 0800 504 639

Caring for Northland and its environment



Caring for Northland and its environment



2005 Annual Report Summary approved



An official Summary of the Regional Council's Annual Report for the year to June 30 was approved by auditors recently. Copies of the Summary, as well as the full 2005 Annual Report, are now available from all Regional Council offices and on the Council's website. Highlights of the 12 months to June 30 included:

- **Sale of Northland Port Corporation shares.** In December 2004, the Northland Regional Council sold a 19.9 percent stake in the Northland Port Corporation to Ports of Auckland Ltd for \$23M. This money has been reinvested with the intention of growing the fund to subsidise rates. The Regional Council remains the Port Corporation's biggest shareholder, with a 52.4% stake.
- **\$5.3M in Northland Port Corporation dividends.** Council's majority shareholding in the Port Corporation returned \$5.3M in dividends, supporting the cost of managing our natural environment. The return included a special dividend of \$4.5M, which has been reinvested in Council infrastructure and reserves.

- **New Whangarei head office.** The 2004-05 year saw the Council complete relocation of its Whangarei offices to a new head office in Water St. The Council and its ratepayers now enjoy the benefits of having all Whangarei-based staff working from one site, enabling more effective communication and resource sharing.
- **Almost 1000 consents processed.** Nine hundred and seventy four consents were received and processed in the 2004-05 year - 98.9% of them within legal time constraints.



- **Possum control.** Another 48,179 hectares of land - including 8567ha of contract works for the Crown - was treated for possums. That work brought the total treated by the Council since 1990 to 1,160,831 hectares.
- **Oil spill defence.** Staff responded to 35 oil spills and 253 other maritime incidents.
- **Farm dairy effluent.** The Council carried out 1005 inspections of 721 consented and 284 non-consented farm dairy discharges, working with farmers where pollution occurred. This work improves the quality of receiving natural water systems and streams.

- **Clean Streams Accord.** This Accord was signed by the Council and dairy giant Fonterra in 2004. Four field days to promote effluent, riparian and wetlands management were held to improve environmental management of Northland farms.
- **24/7 Environmental Hotline.** There were 1008 environmental incidents reported to Council by concerned members of the public during the 12 months covered by the report. Nine hundred and forty two incidents had been reported in the previous year. **The Environmental Hotline number is (0800) 504 639.**

 For more information visit: www.nrc.govt.nz/reports.and.news/annual.report/index.shtml

Northland: Our Place, Our Future

Safe and healthy residents and a strong regional identity are among eight 'Regional Community Outcomes' intended to guide Northland forward as part of Long Term Council Community Plans (LTCCP).


The Northland Regional Council, Northland's three District Councils and research company ACNielsen have been working with more than 50 Northland organisations and hundreds of residents in recent months to identify Regional Community Outcomes.

Regional Community Outcomes are part of the LTCCP process and describe what Northlanders value and what they would like the region to be like in the future. Though not binding, these outcomes are intended to guide the planning processes of Northland's local authorities and other organisations.

Northland's Regional Community Outcomes are that:

- Northland residents are safe and healthy
- The region's infrastructure is developed in a sustainable way
- Northland's natural environment is sustainably managed
- The region is prosperous
- Our residents are educated and skilled
- We have cohesive communities
- Northland retains and enhances its regional identity
- The region's residents have access to recreational and leisure opportunities



 A copy of the Regional Community Outcomes report 'Northland: Our Place, Our Future' can be found on the Northland Regional Council website: www.nrc.govt.nz

Biosecurity... everybody's responsibility



A sea squirt... at the centre of the latest biosecurity incident in Northland after its discovery at Tutukaka recently. Photo: Cawthron Institute

Unwanted invasions of sea squirts, mussels, insects and other nasties have been making headlines around New Zealand.

Northland too has suffered from unwanted 'visitors', most recently the discovery of sea squirt at Tutukaka. Other relatively recent intruders include tropical grass webworm, Southern saltmarsh mosquito, Argentine ant and guava moth.

So who is responsible for keeping pests and diseases out of New Zealand or trying to eradicate them if they do slip in?

Ultimate responsibility lies with Biosecurity New Zealand, an arm of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Biosecurity NZ oversees pre-border surveillance and control, border control, and incursion response. It is also developing national policies for the ongoing management of some pests within New Zealand.

However, Biosecurity NZ doesn't have sole responsibility. The Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) regulates what new organisms may be brought into the country, approving importation only if it believes they do not pose a threat or that any risks can be managed.

If a new organism arrives uninvited in New Zealand, other authorities may also play a part in its control.

Depending on the threat posed, the actual control programme could be managed by the Department of Conservation, Ministry of Fisheries, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry or the Ministry of Health. Regional Councils can also become involved in the eradication or ongoing control of nominated pests, subject to adopting a Regional Pest Management Strategy.

Landholders and affected industries are often involved in the ongoing management of pests and may be subject to rules requiring them to undertake control.

With all these safeguards in place, the obvious question is 'why do we have new pests entering - and migrating around - the country?'

Unfortunately, no matter how well we control what goes into shipping containers or planes, there is always a risk of new organisms hitching a ride.

Every attempt is made to reduce this risk by buying mainly from 'clean' countries, avoiding the importation of high risk goods and checking a high proportion of containers on wharves.

But there are still some practices that raise doubts about our biosecurity.

Used tyres imported as deck cargo on ships that travel to New Zealand via the tropics can become infested with several species of mosquito known to be a vector in the spread of tropical diseases.

The question is not whether the border patrol people are doing their job effectively, but why are we importing used tyres?

Questions can be raised over container loads of used vehicles and equipment transported through Auckland to 'inland ports' in South Auckland. They are then checked more thoroughly, but may have already dropped off any hitchhiking pest organisms.

Similarly, contractors moving plant and equipment need to make sure it is not carrying mud or earth harbouring pest organisms or rhizomes of weeds like Manchurian ricegrass or alligator weed.

Farmers should be careful when buying in hay, with evidence suggesting both nodding and Californian thistles came into Northland this way. Nassella tussock arrived in cheap bush-burn grass seed and Australian sedge was a contaminant in grass seed from Australia.

Even something as seemingly harmless as taking feijoa out of Northland could easily spread guava moth to other regions. Potted plants or potting mix purchased in Auckland may have spread Argentine ant to Northland and continue to be a vector in its spread.

Remember, biosecurity is everybody's responsibility. We are all potential vectors in the spread of pests and diseases and could be equally to blame if we see something different and don't tell anyone about it.

If you do see a strange insect, or a plant that you do not recognise, or if a plant or animal becomes diseased, do something about it. Take specimens of plants or insects into your nearest Northland Regional Council office and we will identify it for you.

If you come across what could be an exotic disease, do not hesitate to call the Biosecurity New Zealand Hotline (0800) 809 966.

