

# Enviroschools NORTHLAND

NEWSLETTER  
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## Nine Enviroschools reach major milestones

Nine Northland Enviroschools reached major new milestones in their journeys as a result of 2013's reflections process.

The reflections process celebrates each Enviroschool's unique, student-led achievements towards a more healthy, peaceful and sustainable community.

It sets a framework of stages – from Bronze, to Silver, through to Green-Gold – reflecting steps on the school's journey. It's also a way to inspire and engage the wider community.

Oturu School's strong commitment to the environment saw it become only the third Northland Enviroschool to reach the coveted Green-Gold stage, says Regional Enviroschools Co-ordinator Susan Karels.

"It's great to see" says Susan. "Oturu School feels like a living ecosystem, where students have a real connection to the environment and know they can effect change for a sustainable world."

Green-Gold status was also achieved by Ruakaka School, following its sharing and decision-making session in November.

Enviroschools Facilitator Julie Holt says: "Ruakaka School is a great example of totally integrated 'enviro-learning', which has real community support and links directly into local action."

Oromahoe and Umawera Schools are Silver Enviroschools following their recent sharing and decision-making sessions, joining six other schools that are currently at the Silver stage.

Having laid strong foundations for the journey towards sustainability, four schools achieved the Bronze stage last year – Kokopu, Okaihau Primary, Otaika Valley and Parua Bay Schools.



Northland Regional Council CEO Malcolm Nicolson shares an environmental tale from his childhood with students at the Far North's Oturu School.

Also attaining the Bronze stage was Comrie Park Kindergarten, Northland's first Enviroschools Kindergarten. Accordingly, Comrie Park is the first Northland kindergarten to have gone through the holistic reflection process via the 'Enviroschools in the Early Years' Programme.

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Ruakaka was one of two schools to achieve the coveted Green-Gold stage in this year's Enviroschools holistic reflection process.

### Congratulations!

#### Bronze

Kokopu, Okaihau Primary, Otaika Valley and Parua Bay Schools, and Comrie Park Kindergarten

#### Silver

Oromahoe and Umawera Schools

#### Green-Gold

Oturu and Ruakaka Schools

## Kia ora koutou FROM THE REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

Welcome to the first Enviroschools Northland newsletter for 2014!

2013 really was a year of achievements; exploration, interaction and fun. Bronze, Silver and Green-Gold holistic reflections, cluster meetings, the 'Down on the Farm' expo, Early Years outdoor environments workshop, Project Possum, WaiRestoration project events, teacher professional development and more.

Looking ahead, there are lots of exciting Enviroschools activities already planned for this year. Check out the dates on page four so you can start diarying them – and yes, the popular Caretaker Workshop is back!



*Sustainability – being nice to all of your neighbours including the trees*  
(Anonymous child)

Ngā mihi o te tau hou  
Susan Karels  
Enviroschools Regional Co-ordinator

## Project Possum helps secure national award

Project Possum, an Enviroschools initiative, has helped the Northland Regional Council on its way to winning a national award for its biosecurity efforts.

The council received the Peter Nelson Memorial Trophy – a distinctive carved wooden kokako – from the New Zealand Biosecurity Institute, for its "significant efforts and outstanding success in engaging the wider community in engaging the wider community in a range of pest control initiatives".

These include the training and opportunities to gain formal qualifications in possum trapping and poisoning, and also fur and pelt recovery, that are provided through Project Possum.

If you're one of the thousands of Northlanders playing a part in pest control work throughout our region, congratulations!

## 'Down on the Farm' expo

Super Silage, Dairy Shed Antics, Awesome Effluent, Possum Plucking and Wetland Wilderness were among the hands-on learning experiences at the Enviroschools 'Down on the Farm' expo.

This annual event was hosted at a 93 hectare dairy farm in Kokopu owned by Charmaine and Shayne O'Shea. The O'Sheas are brother and sister farmers who won the Supreme Award at the 2013 Ballance Farm Environment Awards for their exemplary dairy farm management and care for the environment.

More than 100 students, teachers and whanau (family) from the wider Whāngārei area (including Parua Bay across to Tangowahine and Ruakaka) took part in the expo, rotating between four 'action stations' covering sustainable farming practices, the roles of wetlands, pest management, effluent treatment and supplementary feeding.

Farming is a key contributor to Northland's regional economy and one which offers great careers.

A goal of the expo was to learn about farming sustainably.



'Action stations': Students take part in hands-on learning experiences at the Enviroschools 'Down on the Farm' expo.

# WaiRestoration update

The Enviroschools WaiRestoration Northland pilot project is all about supporting farmers and involving young people and communities in the restoration of waterways and biodiversity.

Primary and secondary teachers from Dargaville, Kaikohe, Kaitāia, Mangakāhia, Ōhaewai, Otaika and Ruawai are involved in the teacher leadership group, which will be developing WaiRestoration case studies as a resource for all schools involved in the project.

Here are stories and photos from some of the schools currently involved.

## Otaika Valley School

Otaika Valley School has been learning about the amazing lifecycle of the whitebait, as part of its 'Save a Species' work.

With whitebait season running from mid August until late November, the school was keen to help educate people fishing for this under-threat species. After a lot of investigative work, students and teachers have been spreading the word about rules and regulations of whitebaiting. They've also been reminding people to 'check, clean and dry' their equipment between waterways to prevent the spread of aquatic pests.



Students from Otaika Valley School help inform whitebaiters and spread the 'Check, Clean, Dry' message.

## Kaitāia College



Harry and Harding Wharerau checking out a fish trap in the Tangonge wetland.

## Ruawai College

Ruawai College is charging ahead with both the WaiNurseries and Save a Species components of the WaiRestoration project.

Last year students planned riparian planting in the school grounds, researched the Kaka Beak and Hebe species and designed their ideal shade house.

Now the shade house is to be set up and science students from Years nine to 12 will be involved in growing, selling and planting out the endangered Kaka Beak, Hebes and other riparian plants.

Ruawai College's caretakers, Toni and Guy Gibson, are totally on board with the students' WaiRestoration work and the school looks forward to helping improve water quality by working with their community to plant alongside streams leading into the Kaipara Harbour.

## Ōhaeawai School



Ōhaeawai School students set up irrigation in their seedling area.

## Dates to diary

For more details about these events, and to find out what else is coming up, visit [www.nrc.govt.nz/enviroschools](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/enviroschools)

Mar  
1-9

**SEAWEEK - Free beach clean-up kits**  
Beach clean-ups can take place outside of Seaweed

April  
8-9

**PROJECT POSSUM STAGE ONE**  
Skills camps - Trefoil Park

10-11  
14-15

May  
15

**WAIRESTORATION**  
Teacher professional development workshop - Trefoil Park

May  
20-22

**WAIFENCING STAGE ONE**  
Skills workshops - Trefoil Park

June  
10

**CARETAKER WORKSHOP**

June  
24-26

**PROJECT POSSUM STAGE ONE**  
Assessment workshops - Trefoil Park

Aug  
12-14

**WAIFENCING**  
Stage 1 Assessment Workshops - Trefoil Park

Sept  
2-3  
4-5

**PROJECT POSSUM STAGE TWO**  
Controlled substance licence - Trefoil Park. For students and community members 17 years of age and over

Nov  
4

**ENVIROSCHOOLS EXPO**  
On the Water - Whāngārei

Nov  
6

**ENVIROSCHOOLS EXPO**  
On the Water - Far North

## School snippets

**Taipā Area School** – won a major award for its beverage container recycling project

**Kamo Primary School** – made a wall garden out of bottles

**Kamo Intermediate** – revamped its stunning ecopond

**Oromahoe School** – turned fruit into profit with its 'Super Fresh and Sweet Lemon Honey'

**Mangakāhia Area School** – Schoolgen solar panels installed

**Kaitiāia College** – extended its school orchard to have its own 'Fruit in School'



### ENVIROSCHOOLS NORTHLAND TEAM [www.nrc.govt.nz/enviroschools](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/enviroschools)

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The Enviroschools Northland team (from left to right): Julie Holt, Susan Karels, Marty Taylor.