

### Project Possum an "awesome experience"

Feedback on this year's Project Possum training has been overwhelmingly positive, with many students simply describing their experience as "awesome".

More than 80 Northland students gained hands-on knowledge of possum trapping and fur and pelt recovery in the popular day-long training sessions, held in April.

It's the third year Enviroschools Northland, the Northland Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, Can Train NZ and the local possum industry have joined forces to offer Project Possum.

Susan Karels, the council's Regional Enviroschools Co-ordinator, says the training workshops give participants the chance to earn NCEA Level 2 and 3 credits as well as create potential jobs and reduce the numbers of a destructive pest.

The courses continued in late June when the students returned to Trefoil Park near Kaikohe for two-day assessment camps to assess their practical skills, check on field work experiences and inspect their written assignments.

*Northland College student Lee Paewhenua was judged the day's fastest trap setter during Project Possum training.*



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### Measuring change

Primary and intermediate teachers from around Northland gathered recently at a series of cluster meetings with a professional development focus on measuring change.

The 'Measuring Change' tool – developed by the Enviroschools Foundation – is a set of web-based resources that supports schools to reflect on their environmental actions and monitor the outcomes of these actions over time.

The cluster meetings were also a valuable opportunity for teachers to learn from, and share with each other, what's happening at the different schools around the region. In the words of one teacher, "students and staff were given excellent ideas of how they can make a difference".

A total of about 50 teachers attended the four meetings in Kerikeri, Whāngārei, Ruakaka and Kaitiāia during May and June, with further meetings scheduled for Dargaville and the Hokianga during term three.

Thanks to Jo McIntyre-Brown, Enviroschools Facilitator at Auckland Council, for her valuable contribution to the development and running of these sessions.



## Kia ora koutou FROM THE REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

Welcome to our newest Enviroschools communities, Hukerenui and Mangawhai Beach, and our two new 'Enviroschools in the Early Years' kindergartens for 2013, Kerikeri and Portland.

Being an Enviroschool is a journey, and it's a bit like travelling in a waka along an awa (river) – it develops from small beginnings, gathering strength and breadth as tributaries join the awa on the way towards the ocean.

If you're ready to reflect on your school's progress in relation to the Bronze, Silver or Green-Gold stages of the Enviroschools journey, get in touch with Marty or Julie.

In a recent newsletter Mangakakia Area School shared this beautiful whakataukai (proverb), which I think really embodies the essence of what we are all working towards.

Mehemea e pai ana te whenua,  
e pai hoki nga wa katoa  
*If the land is well, the fruit will be good.*



Noho ora mai,  
Susan Karels  
Enviroschools Regional Co-ordinator

## Early years action

Our pre-school focussed arm of Enviroschools Northland – Early Years – has been busy over the last few months.

A Far North cluster meeting on 22 March saw 12 kindergarten teachers come together to take part in experiential learning activities from the 'Me in My Environment' Enviroschools theme area.

Teachers from three Northland kindergartens – Comrie Park, Kerikeri and Portland – joined others from around the upper North Island in May to attend the biannual facilitator training for Enviroschools in the Early Years. The training, held in Raglan, explored principles, resources and processes of Enviroschools, including Māori perspectives.

Finally, congratulations to Comrie Park Kindergarten which has been awarded the annual "Lints Award" for its innovative initiatives in the Enviroschools Programme. The award recognises enterprising initiatives supporting children's learning in creative, original and socially responsible ways.



Comrie Park Kindergarten students with the Lints Award.

## Recommended resource



### The Last Ocean Education Resource

The Last Ocean Education Resource looks at New Zealand's connection to Antarctica's Ross Sea, the most pristine marine ecosystem in the world.

The resource has been designed for Years 7-10 and can be adapted for other age groups. The package includes the DVD of the documentary The Last Ocean plus a book covering seven teaching and learning areas including oceans, geography, climate, wildlife, ecosystems, fishing and protection.

Available online at [www.lastocean.org](http://www.lastocean.org)

## Out & About

### An epic journey



Te Kura o Horeke embarked on an epic voyage in March this year, travelling up the Hokianga Harbour from Horeke to Pakanae and back by waka.

Twenty-nine students aged nine to 13, supported by about 40 parents and other whānau, paddled the same waters that their own tupuna (ancestors) would have used as their main means of transport. Along the way they shared stories, learned local history, developed water safety skills and practiced tikanga (customs and culture) and kawa (protocol) relevant to waka and being on a marae.

While this waka journey has been made before by youth and adult groups, never has the feat been attempted by a primary school group. Principal Moari Taylor believes this will be the first of many Hoenga Waka undertaken by tamariki and whānau of the Horeke community.

### Green Day

No, it's not the band – this Green Day at Ruakaka School is all about "wearing green and doing jobs to keep our environment green," in the words of one student.

During the whole-of-school environmental day, held in March, students split into working groups to tackle a range of tasks. From cleaning recycling bins and tree auditing, to composting, bulb planting, tidying classroom gardens and transforming the old sandpit into a garden – it was all aimed at keeping Ruakaka School's special place environmentally friendly.

Complete with celebratory sausage sizzle, Green Day was a big success and the school plans to make it an ongoing event.



# WaiRestoration update

There's been plenty of exciting activity happening around WaiRestoration, our new project that's all about restoring Northland's waterways and biodiversity.



Northland College student Jayden Joyce repairing a fence as part of the WaiFencing workshops.

## WaiFencing skills workshops

Fifty-nine senior secondary students got hands-on with fencing as part of recent WaiFencing skills workshops.

The May workshops, held over four days at Trefoil Park near Kaikohe, were designed to boost the participants' qualifications and future employment opportunities as well as better protect the region's waterways from stock.

Specific skills gained include fencing knots and ties, strainer assemblies and running a multi-wire fenceline.

## WaiEnterprise at Dargaville Intermediate



Dargaville Intermediate's native plant nursery is a growing enterprise.

Dargaville Intermediate School's riparian planting venture is a growing enterprise in more than one way!

The school has a contract with the Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group (IKHMG), which purchases native plants reared by the school to plant on the group's flagship farms. The school raised 5000 plants for IKHMG in 2012, and has a goal of 7000 plants for 2013.

Dargaville Intermediate's venture is an ideal fit with the WaiRestoration project – the kaupapa, goals and outcomes are the same. The project involves the whole school in one way or another and is proving a valuable approach to bringing together environmental and enterprise education.

## Farewell to Philip Kippenburger

This month we farewell Philip Kippenburger (Kipp), who has for the last six months been working for the council under a Royal Society Teacher Fellowship.

Jointly hosted by the council's Land Management and Enviroschools teams, Kipp has made a huge contribution to 'Save a Species', the biodiversity component of WaiRestoration.

While he now returns to his teaching position at Whangarei Boys' High School, the work Kipp has done will have a lasting impact for 'Save a Species' – a big thank you to Kipp from the Enviroschools team!



## Focus on waterways at Mangakahia

Being active kaitiaki (caretakers) of local waterways continues to be a key focus for Mangakahia Area School.

Year 12 and 13 students have applied for funding to build a native riparian plant shade house at the school which would house 4,800 plants. Over time this would enable the school to get involved in riparian planting days along the local Wairua and Mangakahia Rivers.

Students are also looking at the interrelationship and cultural significance of the Wairua catchment and the Tuna Whakaheke (long-fin eels) that live there, plus the importance of the river as mahinga kai (a place where food is gathered).

## Stream health monitoring kits available to borrow

Enviroschools Northland now has six Stream Health Monitoring and Assessment Kits (SHMAK) available for schools to borrow.

Stream health monitoring with SHMAK allows you to test and track water quality, and can help you to understand what makes a stream healthy. It aligns strongly with the WaiMonitoring component of the WaiRestoration project.

We have been able to purchase these fantastic kits thanks to support from the Enviroschools Foundation Building Regional Capacity Fund. To borrow a kit, email Susan Karels at [susank@nrc.govt.nz](mailto:susank@nrc.govt.nz)



## 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)

**Aug 13-16** WAI RESTORATION  
Fencing skills assessment workshops

**Aug 23** ENVIROSCHOOLS EARLY YEARS  
cluster meeting

**Sept 3-6** PROJECT POSSUM STAGE TWO  
Controlled substance license

**Sept 16-27** ENVIROSCHOOLS GREEN-GOLD  
Reflection sessions

**Sept 24 - Oct 18** ENVIROSCHOOLS BRONZE & SILVER  
Celebrations

**Nov 5,7** ENVIROSCHOOLS EXPOS  
'Down on the farm'  
5 November Whāngārei;  
7 November Far North

**Nov 25-29** ENVIROSCHOOLS GREEN-GOLD  
Celebrations

**Dec 6** ENVIROSCHOOLS EARLY YEARS  
Cluster meeting

## School snippets

**Poroti School** – fact-finding field trips to other Enviroschools

**Whangarei Primary School** – new pond development

**Onerahi, Parua Bay and Whangarei Heads Schools** – Pohutukawa Coast planting for World Environment Day

**St Francis Xavier Catholic School** – gardens feeding parish families

**Whangarei Heads School** – Schoolgen solar panels installed

**Otaika School** – TWO raised vegetable beds per classroom!

**Riverview School** – newsletters now by email, saving resources

**Springbank School** – student botanists, designers and engineers developing a multi-purpose trail



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

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