

Enviroschools Northland

Issue 23 / September 2016

Go for Bronze...Silver...Green-Gold!

The Rio olympics may be over, but back home our Enviroschools are achieving great things every day.

The latest additions to the Enviroschools 'medal table' are Hukerenui School, Ruawai Kindergarten, Whangarei Intermediate School, Bay of Islands Academy and Maungaturoto School, all of which recently achieved Enviroschools Bronze status – a fantastic achievement by all.

There are three stages that reflect the deepening and broadening of the Enviroschools journey: Bronze, Silver and Green-Gold.



Fun on mud mountain at Ruawai Kindergarten, which recently achieved Enviroschools Bronze status.

Each Enviroschool is supported through the process by its facilitator, and Susan says there's no need for schools to wait until the end of the year.

"Schools and kindergartens can do a Bronze, Silver or Green-Gold reflection anytime throughout the year. Whenever you're ready, go for it!"

"The reflections process is all about making sense of experiences, deepening our learning and working out how we want to move forward," says Enviroschools Regional Co-ordinator Susan Karels.

"This sharing and decision-making involves members of the wider school community, and it's really inspiring to hear the stories of environmental action happening both at school and at home."



Why fence off the wai?

Keeping stock out of waterways to improve water quality, plus boosting qualifications and future employment opportunities – WaiFencing really is a project with a lot of positives!

Senior students and teachers/gateway co-ordinators from seven Northland secondary schools took part in this year's WaiFencing workshops.

The workshops provide hands-on experience in a range of fencing skills, plus the opportunity to get NCEA credits.

Students also gain knowledge about the benefits of fencing stock out of waterways, like reducing stream bank erosion and keeping effluent out of the water. Fenced waterways also provide a filter of plants to soak up water-polluting nutrients before they can get into our streams and rivers.

Skills workshops were followed up by assessment days in July and August where, after proving their skills, students constructed fencelines to keep stock out of waterways.

Feedback on the training was positive, with many students citing potential employment opportunities as a valuable benefit.



Another wire goes on the new fence at Northland College's dairy farm.

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Bream Bay engaging in local learning



One of the mock-stakeholder groups as part of Bream Bay College's pipi decline investigation.

Some of the council's staff recently enjoyed quality presentations and discussions about pipi decline by Bream Bay College students, in a project focussed on local learning.

The school's Envirogroup has been investigating the causes of pipi population decline on the nearby Mair Bank, and it was great to see the group's enthusiasm for local

issues. To help with their investigations, groups of students role-played some of the major stakeholder groups involved – Ministry for Primary Industries, Northland Regional Council, Refining NZ, NorthPort and local iwi.

Part of the pipi decline project has been working with surrounding primary schools – One Tree Point, Ruakaka and Waipu – to reinforce the importance of the pipi.

At One Tree Point School a pipi action group has started up and is being tutored by the Bream Bay College Envirogroup students. The Envirogroup has also been working closely with the local iwi.

Environmental funding awarded

Bee-keeping, water health, Rongoā Māori and waste management are just some of the 17 school projects that were awarded funding this year under Northland Regional Council's Environmental Leaders Fund (ELF).

Thirty-five applications were received for a total of \$70,000 – more than three times what was available in the \$20,000 fund.

The Environmental Leaders Fund aims to support projects and initiatives that have positive environmental outcomes. Next year's applications will likely open around April.



Opononi Area School's project to improve the health of a local river was one of the successful funding applications.



Kia ora koutou

Welcome to September 2016's Enviroschools Northland newsletter!

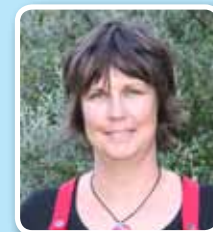
What a busy and productive time the Enviroschools whanau have had recently, from Project Possum and WaiFencing assessment days to the School Environments workshop and Bronze Reflections.

A cause for celebration is Northland Regional Council's increase in funding for Enviroschools Northland. This has allowed Eden Hakaraia to move from facilitating Enviroschools part-time to full-time and for the Enviroschools waiting list to be reduced.

Thanks to all the school community members who continue to put sustainability at the fore-front of design, process and action. I hope everyone enjoys their well-earned holiday.

*Toi tu te whenua, toi tu te tangata
ki te whei ao ki to ao marama –
Sustain the land, sustain the people
into the future.*

Nga mihi nui
Susan Karels
Enviroschools Regional Co-ordinator



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www.facebook.com/NorthlandRegionalCouncil



Out and about

Bringing back the bittern



Dargaville High students are making monthly visits to the farm to record sightings of bitterns.

Dargaville High School is right behind local farmer Ian Lupton's efforts to establish a bittern sanctuary on his farm.

The Australasian bittern, or matuku, is an endangered native bird that lives in wetland areas.

As well as supplying native plants for the sanctuary's riparian planting, Dargaville High students are making monthly visits to the farm to record sightings of bitterns.

By finding out more about the bittern's preferred habitat and conditions, these can be recreated as the sanctuary is developed.

Rainy play at Anne West Kindergarten

"There's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing!" It's a saying that Kaitiāia's Anne West Kindergarten has embraced to enable its children to play outside, come rain or shine.

Playing in the rain provides children with an opportunity to build a relationship with the natural world and experience water in its pure form, outside the confines of a water trough or sandpit.

Thanks to the generosity of Kaitiāia Farmlands which gifted rain capes to the kindergarten, this experience has become part of the kindergarten's everyday life.



Rain capes enable Anne West Kindergarten's children to experience the outdoor world, come rain or shine.

Sustainability: a journey through time

Tangowahine School's fantastic recent performance on sustainability reflected the adage that we need to look back in order to move forward.

'Aotearoa: Our Land, Our Future', was a timeline journey from current time, back to early Maori times, through the 1950s and into the future.

Students viewed time through Papatuanuku, the earth mother, highlighting important environmental issues like deforestation, plastic, pollution and destroyed habitats.

The performance reinforced the school's theme for 2016 – sustainability – and helped share the message around this to the wider school community.



The cast of Tangowahine School's recent production, 'Aotearoa: Our Land, Our Future'.

Wonderful wetlands at Hurupaki School



Hurupaki's successful pest trapping programme will help their native wildlife thrive.

It's been 20 years since work began on transforming a boggy swamp on the Hurupaki School grounds into a magnificent wetland which has become a taonga for the school and wider community.

This year the school's wetlands and butterfly habitat team has been trapping pests to give native creatures a better chance to thrive.

The team has set up a successful trapping programme for rats with help from Northland Regional Council's biosecurity staff. Possums and mustelids will be the next focus, and the students also intend to promote pest eradication to the surrounding community.



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More bad news for possums!



Steve Henderson from Northland Regional Council checks on skinning progress with Anaheera from Northland College.

Project Possum is going from strength to strength, with another 83 students attending this year's skills camps in June.

Along with learning about the biology and environmental impact of possums, the students gained new skills in possum trapping, skinning and plucking, all contributing to NCEA credits.

Over the course of the three overnight camps, 60 possums met their demise as participants put their new skills to the test.

The skills camps were followed up recently by Project Possum assessment workshops. Despite the rain, mud and cold, most students rated the assessment workshops highly – in the words of one attendee “it's a good experience and you learn lots!”

Dates to diary

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

BRONZE, SILVER AND GREEN-GOLD REFLECTIONS

TERM 4

Sharing and decision-making sessions followed by celebrations

ENVIROSCHOOLS EXPOS

1 NOV Whangārei | 3 NOV Mid-North
“Art for Earth's sake”



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