

Friends of Baring Head Newsletter



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September 2012 Number 3



Message from the Chair

It's hard to believe nearly a year has elapsed since the Friends' first newsletter, over a year since the Friends Trust was established and we're coming up to our first AGM.

The role of the Friends covers protection, enhancement and encouraging public enjoyment of environmental and historical features of Baring Head. Two very different activities over the winter demonstrate the diversity of the Friends' work.

Our submission on the Baring Head/Orua-pouanui Management Plan was recently heard by the Greater Wellington Regional Council. We're pleased to say most aspects of our submission have been accepted by Greater Wellington. This includes the somewhat controversial decision not to ban grazing across the whole area, but rather to remove stock from ecologically sensitive areas and retain stock in areas with a significant fire risk. Negotiations for a new grazing licence later this year, provide Greater Wellington the opportunity to deal with suitable fencing, another matter the Friends highlighted.

Work to restore the old Lighthouse pump house has seen a small group of trustees replacing rotten building materials, sanding, painting and restoring the window before the wet weather arrived. The project nears completion and the pump-house is looking great. Eventually, it's hoped seating and an information board will complete this work.

With the anticipated arrival of summer weather a walk to the pump-house will provide a rewarding, easy introduction to the Baring Head site for new visitors.

Joy Baird
Chair

'AGM

**4th October 5pm
Petone Workingmens
Club -
see further details on
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New East Harbour Park Ranger

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the members of FOBH. My name is Mark McAlpine and I have been the East Harbour ranger since the beginning of July. I am thoroughly enjoying the job!

I come from both a recreational and environmental background. I have spent most of my life in the outdoors and completed a Bachelor of Parks, Recreation and Tourism from Lincoln University. The major focus of my studies was ecology.

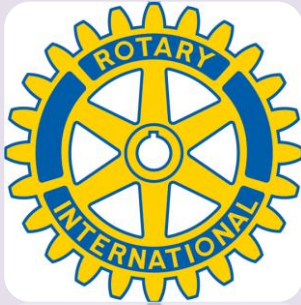
After graduating in 1996, I accepted a position with the Regional Council in the Biosecurity (Animals) team and I have also worked for the Biosecurity (Plants) team and as a Park Ranger. For the last 4 years I have run my own business as a contractor providing both pest plant and animal control work throughout the region.

Being the East Harbour Ranger has a huge scope for me, with the park being made up of three different areas (Northern Block, Lakes Block and Baring Head). Also the range of tasks involved will keep me busy, from the Summer event programme to general maintenance and working with community groups, and lots more!

I hope to meet you all at some point and look forward to working with FOBH soon. I hope you can all come out to the next planting day.

Membership

Just a quick reminder that we are always looking out for new members. So spread the word. Feel free to forward this newsletter on to those you think might want to join. To find out more information you can simply [click on this link for the information!](#)



Interest in Friends of Baring Head

On 31 July, Gwen McDonald and Joy Baird were invited to speak to a combined meeting of members of the Western Hills and Stokes Valley Rotary Clubs about the Friends of Baring Head.

Gwen and Joy used a powerpoint presentation, maps and photos to bring Baring Head to life for the more than 50 members of Rotary who attended. Rotary members asked a number of questions about environmental and recreational activities at Baring Head and the historical sites in the area.

They were interested in the work of the Friends, with a number expressing an interest in providing volunteer support for suitable projects over the summer. So here is another possibility we'd not previously considered for increasing our volunteer network!

There has been very positive feedback from this presentation, with contact details exchanged and a request from another group for a presentation early next year.

The unique Rotary "fines" system resulted in over \$200 being raised on the night and this is to be donated to the Friends.

Gwen and Joy were quite chuffed with the way everything went.



Full steam ahead! Sharon Lee reports on the Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui Amendment adopted by Council

On 21 August the Council adopted the Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui Amendment, concluding 18 months of work of management plan development.

**Next up-coming event
4th October 2012:**



The trustees are holding the first AGM of the Trust at 5:00pm Thursday 4th October, upstairs in the Anzac Lounge at the Petone Workingmens Club, 47 Udy St, Petone

You are welcome to attend and support us on this special day

Hear our Trust chair relate the progress for the past year and we'll talk about our plans for the future. Representatives from Greater Wellington have been invited to outline their plans now that the Baring Head/Orua-pouanui Management Plan amendment has been approved. Let us know what you think so that we can involve you in a meaningful way in the future of Baring Head

The process began with the development of background reports on various issues (recreation and tourism, ecology and heritage) and some of you would have been involved in these meetings. With this research in mind, officers worked towards drafting an amendment to the Parks Network Plan which would outline the approach to management and expected future changes. This was open for submissions from March to May of this year concluding with a hearings process in June.

Perhaps the most debated issue throughout this process has been that of grazing versus retirement. The draft amendment suggested the policy approach of retiring the whole of the area and concentrating on pest control and monitoring to improve biodiversity values. Grazing would only be reintroduced if it was found that it provided benefits to the key biodiversity values (e.g. rank grass can result in more mice and mustelid numbers which then predate on the native fauna).

No grazing would result in a slow change in the landscape over time. For example on the marine terrace, initially the grass would grow rank but gradually other native shrubs and herbs would establish along with tauhinu. However, what was highlighted through the hearing was the possible fire risk associated with a full retirement approach.

Further research highlighted that the fire risk is a real concern and that the policy approach and in the practical management of the area must be adjusted to reflect this. The August report to Council concludes:

The feedback from rural fire officers concludes that removing grazing entirely would lead to significantly heightened fire risk, both severity of consequences and the likelihood of occurrence, for Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui area (and adjacent properties).

In light of this, Council has determined that grazing is an effective measure to mitigate against fire risk and that grazing should be retained in areas of low biodiversity value. Further work will need to be done to determine what a new grazing licence would look like and how areas can be efficiently fenced (and water provided for stock).

This issue aside, the amendment is strong on the protection and celebration of heritage values and biodiversity values and there are opportunities for the community to be involved in developing this work. Already planning work is underway to improve the car park area at the Wainuiomata River mouth with the intention to curb the number of 4WD vehicles illegally accessing the area.

The Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui amendment will become effective once it has also received approval from the Minister of Conservation.

The Pump house Project

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of a few dedicated Committee members, we have made substantial progress towards the restoration of the historic pumphouse on Baring Head.



We have completely repainted two walls, need a few hours work to finish the third, but need a considerable amount of grunt to prepare the last, north-facing, wall to ready it for painting. We have replaced the roof, and Richard Nester (one of our Trustees, who happens to be a historic technical advisor) has had the existing window repaired. This will be installed as soon as the weather improves. He is currently scouting around for a replacement door.

We have appreciated the financial support of the Community Trust of Wellington through a grant and the donation of the paint from Dulux International. The project has also featured in Dulux's in-house magazine.



This is a major project and whether it succeeds will influence our decision whether we should embark on the many times larger restoration of the lighthouse buildings, which many of our members are so passionate about. If we are to embark on that restoration, passion needs to be translated into action. Contact the Trust to let us know you can help. Assure us that you and your practical effort are with us and the restoration will be steps forward.

Colin Ryder

How can I join the Friends?

There are four levels of membership – individual (waged \$20 or unwaged \$10), family \$30, or organisation \$50.

The financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June.

For those with web access, [click here to get a membership/renewal of membership form](#). For those without email, a membership form has come with your newsletter. Please send your form and subscription to:

Friends of Baring Head Charitable Trust,
PO Box 38 076
Te Puni Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045.

All subs for 2012/2013 are now due.

