

## Who is ARAC ?

The Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee was formed as a result of a large public meeting called to protest the closure of the Akatarawa Forest in 1996.

Since then ARAC has become an organised lobby group with an established track record in promoting the cause of managed access to off-road areas.

ARAC is now well respected by many central and local government agencies as well as the off-road fraternity.

ARAC has set up several sub-groups, covering:

- Akatarawa Forest
- Eastern Hutt Hills
- Odlin's Rd / Waiotauru
- Wairarapa

as well as helping set up a similar organisation in Taranaki.

And we're in the start-up phases in two or three other areas.

ARAC holds regular committee meetings, to review progress in each area, look at current and future issues and work out how to deal with them.

Representatives of all the ARAC interest groups are welcome at these meetings. It is important to have as much representation as possible, to make sure the views of each interest group are known and heard, and that all users have input to the way that

our access is managed, in particular access to the Akatarawa Forest.

**Please make sure that your club or interest group is part of ARAC. Your representatives can contact us as shown below.**

Once the ARAC committee has discussed access issues, ARAC then follows through by meeting with the Regional Council several times each year to liaise on access management issues and to ensure that things keep progressing, for the benefit of all concerned.

## ARAC projects

Our main projects at the moment are:

- Johnson's Rd closure
- Eastern Hutt Fire Breaks
- Odlin's Road
- Sutherland's Track
- Foxton Beach
- Wellington South Coast
- Conditions of Access
- Draft Regional Parks Network Management Plan

## Contacting ARAC

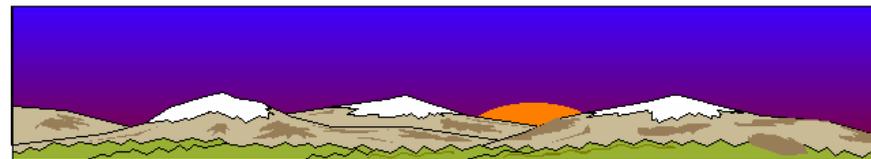
Find us at 025-522 503

or

[info@arac.org.nz](mailto:info@arac.org.nz)

And see us at

[www.arac.org.nz](http://www.arac.org.nz)



# ARAC News

The official newsletter of the Akatarawa Recreational Access Committee Incorporated

Welcome to this issue of ARAC News, March 2004.

This newsletter is for recreational users of the Akatarawa Forest and other "off-road" venues in the Greater Wellington Region.

ARAC represents you all:

- Individuals
- Clubs
- Shops
- Workshops
- Trail Bikes
- Quads
- Four Wheel Drives
- Mountain Bikes
- Walkers
- Horse Riders
- Hunters

## In this issue

- Who is ARAC?
- Off-road tracks being closed
- Damage - Forests & Huts
- Why Permits are Useful
- List of ARAC Projects
- Have Your Say – Park Management Plans



treadlightly!  
LEAVING A GOOD IMPRESSION



## **Off-Road Tracks – they are being closed**

New Zealand is no different to other civilised countries – some parts of the government organisation are continually trying to close paper roads and other off-road tracks that are so important to a very large proportion of the population – us – the outdoor recreation people who love the outdoors and our chosen means of getting out there and enjoying ourselves.

### **Johnson's Road**

The Upper Hutt City Council closed the paper road known as the Johnson's Road Extension, south of Whiteman's Valley, to allow for the rural subdivision of a farm into life-style blocks.

ARAC gathered together its supporters, along with quite a lot of fundraising, to mount a case to the Environment Court to keep the road open. ARAC's leaders on the case, Ken McAdam and Andy Cockroft, prepared lots of evidence and fronted our case to the Environment Court.

With the help of our Barrister Graham Taylor, Andy and Ken were successful and the Court decided that the road should be kept open.

Now we are making progress in getting the road boundaries surveyed, fences opened legally and the road available to use by recreational users. More news later...

### **The 257 and Top Bogs**

Many trail riders will remember these tracks in the Akatarawa Forest, which the Regional Council

closed over a year ago because people were going beyond the allowed places.

ARAC is working on an idea to create a proper loop track, open to trail bikes, which would include the 257, the Top Bogs and the top of Hydro Road. We are currently negotiating our proposal with the Regional Council.

Meanwhile clubs can get a permit for organised events through the 257 and Top Bogs.

### **Other Track & Road Closures**

Please be careful not to trespass or to upset legitimate land owners. Doing things the legal way will keep our access open and also open up more areas – doing things the illegal way or upsetting land owners will do us all no good at all.

We're preparing guidelines for how we should use various areas, called "Conditions of Access". We'll make these available once they're ready.

### **Ngapotiki Station**

You probably all saw or heard about the TV and other media stories about the closing of the coast road from Cape Palliser to White Rock. A land owner got fed up with thoughtless users making a real nuisance of themselves on this farm.

However he closed a legal road. ARAC joined with other groups to work with the owner, the Council and police to keep the road open.

Negotiations have been in progress for a while now. Meanwhile we can all help by respecting the land owner and not causing issues. Then we have a good chance of regaining the public access that we all enjoy.

### **Hut Damage at Odlin's Rd and the Orange Hut**

Well it's just so disappointing isn't it, after all the work that the ARAC volunteers have put in to restoring these two huts, some idiots have trashed them recently.

Please keep an eye out for this mindless vandalism, take down rego numbers or take photos, so we can get DOC, the Regional Council and the Police to crack down on them.

Also the recent storms and floods have caused widespread damage in the forests. In particular please watch out for washouts on the tracks and trees and branches that are unstable.

If we all work together on our forest resources, they'll stay available to us.

### **Draft Network Plan**

Did you know that the Greater Wellington Regional Council have released their draft of the Regional Parks Network Management Plan?

This will be the first in a series; it will be followed by individual management plans for each park and forest.

ARAC and many of our member clubs have been making submissions to try and ensure some options for recreational vehicle access to these places.

Why is this important? Well, if we don't participate in the planning process then we could well find that our interests have not been strongly enough represented and then – yes, you've guessed it – we could lose more access to off-road areas.

### **Why Permits are Useful**

A permit for the Akatarawa Forest for trail bikes or quads is:

- a way to increase the statistics of user numbers, which is good for our cause
- how you get the map of the trails we are allowed to use
- required by the Regional Council.

If too many people don't get permits, what might the Council do about it...?