

ARAC NEWS



The Newsletter of the Akatarawa Recreational Access Committee Inc

Issue 5, June 2014

Biggest News

Orange Hut to Get New Barbeque

ARAC has applied for and received a grant from Transpower's Community Care Fund to rebuild the barbeque at the Orange Hut.

You may have already seen some small changes, with the removal of tree-stumps, the digging of a soak-pit and the temporary relocation of the old hauler.

Full details are on the ARAC website at <http://arac.org.nz/index.php/orange-hut-project/>



The water supply was rebuilt just before Christmas, and seems to be working exceptionally well.

But plans are afoot for the following:-

1. Upgrade Barbeque and Lean-To
2. Fencing, isolation of lawn area
3. Water supply across car park to Orange Hut
4. Guttering and Drainage to Orange Hut (include soak pit)
5. Drain and fill car park
6. Elevate log hauler, sandblast and paint
7. Signage and Displays

Work is underway to get the plans approved by Upper Hutt City Council, and then we will be looking for best prices for materials.

Volunteers will be called for, and you can register your interest to become involved via the link above or directly here <http://arac.org.nz/index.php/orange-hut-project/volunteer-for-the-orange-hut/>

Notice of AGM

Notice is given of the 2014 Annual General Meeting to be held at the Darts Club, Totara Park from 7pm on Thursday July 31st 2014.

Clubs please make sure you have your delegates names registered with the secretary beforehand. E-Mail secretary@arac.org.nz

Details of the Barbeque and other issues will be discussed, along with the usual election of officers.

A change to the constitution may be required – but ARAC is currently discussing options with IRD and the Charities Services to see if we need it. More later.

ARAC Executive

One of our undertakings required the filling of the post of Chairman, so Ken McAdam has been co-opted to the role to serve until the next AGM

Thanks to Ken for taking on the role.

Akatarawa Forest

New Ranger Appointed

Most will have already met our new Ranger -Thane Walls joined the team at GW Upper Hutt as Ranger for Akatarawa and Pakuratahi, after being transferred from their Rivers Department.

With the full complement of staff now on board, we are seeing a significant increase in Ranger presence within the Forest

We were also saddened to see the departure of Nerisa Faaumu overseas to pursue her Religious Studies. We wish her all the very best in her chosen endeavours. Welcome to Wendy Flitcroft in her stead.

ARAC and GW still in new talks to establish closer dialogue.

Surprise to say, but despite our reporting last July that we were getting closer to an MoU – well we still remain at odds with GW – although the gap is closing.

This from our July 2013 Newsletter is still relevant:-

We reported back in March 2011 that we were in negotiations with GW and trying to develop a Memorandum Of Understanding (MoU) – well perhaps no surprises here that the process continues.

After much debate that led nowhere, and a pause whilst various staff changes and restructures took place, ARAC presented their own proposed MoU to GW during July 2013. A meeting is scheduled to discuss the whole MoU position shortly.

Track Maintenance Completed

The Rock Garden had suffered a big washout, and required some remedial work.

Well, ARAC and GW worked together to blast away the rocky outcrop causing navigation issues, and we are once again able to report that the Rock garden is passable once more.

Please remember that this is a serious hard-yakka track and is not to be undertaken lightly.

Link Track

No further issues reported with the Link Track, so let's just hope it stays that way

Plantation Cutting Rights

Cutting rights have been sold - but no real changes seen yet – however we do understand that every single Expression of Interest wanted recreation banned from any logging area.

The MoU under consideration right now is 100% dependent on gaining acknowledgment of our enduring access to plantation forestry – despite whomsoever may hold the cutting rights.

Trip-Leader Assessments

Trip Leader assessments have been completed, and those who attained Trip Leader status have been advised. A few didn't quite make the grade, but will be offered a resit later this year.

As of 1 July 2014, permits will not be issued for trips unless being led by a registered Akatarawa Trip Leader

GW have also indicated a willingness to offer chainsaw training to trip-leaders to help lift our safety standards. However, resources are limited, so training will be rationed by way of ballot. Nonetheless, each Club will be offered a minimum of one place on the course.

Greater Wellington Regional Council Annual Plan

ARAC made submissions to the draft Annual Plan, both written and at subsequent oral hearings. These submissions were focussed on the selling of cutting rights and the retention of full recreational access.

Odlin's Road and Waiotauru Valley

A huge lahar came down before Christmas, about 1 Km before the Hut. Initial thoughts were that the track was so heavily damaged that a machine would be needed to reopen it.

Happy to say that perseverance by several Clubs and individuals has succeeded and the track is open to the Hut once more.

The big slip beyond Waiotauru Hut remains a stopping point for 4WD and most quads.

Waiotauru Hut is being discussed with DOC, and while its future is reasonably secure, the question remains – do we repair or rebuild? Watch this space as ARAC works with DOC, sponsors and the TARH Committee

Wellington South Coast

As many will be aware, severe storm damage was done earlier in the year to the road around the South Coast from Owhiro Bay. Wellington South Coast Chair – Barry Insull – has been liaising with Wellington City Council to resolve access issues. It was thought likely the road would remain a “challenge” for some time – certainly beyond Red Rocks.

However, WCC had a digger in for several days working between the former quarry and Red Rocks. No significant issues beyond Devils Gate

CCVC and Wellington Family 4WD put 800 odd plants in the ground last planting season. More is planned for this year.

Aaorangi – aka Sutherlands

Sutherlands has stood up well to all the storms of late, and the hut is in good condition.

Track will be open for use – but check with ARAC Wairarapa for exact timings and to make bookings.

Trip Leader training is scheduled sometime this spring, and will concentrate again on identifying areas where access is OK, and those sensitive out-of-bounds locations.

As a stark reminder, one Club has already been suspended from Sutherlands, and will remain so until such time as agreed reparation has been made – all because they didn't observe the no-go areas.

Any Other News?

Anything we need to know about? Anything you want to know about? Email info@arac.org.nz