



Plenty of updates in this issue.....

Akatarawa Forest



4WD Nil, Logging Truck 1

Trip Leader Assessments

Part instigated by issues like the above, and part by the desire to raise Forestry's game-plan, there are some new rules coming our way.

Just when you thought all was now done and dusted, new criteria for all our Trip Leaders has been called for from P F Olsen, the agents for the logging operations in all of the Akatarawa plantation forests.

It is now a requirement that all Trip Leaders attend a Health & Safety briefing. Two discrete dates will be set aside – after that any Trip Leaders who does not attend one or the other will no longer be able to run trips – irrespective of their passing all other current requirements.

Sorry, but this is the best outcome ARAC has been able to obtain to keep our access into and through plantation forestry open to us.

Orange Hut Progress

Upper Hutt City Council have approved our plans for the Barbeque area, and we have received sign-off from GW to proceed.

The next steps will see initial works starting almost immediately on drainage for the carpark and then digging the footings for the barbeque itself.

Monitor progress at <http://arac.org.nz/index.php/orange-hut-project/> - you can also sign up as a volunteer via this link.

Devil's Staircase

Repair work to the Devil's Staircase and bottom of the Rock Garden / Martin's Creek area will be undertaken hopefully this month!!!

This will probably be good news for those with "shiny" vehicles who have been put off visiting the area due to the horror stories about the place. Although it is expected that weather will take its toll quite quickly, you should at least get one season's opportunity to visit this most beautiful and picturesque location before the weather Gods render it hard-yakka again

Beware however, the Rock Garden will remain as challenging as ever – so perhaps regard the Staircase as a one-way adventure!!

The Ruts

The Ruts are recovering well, and the native plantings are coming away well.

Nonetheless, please exercise restraint when passing over the Eastern End until it has a chance to heal completely



Remember those impassable Bogs?

Rimu Road

Probably unrecognisable now, the new camping ground / picnic area at the bottom of Rimu is settling down nicely.



Rimu Road Picnic/Camping Area 1

Only one incident so far of mindless idiots digging up the newly-sewn grass with dirt-bikes.

The old roof from the existing Orange Hut Barbeque is to be recycled and placed here – and later as time permits other furniture will be added – but only after the new Orange Hut barbeque is completed.

Odlin's Road and Waioatauru Valley

The biggest item concerning Waioatauru Valley at present is the hut itself.

DOC have agreed in principle to ARAC taking over the maintenance of the existing hut, with a view to replacing it with a new structure in the not too distant future.

ARAC is a member of the Tararua Aorangi Rimutaka Huts Committee (TARH), who have some funds available for us to bid for. Hopefully we can obtain sufficient funding from TARH – with perhaps top-ups if needed from local Clubs etc. to get the job done.

Application has also been made to FMC for access to the Back-Country contestable fund. Watch this space for updates

A more detailed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will have to be entered into for both the Hut and the Track down to it. We expect to become owners of the Hut, with DOC as landlords at a peppercorn rent.

Wellington South Coast

A clean-up was undertaken mid-November and thanks to all who participated. Thanks especially to Barry Insull for organising the whole event – including the trip beforehand

Banded Dotterel nested in the gravels at Red Rocks this year. These are considered threatened in many areas and deserve a little help.

Wellington City Council staff are likely to implement measures to better protect nesting sites in their region. Please adhere to signage should anything be put in place.

Speed of some users continues to be a problem. Remember the actions of a few can tarnish the standing of a wider group.

Aorangi – aka Sutherlands

Work has been undertaken on the Hurupi side – especially the clay climb out of the Stream itself. In addition a working-bee combined with Trip Leader training was undertaken mid-November.

Favourable reports of both the state of the track and the quality of the new Trip Leaders have been received. Although offered, apparently there were no takers to stay overnight at Sutherland's Hut

Manawatu

DOC are preparing a discussion document regarding Takapari Road and the A-Frame Hut

Many folks use the place on a casual basis, and DOC is keen to obtain your opinions as to what should happen to both the road and the hut.

This extract from their draft circular to interested groups:-

Purpose of Consultation

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is charged with managing Takapari Road and the A-Frame Hut in the Ruahine Forest Park. A-Frame Hut is also known as Traverse Hut.

DOC recognises that getting community input into management decisions is key if the community are to get maximum enjoyment while the environment and biodiversity are protected.

DOC would like feedback on the best future management options for the Takapari Road and A-Frame Hut.

After receiving feedback DOC will seek to work with partners and secure funding to undertake future work. DOC funding is contestable and cannot be guaranteed.

Background on the Road and Hut

Takapari Road is an attractive drive to the top of the Ruahine Ranges, with views of the South Island, Tararua Ranges, Mt Taranaki and Mt Ruapehu when the weather is clear. Takapari Road is the only public 4WD Track in the Ruahine Forest Park.

There are three sections of the road within the Forest Park. The first section goes from the entrance to the look-out was recently upgraded to 'shiny' 4WD standard. The second section goes from the look-out to the Hut and has not been maintained for several years. The third section is from the Hut to the end of the road. The last section is recommended for 4WD vehicles with very experienced drivers only. DOC has no annual budget for the road.

The A-Frame Hut is 11 km along Takapari Road. Over the last 15 years the services offered at this hut have been steadily decreasing due to ongoing vandalism and a lack of recorded use (bed nights). The building has suffered from vandalism and a pit toilet was removed due to it being unsanitary (very high water table lead to effluent spilling on to ground). The A Frame is currently designated as a basic hut/bivvy and receives minimal maintenance from the Department. There is no DOC-installed water system at the Hut (due to it being vandalised and unfit for use). However, a rainwater catching system was installed by volunteers in May 2014. There is no clear viewing point from the Hut.

Implementation of any new management options will be dependent on securing funding. Any future development would be subject to environmental and cultural assessments. Subject to those assessments and funding, development (such as a viewing platform, shelter, picnic table and/or toilet) could occur anywhere along Takapari Road.

When the final consultation document is available, we will forward to all our Members

Any Other News?

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