

# envirocare

YOUR REGIONAL NEWS UPDATE FROM ENVIRONMENT WAIKATO

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**ISSUE #68**  
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## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY DRIVES NEW ECONOMY

From the mountains, across our land and out to sea, a healthy environment is crucial to New Zealand's economy and our own wellbeing.

But as our business and lifestyle activities put pressure on our air, water, soil and coastlines, we must continue to develop and adopt technologies and policies to protect and restore our environment.

Environment Waikato's policies, such as those developed to protect Lake Taupo's near-

pristine water quality, are key to protecting the Waikato's rich natural resource base.

"Even if you don't light up with interest when we talk policies and rules, most of us know they are necessary to ensure our environment remains productive and healthy," says Environment Waikato chairman Peter Buckley.

"And a productive, healthy environment is the reason for the Waikato's economic strength, for the New Zealand brand and the quality of life

we enjoy and want for our children.

"Environment Waikato is looking ahead to a big year for policy development. Our aim is to give people certainty about how they can use and develop natural resources to help grow the economy without ever losing sight of the need to protect and enhance the environment."

Groundbreaking policies to protect Lake Taupo water quality from the effects of nitrogen leaching illustrate the point.

Continued on page 3.

**YOUR  
WAIKATO**

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Waikato**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

# INFLUENCE YOUR FUTURE ENVIRONMENT

The proposed Regional Policy Statement (RPS) 2010 is open for submissions until 4pm on Monday 28 February 2011. This influential planning tool links regional and district plans to enable the use of natural resources, such as land and water, and allows for the development of roads, other infrastructure and buildings in ways that don't harm our environment.

**You can view the proposed RPS 2010 and get a submission form at:**

- [www.ew.govt.nz](http://www.ew.govt.nz)
- any Environment Waikato office
- your local city or district council office and at major libraries. For a full listing, see [www.ew.govt.nz/rpsreview](http://www.ew.govt.nz/rpsreview)

## RATES DIRECT DEBIT WINNERS

Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Weir of Hamilton, who have won \$500 from the National Bank in Environment Waikato's rates direct debit promotion.

Direct debit takes the hassle out of paying your rates. You never have to worry about late payment penalties or missing a payment. Even better, you can spread your payments over a year by paying weekly, fortnightly, monthly or quarterly, so it's great for budgeting.

To pay your rates by direct debit, all you need to do is fill in a form. Visit [www.ew.govt.nz/payrates](http://www.ew.govt.nz/payrates) or freephone 0800 800 401 to be sent a form.

## SURVIVAL KIT THRILLS

Calvin Creighton of Huntly and Jennifer Greenan of Te Puru are now better prepared for disasters, thanks to winning Survive-it emergency survival kits from our draw in the October 2010 Envirocare.

Jennifer was absolutely thrilled with her prize. She said: "We had to throw a pack together previously – due to the fact that we were being flooded. Looking for things in the darkness with the power off was not easy, especially when in panic mode. This pack will make an emergency so much more manageable if it ever happens again. Thank you so much for the opportunity to be more organised in future."

To find out how to get ready for a disaster so you'll get through visit [www.getthru.govt.nz](http://www.getthru.govt.nz)



## \$50,000 to coastguard and surf life savers

Environment Waikato will fund Coastguard and surf life saving groups to the tune of \$50,000 this year. The groups provide services to the community and the council's various water safety functions across the region.

The council has granted \$15,000 to Coastguard Northern region, which runs a 24/7 operations and communications facility and a Bar Safety Watch service, particularly important on the region's west coast.

Surf Life Saving provides paid lifeguards Monday to Friday at eight popular swimming beaches during the peak summer season, while volunteers handled duties at weekends. It will receive \$20,000.

Tairua/Pauanui, Whangamata and Whitianga volunteer Coastguard groups will each receive \$5,000.



Photo: Surf Life Saving New Zealand

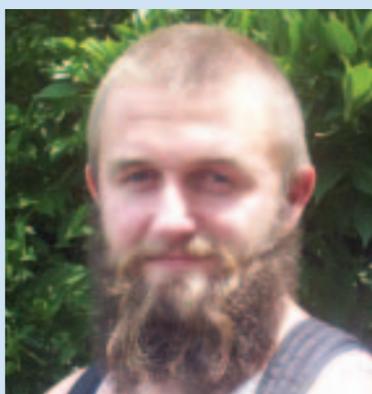
## DOUBLE THE ENCOURAGEMENT FOR YOUNG SCIENTISTS

Environment Waikato's prize in water science has been jointly awarded to University of Waikato students Joshua Scarrow (pictured below) and Ivan Schroder, who will share \$500 in book vouchers.

The prize is awarded annually to the top Bachelor of Science student enrolled in water science papers within the Faculty of Science and Engineering. It will be presented at a meeting of the council's environment committee on 10 February.

Scarrow, from Katikati, is starting his Masters in microbiology and says his interest in the environment spurred his passion for science. In 2010 he headed to Antarctica as part of his Masters research.

Schroder is majoring in chemistry and earth and ocean sciences, and plans to study honours this year. He says his interest in water science grew at university where he became aware of the far-reaching implications water has for life on earth.



## Submissions on Government proposals for aquaculture close soon



As part of a package of aquaculture reforms, the Government has proposed changes to the law to promote marine farming, and is investigating a new marine farming zone off Coromandel.

The law reforms are contained in Aquaculture Bill No 3 and include changes to the Waikato Regional Coastal Plan to allow applications for fish farming within existing marine farm sites, such as the Wilsons Bay Zone. Submissions on Bill No 3 close with the select committee on 11 February 2011.

The Ministry of Fisheries is investigating a new marine farming zone for fish farming about 12 kilometres west of Coromandel township. The proposed zone is 300 hectares in size and would allow farming of fish, such as kingfish and hapuku. Submissions on the proposed Coromandel Marine Farming Zone close at 5pm on Wednesday 9 February 2011.

For more information, visit [www.fish.govt.nz](http://www.fish.govt.nz) or contact the Ministry of Fisheries Aquaculture Unit on 03 548 1069 or [aquaculture@fish.govt.nz](mailto:aquaculture@fish.govt.nz)

## CORRECTION

In Envirocare issue 67 November 2010, incorrect timeframes for figures on nitrogen were published. The sentence should have stated:

Between the 1990s and 2007 nitrogen use on dairy farms increased seven-fold, and nitrogen leaching on dairy and sheep and beef farms increased by 25 per cent between 1997 and 2002.

# Waikato company's restoration could be a New Zealand first

A Waikato company may be the first in New Zealand to restore and potentially enhance habitat for giant kokopu, a native fish and whitebait species.

Perry Aggregates, on behalf of Waikato Quarries, developed an artificial stream at Waingaro Road Quarry in Ngaruawahia as part of remediation works undertaken to minimise the environmental impacts of the quarry. Native fish monitoring results for the artificial stream have delivered surprising results, surpassing all expectations.

A resident population of giant kokopu, also known as giant native trout, had been known to live in a section of the original stream. But this stream was to be culverted to make way for a bund to screen the noise and visual effects of the quarry.

A 190 metre fish passage was piped through the bund and a 280 metre long artificial stream dropping over 7 metres in elevation created using a series of rock weirs and pools to reproduce giant kokopu's

preferred habitat. Ponga logs placed in the stream provide cover for the fish to hide under, and the stream banks are heavily planted with native trees and shrubs to shade the water. Around 8000 native trees and shrubs have been planted on the bund. A constructed and planted wetland cleans water from the quarry and supplements stream flow. This solution was designed by Charles Mitchell, a Raglan-based expert in whitebait species.

Six months after the artificial stream started flowing, monitoring showed six species of native fish had moved into it, and giant kokopu were in greater abundance than ever. The fish were also passing up the stream and fish passage and getting further into the native bush to lay their eggs on leaf litter and forest plants, which they could not do before the restoration work.



The artificial stream at the Waingaro Road Quarry

## Continued from cover...

The Environment Court has recently ruled in favour of these new policies and rules first proposed more than 10 years ago to manage land use around Taupo. New rules apply to most farming practices and urban development.

In a world first, the plan change gives farmers in the Lake Taupo catchment the ability to buy and sell nitrogen. Where these purchases involve land use conversion to forest, landowners are eligible to trade carbon as well.

"We are seeing a new economy springing up in Taupo involving converting land to low nitrogen-leaching forestry and then

selling the carbon credits from the forests to those needing credits under emissions trading legislation.

"Such innovation could provide a powerful boost to our clean green brand as international markets look to align with those investing in the emerging low carbon world. It's a win-win for the economy and the environment."

In line with this, Environment Waikato will also be promoting a regional carbon strategy to support New Zealand's response to climate change emissions. Farmers could improve profitability of their marginal land and have a positive impact

on the environment by planting their steep and erosion-prone land in trees for carbon credits or allowing it to revert naturally to native bush.

Other economic growth opportunities to look out for over the next year include the proposed reform of aquaculture rules which could deliver significant economic success to our local economy, as well as nationally. (See page 2 of this issue of Envirocare for more information.) Within strict environmental limits, fin fish farming has a number of advantages for establishing and growing a fish farming industry in the region.



Photo: Landcare Research

## Bugs to feast on pest

Woolly nightshade lace bug

A small insect's appetite for an invasive pest plant is being put to good use this summer, with the release of lace bugs to control woolly nightshade. This is the first ever release of the bugs in the Waikato and a number of other regions around the country.

Woolly nightshade, also known as tobacco weed, is native to South America, and invades pasture, native forest margins and urban areas. It quickly takes over and stops other plants from growing. Dense stands can invade pasture on poor soils, especially in hill country, and impede livestock movement. It is also toxic, affecting both people and livestock.

The lace bug, also native to South America, has been used as a biocontrol agent in South Africa for the last decade. It feeds on woolly nightshade leaves and stunts the plant's growth, allowing

native bush and other desirable species to regenerate.

Woolly nightshade is found mainly in the northern parts of the Waikato and on the Coromandel Peninsula, and the lace bugs have been released at several sites in these areas. The lace bugs are not likely to spread widely from the release sites, and in the long term, Environment Waikato would like to see more releases.

For more information on woolly nightshade see [www.ew.govt.nz/woollynightshade](http://www.ew.govt.nz/woollynightshade)



Environment Waikato pest plant contractor Philip Mabin releasing the bugs in a dense stand of woolly nightshade at Port Waikato.

# Trial traps over a tonne of koi carp

An innovative trap could prove effective in controlling the destructive koi carp and other pest fish.

Koi carp and other pest fish contribute to water quality decline in the region's rivers and lakes. They are linked to the collapse of aquatic plants, loss of native biodiversity, algal blooms and reduced waterfowl production.

In June 2010, Environment Waikato invited two Australian carp researchers from the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) to a workshop to devise a programme for point source control of carp. It was decided to test an innovative koi trap designed by SARDI at the Lake Waikare fish pass, an important migration route for carp. Large numbers of koi carp regularly move between the Waikato River and connected shallow riverine lakes.

The trap was installed in the Lake Waikare fish pass in August 2010 and was fully operational by November 2010.

Environment Waikato biosecurity officer Dave Byers said 777 fish weighing about 1565 kilograms were removed from the trap over two and a half days with minimal by-catch of native fish. This result exceeded the expectations of all involved.

Environment Waikato freshwater scientist Dr Bruno David, who initiated the trial project, said: "The success of the experimental trap is very encouraging and will likely lead to the development of a proposal to install a permanent automated koi trap in the Lake Waikare fish pass."



Some of the koi carp caught by the trap.

## Meet the new council

Environment Waikato councillors have a busy term ahead of them. They have about 755 meeting attendances in 2010-11, 130 more than last year. The extra work is largely as a result of co-management arrangements with iwi.

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This summer's drought is a strong reminder not to take the region's freshwater resources for granted.

In late December the Government declared the Waikato a drought zone and most district and city councils in the region had water restrictions in place.

Despite this, it can still look like there's plenty of water in our rivers and lakes and some people question why water conservation is important.

Smart water use is critical. If minimum flows and levels aren't maintained, fish, plants and other aquatic life can be adversely affected or disappear altogether. Less water in waterways can also mean higher water temperatures, which affect aquatic life and limit the use of water for industrial cooling. There may be a higher concentration of pollutants like silt and nutrients, causing algae to grow.

Taking too much groundwater can reduce the flow to springs, streams and rivers and also reduce the availability of this resource for future generations.

The amount water users like councils, irrigators and industry can take is managed through resource consents. Many of our rivers and streams are already fully allocated and demand

keeps growing, especially for domestic purposes and for irrigation.

So during drier months, it's a case of making best use of the water supplies we have. Councils around the region have teamed up in a Smart Water Use campaign. For more information check out [www.ew.govt.nz/smartwateruse](http://www.ew.govt.nz/smartwateruse)



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