



Spring colour at Hollard Gardens.

Springing into a busy season

Spring brings new life and new hope – and in the case of Hollard Gardens and Tupare, new events and new hours.

It's been a busy winter. Besides pruning and mulching, the gardeners have been refurbishing the herbaceous border on the main lawn at Hollard Gardens, as well as fine-tuning plant compositions and opening up some new vistas at Tupare.

Now both Taranaki Regional Council heritage properties are in excellent shape for a busy season in the run-up to and during the Taranaki Rhododendron and Garden Festival.

Another reason for celebration is new extended opening hours – from 1 October to 31 March, they will remain open until 8pm daily instead of shutting 5pm.

“We'll be celebrating this with twilight events at both properties,” says the Council's Regional Gardens Manager, Greg Rine. “At Hollard Gardens there'll be a Twilight Country Fair, with the Farmers Market and live jazz from 4pm to 7pm on Saturday 10 October.

“At Tupare, we'll be running an Antiques Roadshow from 4pm to 7pm on Saturday

17 October, also with live jazz, as well as a display of classic motorbikes.”

Other spring highlights will be the resumption of free house tours and a season of Sunday afternoon tea parties at Tupare, and the completion of the series of home gardening workshops at Hollard Gardens.

Both properties are open daily from 9am and are free to visit. The programme of events is:

Hollard Gardens

All events free.

- Sunday 27 September, 2pm-4pm: Home Gardening Project, Workshop 5: Companion planting and composting. The final of a series of five practical workshops for the home gardener.
- Saturday 10 October, 4pm-7pm: Twilight Country Fair. Buy fresh local produce from the Taranaki Farmers Market, have a picnic with friends and enjoy some jazz in a beautiful garden setting.
- Sunday 11 October, 10am-11am: Workshop – designing an outdoor room. Meet at the Events Pavilion.

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Puttin' on the ritz

*If you're blue and you don't know
where to go to
why don't you go where fashion sits,
Puttin' on the ritz ...*

Taranaki people will have plenty of opportunity to “put on the ritz” in October as the doors of the Chapman-Taylor house at Tupare are thrown open for a series of afternoon teas in the elegant tradition of English aristocracy.

Organised as a fundraiser by the Mangorei School PTA, the afternoon teas will cost \$15 and will be held at 2pm every Sunday for a month – 4, 11, 18 and 25 October.

“Many people will remember that Sir Russell Matthews and his family hosted some grand parties when they lived at Tupare, and these afternoon teas will be a fun way to relive those days,” says the Regional Gardens Manager, Greg Rine. “The idea is to dress in your finery and make an afternoon of it.”

Numbers are limited and places can be booked by calling Mangorei School on (06) 758 7860 during office hours before Term 3 ends on 25 September. Payment is by cash or cheque only.

Those with a strong interest in Tupare's style will also enjoy a guided tour and talk on Wednesday 4 November as part of the Taranaki Rhododendron and Garden Festival. The event will focus on the mid-19th century Arts and Crafts Movement and how that inspired Tupare architect James Chapman-Taylor.



Lady Mary Matthews during Tupare's high-society heyday.

From the Chair

The stories in this edition of *Recount* highlight the incredibly varied range of activities the Taranaki Regional Council is involved in.



From emergency management (as far away as Sri Lanka!) to navigation and safety in and around Port Taranaki, from hillcountry erosion to high tea at Tupare, from streamside planting to South Taranaki bus services ... the Council's work touches people's lives in many different ways.

It all helps to make life interesting for the team of elected Councillors I am fortunate to lead, as we decide on policy, strategies and directions, and oversee the implementation of policies.

The Council, along with the region as a whole, is also well served by dedicated, well-qualified, highly competent and committed staff across the entire spectrum of its activities. Again, that's reflected in the stories on these pages.

This edition of *Recount* also contains encouraging news about the results of testing at Marfell Park, New Plymouth. There was much media attention and public discussion when agrichemicals were excavated there in May, but it's worth remembering that the hazard was dealt with on day one, when the material was removed and appropriately disposed of. Since then this Council has engaged with the community and other agencies to ensure any remaining concerns are allayed. That's what was behind the sampling and testing reported on in this newsletter.

Finally, many thanks to those who took the time to fill out and return the reader survey form that was included in the last edition of *Recount*. There was a good response – around 16% – and the survey results indicate that the newsletter is well-read and appreciated. As a result of your suggestions, however, some of the content and design will be tweaked. Watch this space.

David MacLeod – CHAIRMAN

Springing into spring

from page 1

Discuss techniques to link the house with the garden and apply to your own situation.

- Saturday 31 October, 9am-noon: Farmers Market. Sample fresh local produce.
- Sunday 1 November, 2pm-3.30pm: Garden Talk - Clipping and Shaping Trees and Shrubs. Enhance your garden using different pruning techniques and styles. Create a sense of balance and depth to your plantings.
- Tuesday 3 November, 2pm-3.30pm: Guided Walk. Accompany Greg Rine as he walks the property and discusses the early garden created by Bernie Hollard.
- Saturday 7 November, 9am-noon: Farmers Market. Sample fresh local produce from the Taranaki Farmers Market.

Events continue through summer and into the New Year. See www.hollardgardens.info.

Tupare

All events free unless otherwise stated.

- Friday 2 October to Monday 5 October, 11am: Free house tours. Meet at front door.
- Sunday 4 October, 2pm-4pm: Afternoon tea at Tupare, in the elegant tradition of English aristocracy. \$15, bookings essential (see panel on P1).
- Friday 9 October to Monday 12 October, 11am: Free house tours. Meet at front door.
- Sunday 11 October, 2pm-4pm: Afternoon tea at Tupare, in the elegant tradition of English aristocracy. \$15, bookings essential (see panel on P1).
- Friday 16 October to Monday 19 October, 11am: Free house tours. Meet at front door.
- Saturday 17 October, 4pm-7pm: Antiques Roadshow. Bring your treasures along to be identified and enjoy refreshments from the Mangorei School PTA, live jazz and a classic motorcycle display. House tours on the half-hour from 4pm to 6.30pm.
- Sunday 18 October, 2pm-4pm: Afternoon tea at Tupare, in the elegant tradition of English aristocracy. \$15, bookings essential (see panel on P1).
- Friday 23 October to Monday 26 October, 11am: Free house tours. Meet at front door.
- Saturday 24 October, 9am-noon: Farmers Market. Sample fresh local produce. House tours on the half-hour from 9am until 11.30am.
- Sunday 25 October, 2pm-4pm: Afternoon tea at Tupare, in the elegant tradition of English aristocracy. \$15, bookings essential (see panel on P1).

- Friday 30 October, to Monday 2 November 11am: Free house tours. Meet at front door.
- Sunday 1 November, 2pm-3.30pm: Guided Walk (meet at the Gatehouse): Absorb the landscaping features upon which Tupare's reputation is built. See how topography and spacing are used to ensure plants are grown to their best advantage.
- Wednesday 4 November, 11am-12.30pm: Garden Walk and Talk - Learn how Tupare is a product of the global Arts and Crafts movement that emerged in the mid-19th century.
- Friday 6 November to Monday 9 November, 11am: Free house tours. Meet at front door.
- Friday 13 November to Monday 16 November, 11am: Free house tours. Meet at front door.
- Friday 20 November to Monday 23 November, 11am: Free house tours. Meet at front door.
- Saturday 21 November to Sunday 29 November: Exhibition of botanical art by Susan Worthington.

Free house tours run at 11am on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays until 31 March 2010.

Other public events continue through summer and into the New Year. See www.tupare.info.



Farmers Market at Tupare.



LEFT: Council Land Services Manager Don Shearman explains the farm's riparian management plan to the Minister of Agriculture, David Carter (right) and the MP for Whanganui, Chester Borrows.



RIGHT: Council officers and Labour MPs on the farm of Dean Smith (right) and Kim Hodson

Agriculture Minister and Opposition MPs get first-hand view

Parliamentarians from both sides of the House were hosted by the Taranaki Regional Council recently, with the MPs given a first-hand look at a riparian planting project on a Cardiff farm.

On their respective visits, both the Minister of Agriculture, David Carter, and a group of Labour MPs led by Phil Goff were taken to the Cardiff Road farm of Dean Smith and Kim Hodson, who are

well under way with riparian fencing and planting.

Mr Carter was also taken to two other farms to look at the implementation of agroforestry and comprehensive farm plans.

No contamination worries - report

Results of a soil sampling and testing programme at Marfell Park show residents do not need to worry about contaminants or any environmental risk at the former landfill site, the Taranaki Regional Council says.

A report on the investigation, by leading contaminated sites specialist Dr Graeme Proffitt of Pattle Delamore Partners, includes detailed results of analyses of 14 composite samples of soil taken from 85 locations in the park. Each sample was analysed for around 300 different substances.

Importantly, Dr Proffitt concludes that the park is "suitable for its current use".

Tests for dioxin, pesticides, herbicides, heavy metals and a range of other contaminants revealed all levels were well below appropriate guidelines, and in fact were generally lower than at other landfills that have been investigated.

The investigation also included an assessment of the depth of soil cover over the landfill material, and concluded it was

mostly adequate, the only recommendation being additional soil cover in the area of the park where agrichemical residues were excavated in May.

The Taranaki Regional Council commissioned Dr Proffitt's investigation after consulting residents who were concerned about the May incident, which occurred during a New Plymouth District Council stormwater project. Dr Proffitt's sampling and testing plan was endorsed by Marfell community representatives early in July.

"The soil samples have been tested for an incredibly wide range of contaminants and all the results indicate there is nothing to worry about," says the Council's Director-Environment Quality, Gary Bedford.

"There is also no evidence of the presence of further agrichemical wastes, beyond that related to the original excavation, which is another pleasing finding of this investigation

"It's great to have delivered on our promise to the residents to undertake this survey, and the

fact that the results are so reassuring is a great relief. We have advised the park's neighbours of the results, and all concerns should now be dispelled."

The Council will continue its regular monitoring of the park. Monitoring began in the mid 1990s when the park's owner, the New Plymouth City (now District) Council, was issued a resource consent governing leachate discharges from the former landfill site.

Marfell community representatives, the New Plymouth District Council, the Taranaki District Health Board and the Ministry for the Environment have been briefed on the results of Dr Proffitt's investigation.

Dr Proffitt has recommended that the NPDC develop a management plan for the park to govern any future excavation works.

The full report is available on the Taranaki Regional Council website, www.trc.govt.nz.

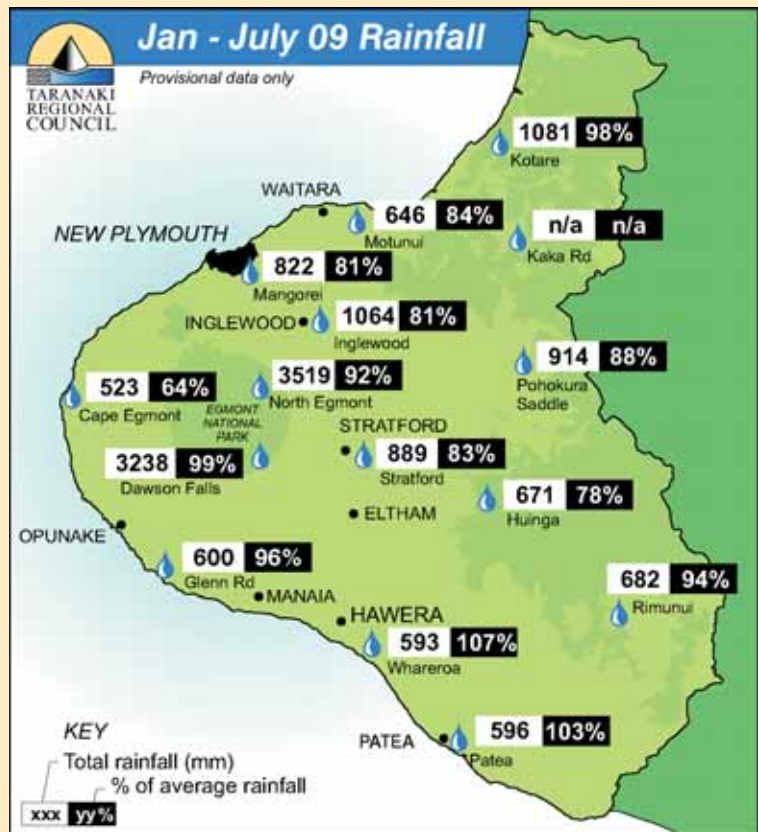
Rainfall gauges drier than usual

To the end of July, 2009 has proved a fairly dry year at the sites where rainfall is monitored by the Taranaki Regional Council, with only Patea and Whareroa (Hawera) above what we would expect to have recorded. And this is because these two sites received more than double their expected May totals – if that was taken out of the equation, they would also be well under the expected year-to-date figure.

July itself was another month with lower-than-expected rainfall recorded at all the sites monitored by the Council, even though there were more rainy days than non-rain days, on average. On Mount Taranaki, for example, it rained on 24 of July's 31 days.

Check the Council website, www.trc.govt.nz, for live rainfall information and other data including wind speed and direction, soil moisture and temperature, and river levels and temperatures. The data is automatically updated every 30 minutes.

In summer months, the website also shows the results of the Council's water quality monitoring at selected coastal and freshwater bathing sites throughout the region.



Laying down lane law at Ngamotu

The access lane off Ngamotu Beach is set to be clearly defined as being only for boats towing water-skiers, and not for jetskis.

This is among a small number of changes being considered by the Taranaki Regional Council as it reviews the navigation bylaws for Port Taranaki and its approaches. The proposed changes were open for public submissions until 11 September.

The current bylaws impose a 5 knot speed limit from Ngamotu Beach to the end of the Lee Breakwater, but with higher speeds allowed in a narrow access lane at the port end of the beach.

“We’re proposing a slight amendment to the current bylaw, clarifying that the access lane is for small vessels ‘when engaged in towing water-skiers only’,” says the Council’s Director-Resource Management, Fred McLay. “This makes it clear that jetskiers need to be well away from the beach area before opening up the throttle.”

New signage at the beach already reflects the intent of the planned amendment.

Other changes proposed for the bylaws include:

- Establishing moving safety zones around big ships moving or manoeuvring within



harbour limits. Apart from the port’s tugs and boats, other vessels will need to stay at least 300 metres from the front and 50 metres from the sides and rear of the moving ship.

- Restricting people from swimming, diving or playing in a manner that could be dangerous, for example by hindering

navigation. “This has always been discouraged but up until now it has not been specified in the bylaws,” says Mr McLay.

The current bylaws date from 2003 and Mr McLay says they have generally worked well. He says consultation with groups representing port users has already begun, and some of their feedback has been incorporated in the suggested changes.

While the Council has the option of making navigation bylaws covering all coastal waters and navigable inland waterways, Mr McLay says it will continue to focus only on the port and its approaches, leaving other areas under the jurisdiction of Maritime New Zealand and District Councils.

“The port and its surroundings are where the traffic and risks are greatest,” he says. “Recreational use in this area is estimated to be at least 30 times higher than anywhere else along the coast, and the port has an annual 1,200 ship movements in and out.”

Mr McLay says the Council’s bylaws incorporate Maritime New Zealand regulations, including any future changes such as making lifejackets or communications equipment compulsory.

More bus services for South Taranaki

South Taranaki bus services have been expanded under new Taranaki Regional Council contracts which took effect from 1 July.

It is business as usual for the weekly South Link services between Opunake and New Plymouth and between Waverley and Hawera, but there are changes to the service between Opunake and Hawera.

This now operates on Fridays instead of Thursdays, with an earlier departure time from Hawera.

Additional changes include:

- Creation of a new route linking Hawera and Manaia to Opunake, in conjunction with the Opunake-Hawera service on Fridays.
- Timing this new service so that passengers can transfer to and from the Opunake-New Plymouth service on Fridays – effectively giving Hawera people a new weekly bus link to and from New Plymouth.
- Retaining the current Waverley-Hawera return service on Thursdays but running a new return Hawera-Waverley service in conjunction with it.

The new three-year South Link contracts have been awarded to Pickering Motors (Opunake-New Plymouth) and Hawera Taxis (Opunake-Hawera, Waverley-Hawera and the new routes). They follow two-year trial services on the three existing routes.



The South Link coach used by Hawera Taxis for services between Hawera and Opunake, and Hawera and Waverley.

“We’ve been able to award contracts that expand the public transport options in South Taranaki,” says the Taranaki Regional Council’s Director-Operations, Rob Phillips.

“We’re pleased there’s a connection through to New Plymouth and return, and that Waverley can be a destination as well as a departure point.”

For details of timetables, routes and fares, go to www.taranakibus.info, email transport@trc.govt.nz, or call the service operators – Hawera Taxis (Manaia-Opunake-

Hawera and Waverley-Patea-Hawera) on 0800 278 7171, or Pickering Motors (Opunake-New Plymouth) on 0800 221 120.

Meanwhile, the weekly bus service between Inglewood and New Plymouth looks set to be made permanent after its two-year trial ends on 1 November.

The Council’s Executive Committee has approved the implementation of a contracted service, based on improving passenger numbers since the introduction of free travel for Super Gold Card holders.

Lessons in civil war aftermath

Helping to co-ordinate relief and welfare for thousands of people left homeless by civil war may sound far removed from day-to-day life in Taranaki. But after a stint doing just that in Sri Lanka, Senior Emergency Management Officer Mike Langford says it was a useful experience with lessons he can apply at home.

Mr Langford was selected by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA New Zealand) for a four-week deployment in Sri Lanka, which is facing a humanitarian crisis with 280,000 people displaced by military action in a 30-year civil war that recently ended.

As well as providing general support for relief and welfare efforts, he was involved in organising non-food essentials for displaced people, including cooking equipment, personal hygiene supplies and some clothing.

Typically, displaced people have been moved from one temporary shelter to another up to



Some of the displaced people Mr Langford encountered during his deployment in Sri Lanka.

10 times, have been away from their home well over a year, are accompanied by their entire family with only the belongings they can carry, suffer bouts of gastro-intestinal disease and have minimal access to food and clean water.

Mr Langford says that while he gained much personal satisfaction from being able to help many people, the wider benefits included

the opportunity to use his emergency management and co-ordination skills in a real situation rather than practising.

“The scale of the situation in Sri Lanka also became a test of my abilities, and there was also the opportunity to compare notes with and learn from emergency management professionals from around the world.

“Overall, I gained a lot of practical knowledge that can be transferred to my role in Taranaki.”

He says the impact of the civil war was immediately obvious on his arrival at Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital, with many checkpoints manned by armed police and military personnel.

But he would “jump at the chance” for a similar deployment in future, and would recommend it to others.

ADRA met all of the costs of Mr Langford’s deployment.

Biodiversity on a broad front

Protecting and enhancing native biodiversity in Taranaki involves both talking the talk and walking the talk.

The talking happens during new forums facilitated by the Taranaki Regional Council – the Taranaki Kiwi Forum and the Taranaki Biodiversity Forum.

“The original aim was to bring together all the different parties working on biodiversity – community groups, individuals, government agencies and local government – to identify any gaps and overlaps and to assist in co-ordination of efforts,” says the Council’s Director-Operations, Rob Phillips.

“When you get representatives of all these groups talking together in one room, you realise what a tremendous biodiversity effort is being made across the region.

“The forums are proving useful, and becoming a good venue for information-gathering. For example, at the last Biodiversity Forum in June, three scientists from Landcare Research talked about the implications of studies into predator control and other biodiversity enhancement measures.”

On the ground, the Council worked with landowners to prepare biodiversity plans for 14 Key Native Ecosystems during the 2008/09 financial year. Each plan sets out a programme of predator and pest plant control, and other measures, with Council officers offering ongoing support.

Council officers have also worked with iwi and community groups on management plans for larger areas.



Streamside effort for whitebait’s sake

Some 20 people turned out for a planting day on the banks of the Hutuiwai Stream near Tongaporutu in July.

Organised by the Taranaki Tree Trust with funding from Honda New Zealand, the day marked the completion of three years of planting for the Hutuiwai Stream Whitebait Restoration Project.

“By planting natives along the Hutuiwai Stream we’re improving the health of the waterway and helping to ensure whitebait continue to spawn in the area – and that there’s plenty to be caught for generations to come,” says Rachel Stewart of the Taranaki Tree Trust.

Nine Taranaki Regional Council staff took part in the planting day, by the end of which the streambanks had 650 more plants.

Since establishing its Tree Fund in 2004, Honda has funded an estimated 8,500 native plants throughout Taranaki and nearly 400,000 nationwide.

Honda New Zealand and its agent network fund the planting of 13 native trees for every new Honda sold, with Honda owners also encouraged to contribute to the fund.

Going with the flow down by the river

Whether you’re an angler, a walker or a watcher, the riverside’s the place to be in Waitara.

Locals head there for a wide variety of reasons, and these have been highlighted in a review of the way the township’s riverbanks are managed.

The draft Lower Waitara River Reserve Management Plan is out for formal public consultation until early October.

The 56 ha Lower Waitara River Reserve, encompassing the riverbed and both sides of the river from the SH3 bridge almost to the Tasman Sea, is owned and administered by the Taranaki Regional Council, which is also responsible for the flood protection work carried out there.

The Council has already given people an opportunity to have their say on the reserve, via a survey and public meeting. Council officers have also talked to the Waitara Community Board, the New Plymouth District Council, conservation groups and other stakeholders.

According to the public feedback in those exercises, the area is popular for exercising, boating, fishing, watching water activities, relaxing with friends and family, walking dogs, and “general people-watching”. Native birdlife and plants are also appreciated.

“The public feedback has been most useful, providing concrete ideas for the future and giving us a good perspective on how townfolk see and value the reserve,” says

the Taranaki Regional Council’s Director-Operations, Rob Phillips.

“It is pleasing to note good support for the idea of community working bees for planting or cleaning up. Partnership with the community will be important in the future management of the reserve.

“Partnership with other agencies will also be important in dealing with some of the problems that have been highlighted, such as littering and damage by hoons.”

Mr Phillips says it is also pleasing to see wide recognition of the reserve’s primary purpose – to protect the township from the effects of flooding. “The community has indicated it accepts that whatever happens in the reserve can’t be allowed to interfere with this.”

'Yes' for the hillcountry

Taranaki has won extra money for environmental work in the face of widespread funding cutbacks.

The region will receive nearly \$1.1 million over four years from a three-year-old Government sustainable land management fund – the full allocation sought by the Taranaki Regional Council.

The money will mainly go towards poplar poles to be planted in the Waitotara Valley and elsewhere in the hillcountry to stabilise farmland and avert slips and erosion. Such work helps to prevent silt and sediment clogging rivers, thus reducing flood risks and protecting water quality.

The Council's Director-Operations, Rob Phillips, is pleased that Taranaki's application for the Hill Country Erosion Fund allocation was 100% successful, and says it's a real shot in the arm for the region's hillcountry farmers. "It will certainly provide more options for carrying out this work. And landowners know how important it is, because the 2004 and 2006 Waitotara Valley floods are still fresh in everyone's minds."

Mr Phillips says that since the floods the Council has worked closely with landowners in the valley, with good take-up of the comprehensive farm plans it supplies under its sustainable land management programme.

These plans are based on a detailed land resource inventory and include an analysis of the property's soils, geology, vegetation, slope and erosion, and they recommend measures to stabilise and protect soil.

"Having the plans already prepared, and many land owners already starting to implement them, meant our funding application to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry could include exact details of what's required, what's already been achieved, what still needs doing and where the funds will be applied.

"In approving the funding, MAF commended us for our whole catchment management approach, collaborative farm planning and existing and ongoing consultation with landowners."

The Sustainable Land Management Hill Country Erosion Fund makes \$2 million a year available for regional initiatives to protect erosion-prone land. It is available to projects co-ordinated by regional councils, with landowners expected to provide financial or in-kind support.

Mr Phillips says the Council is also helping hillcountry landowners take advantage of opportunities presented by the Government's Afforestation Grants Scheme, which so far has led to 320 ha of planned plantings in the region.

Recount readers have a say

Most *Recount* readers appreciate the newsletter and think it does its job well, according to responses to a survey included in the last edition.

A total of 157 survey questionnaires were returned by readers, representing a response rate of around 16%. Analysis of the responses revealed:

- At least two-thirds of respondents rated *Recount* "very good" or "excellent" in five aspects: readability (83.3%), clarity (76.6%), layout (76.6%), content (71.6%) and mix of topics (68.6%).
- Nearly 90% of respondents judged the newsletter to be "achieving its objectives" (providing an overview of Council activities), either very well (61.7%) or reasonably well (27.5%).
- Asked how much of *Recount's* content was of substantive value to them, 35.2% of respondents said "some" and 33.5% said "most".
- Asked how much of *Recount* content was new to them, 48.5% said "some" and 19.1% said "most".
- Of the respondents, 88.5% judged the newsletter's overall length to be "about right" and 91% judged the length of articles to be

"about right".

- Asked how much of *Recount* they typically read, nearly half (46.7%) said "the whole newsletter" and 39.5% said they were selective about the articles they read.
- Asked how they would prefer receiving *Recount*, 62.3% of respondents preferred the printed copy, 16.1% would opt for an electronic version and 7% wanted both.

"The responses were pleasing and indicate that in general, the *Recount* formula is working well," says the Taranaki Regional Council's Director-Corporate Services, Mike Nield. "We will be making some minor tweaks as a result of the survey, and readers have also given us some useful suggestions on additional topics to cover."

He says the emphatic reader preference for a printed newsletter has been noted, but a parallel electronic version will be developed as a way of increasing the readership base.

Recount is produced five times a year and mailed directly to more than 1,000 key stakeholders. It is also available at the Council office in Stratford, at the Taranaki Emergency Management Office and Tupare in New Plymouth, and at Hollard Gardens in Kaponga.

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Brian Jeffares	0-6-765 7773
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MEETING SCHEDULE:

Taranaki Regional Council meetings and its committee meetings run on a six-week cycle. Meetings are held at the Council chamber, 47 Cloten Road, Stratford, unless otherwise stated.

Monday 14 September, 10am:

Executive Committee

Tuesday 22 September, 10.30am:

Ordinary Council meeting

Tuesday 13 October, 10.30am:

Consents and Regulatory Committee

Thursday 15 October, 10.30am:

Policy and Planning Committee

Tuesday 27 October, 10am:

Executive Committee

Agendas and minutes can be found on the Council website, www.trc.govt.nz, as soon as they are available.

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Margaret Mullin, right, with son Rod and daughter Janine planting the banks of the Ouri Stream. The family has two properties alongside the Ouri and is committed to riparian management.

Think ahead, farmers urged

The planting season may be over but farmers are being urged to think ahead to their riparian plant requirements for next year.

Early orders help keep costs down in the large-scale project to ensure all of Taranaki's streambanks are protected by fences and vegetation.

The project is a partnership between the land owners and the Taranaki Regional Council, which has drawn up free riparian management plans for more than 90% of ring plain dairy farms, and supplies plants at cost.

The Council's Land Services Manager, Don Shearman, says that as the volume of plants grows, forward planning is vital for the scheme to succeed. "We really need land owners to be ordering a year ahead so we can get the right number of plants at the most economical rate."

With fencing to prevent stock access, streamside planting protects and enhances water quality by filtering run-off, preventing erosion and shading the stream.

South Taranaki dairy farmers Margaret Mullin and Rod Mullin need no convincing about the benefits of such work.

The mother and son are equally committed to protecting and enhancing the Ouri Stream, which flows through both their properties.

For the fourth winter running, they're planting out the stream banks with native grasses and trees, making steady progress in implementing the riparian management plans drawn up for both properties.

They see the work as important enough to continue even in tougher economic conditions. In better years they've planted more but this season there are still 400 plants going in at each of the 200-cow farms.

"It's the right thing to be doing," says Margaret. Rod chimes in: "As well as the environmental benefits, it's also providing shelter and shade." Margaret: "It feels good to be putting shelter back on land which has been cleared."

Margaret believes it's important to get on with this riparian protection work now rather than wait for possible regulation in future years requiring streams to be fenced and planted. "We plug away at it year after year and it's good to be doing things at our own pace."

She says her family is "into plants and gardens",

with daughter Janine also pitching in to help with the planting when she's home on holiday from university. But Margaret says even those who don't share this enthusiasm should not feel daunted at the thought of implementing a riparian management plan.

"It's not such a big deal once you get started," she says. "Check out a neighbour who's doing riparian work, and you'll see. And they'll also be able to give you tips on what plants do best in your locality." Council Land Management Officers will be providing onsite advice and information, and monitoring works implemented all year round. They can also arrange contractors to carry out the work.

Rod sees personal benefits in the riparian work. "My farm is my workplace, and why wouldn't you want your workplace to be a good environment?"

One of the rewards for Margaret has been the arrival of tui at her and husband Bernie's Patiki Road property. "We'd never noticed them before but they're certainly here now."

For more information, call the Taranaki Regional Council on 0800 736 222 and ask to speak to a Land Management Officer.