



Community newsletter from the Committee of the Mahurangi East Residents & Ratepayers Association - August 2023

www.scottslanding.org

Your new MERRA committee

The new MERRA Committee for the 2023/24 year is:

- Peter Seers - Chair
- Heather Mackay - Secretary
- Debbie Mickelborough - Treasurer
- Annie Bradley
- Mike Brooker
- Suzette Eastmond
- Barry Mein
- Chris Russell
- Stuart Windross

Subscription Renewals

Many thanks to all of those who have renewed their MERRA subscription for 2023-24. If you have yet to renew, or if you would like to join, it's never too late!

At the recent AGM it was agreed to increase the annual subscription to \$20 per household to cover increased ongoing costs. As always, we appreciate any additional amounts that you may wish to donate.

Payment should be made direct to the MERRA bank account which is 02-0480-0033353-00 (BNZ Warkworth). Please include your street address as a reference.

Your subscription will enable MERRA to continue its work to support our Scott's Landing community through activities such as fire and emergency response, animal and plant pest control and community advocacy. Financial members also benefit from free entry to the annual picnic.

MERRA Declares War on Rats!



For over thirty years, MERRA has been controlling rats on public land. Recently we have received funding from Predator Free NZ to extend rat control beyond public land and into residential backyards. We are getting ready to mobilise residents to join the war!

Watch your inbox in the coming weeks and check the MERRA website for exciting details on how you can join the war, control rats around your home and protect our wonderful flora and fauna.

Progress on Seawall Upgrade



Work is well advanced on rebuilding and stabilising the seawall next to the carpark at Scott Point. The northern side of the wall is expected to be completed in the next few weeks and clearing material and breaking into the bedrock for the foundations on the southern side will proceed as tides permit. Once work on the seawall is complete, the car park will be redesigned and re-surfaced with the establishment of boat trailer parks.

Following completion of this project, we will be installing the last of the six Historic Trail benches next to the jetty. You can read more about the Historic Trail at scottslanding.org/history/

Ridge Road Remedial Work



The heavy vehicle movements associated with the seawall upgrade have further highlighted the precarious state of the gravel section of Ridge Road, which has suffered further damage from weather events this year. MERRA has been in ongoing dialogue with Auckland Council and Auckland Transport to ensure that the necessary remedial work is undertaken to stabilise the slips and prevent further sediment entering the harbour.

We are pleased to advise that budget has been allocated for remedial work to be undertaken in the current 2023-24 financial year, as a partnership project between Auckland Transport and Auckland Council/Mahurangi Land Restoration Programme (MLRP). Auckland Transport will fund a traction seal to improve the road surface and reduce sediment migrating into the harbour, and MLRP will fund the upgrade and improvement of the stormwater drainage along the road.

MERRA understands that contracts are close to being finalised for this work, and we will continue to liaise with Auckland Transport and Auckland Council to ensure that the work progresses as soon as possible.

Volunteer opportunities

The Scotts Landing community has a proud history of volunteering for projects that help to enhance our unique environment. Examples include pest trapping, rubbish clean-ups, track maintenance and weed control. To build on this, MERRA is keen to coordinate future volunteer opportunities and working bees for local residents to join. It's a great way to make a difference and get to know your neighbours.

As part of this, we are working with the local Auckland Council park ranger, Michael Boyle, to identify volunteer projects in the beautiful parks on our doorstep. This could include work in the gardens around Scott Homestead, weed control, and track maintenance. We are also exploring opportunities to help with the work needed to get the new part of the Mahurangi East Regional Park open.

Keep an eye on the MERRA website for future working bees and volunteer opportunities. In the meantime, if you are interested in helping out, email merra.events@gmail.com

Looking out for each other

The serious storms and power outages earlier this year highlighted the need for the community to be well prepared and well connected for adverse events. It also provided some lessons for how we might deal with future events.

MERRA was active in providing residents with shared access to two generators, which many of us were able to take advantage of during the lengthy power cut. We also maintained contact with Vector to ensure that they were aware of the situation in Scotts Landing, as some households were without power for 10 days.

MERRA also worked closely with Rodney Neighbourhood Support and CRG (community response group, old civil defence) to ensure that we had up-to-date information that could be relayed to residents via the MERRA local network street coordinators. This included emergency messages on where to evacuate to, and where to go for help. The MERRA local network was used to convey these messages via email and text but once the power was out for an extended time, this method proved useless as cell phone towers also went down. As a result, in the future, the street coordinators have set up a backup method - 'shanks pony' - to convey important messages.

Native planting contributes to sediment control



As previously reported The Mahurangi Land Restoration Programme (MLRP) is a \$5 million, 5-year long programme aimed at reducing sediment entering the harbour.

In 2022, the group received funding for 3,500 plants which were distributed to 10 landowners, and this year a further 2,500 plants have been funded. Held collectively, these smaller restoration projects can have a big impact on erosion control and biodiversity in the local area.

The MLRP Land Advisor and Planting Coordinator visit each property to map the planting area, assess the site requirements and discuss site preparation (including weed control required prior to planting) with each landowner. Each site also has an archaeological assessment, to ensure that planting will not disturb any archaeological sites.

A plant list is developed for each property following the site visit and is based on what grows naturally in the local area, in the applicable habitat type (for example, cliff face, coastal margin or coastal forest).

Landowners can view and input into their plant list, but all plants supplied by MLRP are natives, eco-sourced from the Rodney District. Usually, the plants supplied are 'coloniser' or 'primary' species. These plants are faster growing and more tolerant of exposed locations and/or poor soils. On bare sites, a density of one plant per square metre is used, to help speed up canopy closure, and assist with weed control.

If existing native vegetation is present, which provides some shade and protection from the elements, other 'diversity' or 'secondary' species may be supplied, and at greater spacing. The idea behind MLRP restoration projects is to restore the natural vegetation cover, and mimic natural succession, to help bind and stabilise soil, absorb rainfall, and reduce erosion and the overland flow of sediment.

If you would like to discuss the project or apply for some plants for next year, please email merra.localnetwork@gmail.com.

Keeping safe on our roads



Unlike urban streets, our roads in Scotts Landing have no footpaths and are often narrow and winding, so this is a reminder to please take extra care when driving and share the road with those who are walking and cycling. Slow down and enjoy the drive!

While 111 is used for emergencies, there are other ways to report road incidents or unsafe driving.

- **Call *555** free from a mobile phone to report road incidents which are urgent but not life-threatening.
- **Community Roadwatch** can be used to report non-urgent incidents of poor driving where you **do not** wish the offender to be prosecuted. You will need to provide a registration plate number and make or colour of the vehicle you are reporting, but photo or video evidence is not required. Police will treat your Community Roadwatch report as confidential. If an offence and vehicle can be clearly identified, Police will contact the owner of the vehicle to tell them of the allegation made and of the expected standards of driver behaviour.

You can make an online report at <https://forms.police.govt.nz/forms/community-roadwatch>

Community Coffee Catch-ups

For those of you wanting to catch up over coffee and meet new people in the wider community, we've heard good things about the Friends Coffee Club meetings on Fridays at the Mahurangi East Library. It's run by the Friends of Mahurangi East Library, 11.45am – 1.30pm Fridays, at the library, 21 Hamatana Road, Snells Beach.

Save the Date - Upcoming MERRA Events

War on Rats: Information, Pick-up and Training Day - 9.00am – 12 noon, Saturday 2 September, at Rosedale (9 Charles Street)

New residents' morning tea – Sunday 1 October 2023 (venue TBA)

2024 MERRA picnic - Sunday 3 March 2024, Scott House

Inorganic Rubbish collection: the next scheduled collection for Scotts Landing is the week of 4-8 March 2024. Make a booking at <https://inorganiccollections.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/>

2024 MERRA Annual General Meeting - Sunday 5 May 2024, Scott House