

## **Big plans for Mangere Mountain Education Centre (Peter Dentener; 17 May 2004)**

The Mangere Mountain Education Centre (Te Whare Akorangao Te Pane o Mataoho) has big plans for the future, according to Education Co-ordinator Wayne Knox. Schools from all over Auckland (and beyond) visit the Centre to learn about Mangere Mountain's history, geology and botany. "To start with, we need a bus bay for visitors".

Wayne would also like to attract an on-site Maori carver. "There is a spare garage on the site which we would like to convert into a workshop, and possibly even offer carving classes". These are short-term plans and Wayne would like to see a carver with carving demonstrations on site by the end of 2004.

And the plans don't stop there. "We are planning a heritage garden where we would grow traditional Maori crops such as kumara and hue (gourd)." But his biggest wish is for a Whare (Maori house), for on-site education.

Wayne (from the Tanui Iwi) has been involved with the Centre as an Education Co-ordinator since September 2003. Having completed a Bachelor degree in architecture, he has since worked as a consultant architect, Maori Community Liaison (Waitakere Council), and for Te Kawerau A Maki Trust, his local Iwi in West Auckland.

So what is involved in being an education-co-ordinator? "Well, I do the Centre administration, take minutes at meetings" says Wayne. "My main role is developing educational programmes with support from the Trust and other resources."

The Mangere Mountain Education Trust was established in 2003. The Trust is made up of people from the community and currently includes representatives from the Auckland College of Education, Te Wai-o-Hua Trust, Howick Historical Village, Watercare Services, and Mountain View Primary School.

But the decision to establish an education centre at Mangere Mountain goes back to the early 1990s. Te Wai-o-Hua, Department of Conservation and Manukau City Council agreed in 1995 to work towards this goal in partnership.

Add to that the support of the Auckland Regional Council and the result has been:

- A refurbishment of the old quarry depot off Coronation Road into an educational facility
- A commemorative shell path
- Interpretation signs and carving
- And a children's nature park.

The Centre is currently developing a range of activities. Some examples are:

- Curriculum based activities for primary and secondary schools
- Adult education programmes relating to general aspects of the Mountain, including Te Reo me ona Tikanga (Maori language and culture) and Arts and Crafts.
- Guided walks on Mangere Mountain for groups
- Educational resources relating to Mangere Mountain and its environment
- Open days and organised walks
- Planting days.
- Flax weaving classes

Wayne is kept quite busy by his educational and administrative roles. So how does he relax after a busy day? "I practice Sahaja Yoga (a form of meditation), and enjoy being with my young baby".

In addition to Mountain-related activities, the Centre also hosts a children's native garden, and a worm farm. This environmental focus complements the archaeological, geological and botanical role of the Centre.

The Centre is used for education, and introductions before trips onto the Mountain. With its big glass doors, it is a very light and pleasant building. Children's art work and poems, and local artists work decorate the walls.

While schools predominantly use the Centre, public (non-school related) trips can be arranged by appointment. You can visit the Centre on Mondays, Tuesday and Thursdays from 10am-3pm. Contact details can be found [here]. The Centre is open to schools 5 days a week and arrangements should be made by contacting Wayne. The Centre is also available for hire as a meeting venue.

Like any organisation, the Centre depends on assistance from volunteers, so if you have some spare time and an interest, please let Wayne know. Any help is welcome.

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(We gratefully acknowledge Wayne's contribution, and background information provided in the Mangere Mountain Education Centre pamphlet)

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