

New group forms to protect gulf

A new advocacy group is being formed to work to protect the marine environment. Organisers Kathy Voyles, Rose Davis and Shirin Brown are active in advocating for the protection of the Hauraki Gulf.

Kathy says that while they weren't delighted with the idea of developing a new organisation, they are very aware of consents being notified on dredging and dumping in the marine space.

"This new incorporated society will work to preserve and protect the ecosystems and landscapes in the Hauraki Gulf," says Kathy.

"It is being set up to advocate for a future where sustainability must be the catchword for our children and their children."

Shirin, a former local board member, says that over the past decade, conservation-minded islanders have rallied



Shirin Brown says Protect our Gulf Incorporated will submit on environmentally hazardous projects. Their first task was to submit on a Ports of Auckland application to dredge 2.5 million metres³ of sediment from the Waitematā Harbour over the next 15 years.

together to resist marinas, dredging and overfishing around Waiheke.

"We're also keen to focus on the wider area - New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone - which is one of the largest in the world with an area of 405 million hectares. This is because fisheries management, drilling consents and dumping consents are all potentially exercised in this area, which falls outside Auckland Council jurisdiction."

On 19 December the group submitted as

individuals against dredging consent for the Rangitoto Channel. Shirin says that while this is already a shipping channel, the consent will significantly increase the amount of dredge that can be removed to deepen it.

"We're not clear why the channel needs to accommodate bigger boats. Given what is known about the environment and the fact that birds, fish and marine mammals forage and travel across the Hauraki Gulf, as well as the dangers of sedimentation to sea life, we feel the application needs to be rethought and maybe shelved."

The group is aiming to bring like-minded people together to continue to submit on consents and develop awareness around plans within the gulf and the Exclusive Economic Zone.

"It seems high time to pool the knowledge, energy and talent we have on Waiheke," says Kathy.

"In short, to start a new incorporated society to advocate for our beleaguered marine environment."

To get involved email protectourgulf@gmail.com •

Funding open for enviro-groups

Do you need financial support for an environmentally-focused project? Applications are open for the Community Coordination and Facilitation Grant. If your group needs funding to increase collaboration and strategic planning, or for on the ground delivery and admin costs, this grant can help.

The Community Coordination and Facilitation Grant will provide funding for community conservation coordinators or facilitators to guide communities through how to:

- Deliver projects across Tāmaki Makaurau.
- Reduce the spread of animal and plant pests, and restore native biodiversity.
- Facilitate community-led conservation activities that rehabilitate, protect and restore urban and rural streams across landscapes or catchments.

- Form strategic and operational planning.
- Manage the costs of increasing the quality and quantity of community conservation work on the ground, eg, administration.

Funding is available for a maximum of two years for community organisations, mana whenua and schools or groups who are undertaking biodiversity focused conservation work that contributes towards the ecological health of streams and catchments, regional biodiversity outcomes and delivery of the Pest Free Auckland 2050 vision. The grant will support programmes and activities that occur at a broad local, landscape or catchment scale. It will facilitate increased delivery across private, Māori and public land, or across multiple land tenures. The grant will fund:

- All activities that must support current or future on-the-ground delivery for Pest Free Auckland and regional biodiversity.
- Administration - activity relating to the management of the group or organisation.
- Developing processes that will help applicants respond more effectively to the expected increased on-the-ground delivery.
- A contribution towards facilitator or coordinator time.
- Strategic or operational planning - development of pest-free plans or similar.

Applications are open until 10 January 2020 for grants of up to \$50,000. For further information visit aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/grants •



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