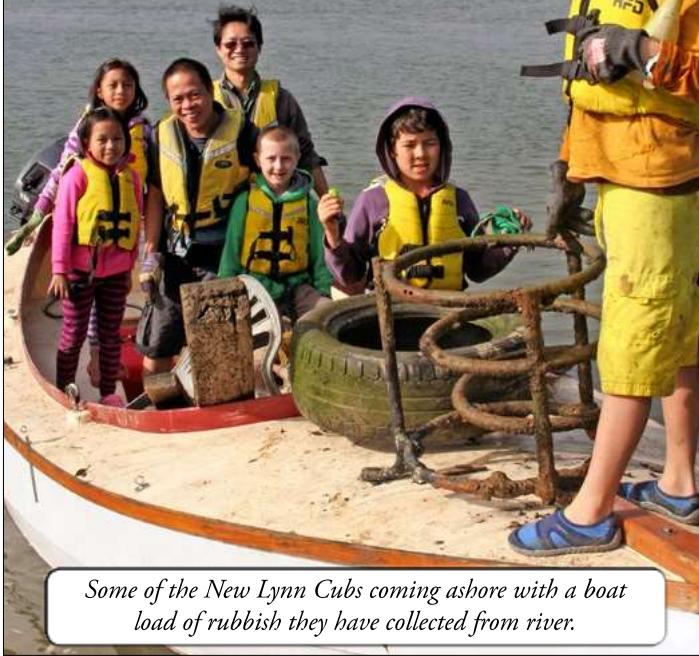


Sea Scouts Clean Up Whau River



Some of the New Lynn Cubs coming ashore with a boat load of rubbish they have collected from river.

As fog blanketed much of Auckland, the New Lynn Sea Scouts took to the water on a cool winter's Saturday morning. They invited, and were joined by Western Bays and Owairaka Sea Scouts for a day on the Whau River.

But rather than it just being a day to play, it was day to help clean up this waterway, an annual project undertaken by the Scouts in conjunction with the Friends of the Whau and the Watercare Harbour Clean-up Trust.

"It's a great feeling to be able to do something for the environment; and it's also beneficial for us" says Andrew one of New Lynn's Scout Leaders. "The water ways of the Whau River and French Bay have been home to our boating activities for over six decades, so it is good to help maintain the health of the environment." In 2010 the New Lynn Sea Scouts won the then Waitakere Councils Heritage and Environment Award, in recognition of their ongoing work in helping clean up these water ways.

Andrew remembers boating on the Whau as a Scout himself some 30 years back, and has noted a big improvement in the level of pollution in the Whau from a time when the river banks were littered with rubbish. "Now," he says, "the Scouts have to work harder to find the rubbish." But in saying that, the day still netted a large skip overflowing with about 15 cubic meters of rubbish!

The Sea Scouts are a branch of SCOUTS New Zealand. While they have water activity as a core part of their programme, they also do all the land-based activities that the land branch do. Andrew sees this as the best of both worlds for their members.

"Being situated midway between the Manukau and Waitemata Harbours, and in the lee of the Waitakere Ranges, means we have an awesome adventure playground right on our back doorstep" says Andrew. "It simply makes sense to get out and enjoy it".

So, having done their bit for the environment, the following day they were back out on the water; this time to Farm Cove, Pakuranga, to take part in the Regions Winter Sailing Series.

Being a 'land locked' Sea Scout Group, means New Lynn have learnt to be mobile. The Group sees this as a positive as it tends to open up a wider range of experiences than may otherwise be had if everything was right on their doorstep.