



Kaikoura Wilderness Walks - Case Study

Kaikoura Wilderness Walks offer guided walks through the privately owned Puhi Peaks Nature Reserve, hosting guests at Shearwater Lodge.

The lodge has been designed and built with sustainability in mind and operates completely off the national grid – meeting all water supply and electricity needs with a purpose built micro-hydro system. The award panel noted the depth of detail and consideration given to initiatives both large and small, showing the business is highly committed to sustainability.

The business has considered carefully how to minimize impacts in this pristine alpine environment and is involved in monitoring of nesting sites for endangered Hutton's shearwaters (*Puffinus huttoni*) which nest in burrows high in the mountains just north of Shearwater Lodge.

Owner/manager, Nicky McArthur, says an awards programme focused on measurable and tangible goals benefits businesses, while highlighting the integrity of their approach to consumers.

“It’s about wrapping good business practice around what we are doing to care for the environment - protecting our precious land as a legacy for future generations,” says Nicky.

Initiatives

Energy
A micro-hydro scheme supplies Shearwater Lodge with all its electricity requirements. The micro-hydro scheme uses water from Happy Valley Stream which runs behind and along side Shearwater Lodge. No electricity is drawn off the national grid.
Using outdoor lights for effect and ambience is no longer practised. The areas around the lodge are kept natural and without light pollution. Outside safety for guests is not an issue as they remain either on the decks or in the lodge at night. Being a summer activity natural light is more than sufficient for atmosphere most of the season. Hydro power is saved for more important uses.
Candles are lit on the dining table for evening meals. This not only adds to the ambience at the lodge but also saves hydro power.
'Switch off' stickers are attached to switches and most appliances. Staff are encouraged and reminded to 'switch off'. Guests are briefed at the lodge.
Coal and wood were historically used in the range. We successfully stopped using coal during the 2009/10 season. The range has been fuelled by wood on the odd occasion it has been used. Because the business is essentially a 'summer activity' use of the range has been minimal. Further use of coal is not anticipated.
We cut, stack and store all wood in a covered shed before use. Dry wood emits less pollution than fresh, 'wet' wood.
An Asko* dishwasher which is particularly efficient in energy and water is used. The dishwasher is only used when completely full and a cold water fill/short programme is selected to save on power and water. A programme with the minimum drying time is

<p>also selected. A minimal amount of detergent is used which is a requirement of our Devan Blue sewage to grey water system. All crockery and cutlery is scraped off before going into the dishwasher in order to make a short wash cycle fully effective.</p>
<p>Shearwater Lodge has double glazed windows. They are essential in this wilderness environment to reduce the amount of heat loss through the windows.</p>
<p>Drapes throughout the lodge not only add to the aesthetics and ambience but also add to the energy efficiency by keeping in the warmth.</p>
<p>95% of all lighting in the lodge and woolshed is low energy compact fluorescent.</p>
<p>Each centrally heated radiator is individually controlled. Radiators in rooms not being used are turned off.</p>
<p>The Devan Blue system has a timer and home and away options and is programmed for maximum efficiency, minimum power and running time.</p>
<p>Our programme for improving the level of under-floor insulation has been implemented by adding a layer of Sisalation 421* under the floor throughout the lodge's 6 guest bedrooms and lounge area. The staff quarters and hallway are scheduled to be completed by the end of the 2009/2010 season.</p>
<p>The carpet is 100% wool, a renewable resource, laid with a foil underlay which will enhance its insulation properties. The carpet will further insulate the hallway keeping in the warmth and reduce noise for our guests. The carpet is being run right up to the guest bedroom doors to eliminate any draughts.</p>
<p>We minimise fuel usage for transporting supplies to the lodge: We ensure that any vehicle using the service road to the lodge for transporting supplies has a full load to reduce the number of journeys needed to service the lodge. We also return with a full load – laundry, waste etc.</p>
<p>KWW has purchased a Yamaha Rhino to transport equipment and supplies to the lodge. This smaller vehicle is actually more fuel efficient than our old vehicle. It has been fitted with a lightweight cage and cover to extend its capacity and keep contents dry and dust free. Being able to transport more supplies each trip cuts down on the overall number of journey made reducing fuel costs and efficiencies.</p>
<p>We request that guests take as little as possible into the lodge for their 1 or 2 night stay. Providing hold-alls for guests and requesting they pack light for their walk has reduced the load and frequency of trips to the lodge as well as saving on fuel costs. This information is available on our website, booking form and a reminder on the trip questionnaire.</p>
<p>Each guest rooms have two merino wool blankets which are used by our guests in the lodge and on the decks for extra warmth on chilly evenings.</p>
<p>We have removed electric blankets from our guest rooms are using hot water bottles to take the chill off the bedding in the evenings. Our guests have loved the idea of this 'home touch' and it reduces the load on our hydro scheme.</p>
<p>We use tourism agents for North Island and overseas marketing excursions. These agents represent a number of tourism enterprises thus reducing the cost of travel and more particularly the reduction of fuel usage helps reduce our carbon emissions.</p>
<p>Anything that is hand washed, or in the case of tea towels, boiled and washed occasionally on site, is line dried.</p>
<p>A purpose-made drying rack is used in the drying room which enables us to spread clothing out when we are unable to line dry. This allows us to dry things more quickly using less power. The rack is made of recycled rimu.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Water</p>

<p>The lodge water supply comes from a spring which emerges alongside Happy Valley Stream. We do not draw water from the Kaikoura township supply.</p>
<p>Staff and guests are encouraged, and reminded, to save water by limiting showering time. This not only conserves water but reduces the amount of gas we use for heating the water. This is also documented in the Guest Compendium.</p>
<p>By using a washing up bowl in the sink, less volume of water is used than when using the sink alone. We don't need to keep emptying the sink when it is needed for other uses.</p>
<p>All vehicle washing is undertaken on grassed areas so that water runs back onto the land. A high pressure hose is used when the vehicles are particularly muddy. At all other times a bucket and sponge is used to conserve water.</p>
<p>Toilets throughout the lodge have dual flush cisterns which reduce the amount of water used.</p>
<p>Drought free plants have been planted around the lodge. This project is ongoing.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Waste</p>
<p>We recycle paper, cans, bottles and plastic from food supplies, packaging and, similarly, envelopes, paper and packaging etc from the office.</p> <p>Recycling bins are used to separate all items at the lodge and at the woolshed meeting point. There is very little waste that is non-recyclable. All waste is transported to Kaikoura Recycling Depot - Innovative Waste, where it is deposited into the appropriate recycling bins.</p> <p>Our old and depleted micro-hydro battery bank will be recycled through Innovative Waste Kaikoura Ltd.</p>
<p>All organic waste from the lodge is recycled. Food waste is fed to our own pigs.</p>
<p>Plans for shopping and bulk buy: Accurate assessments are made when purchasing all food stuffs. We bulk buy and encourage minimal waste, which in turn reduces our food and transport costs. Minimising the number of journeys made helps reduce vehicles on roads and goes some way to reduce emissions. If there is any excess food it is generally consumed by the staff.</p>
<p>Beneficial change to our working/walking days for the 2009/2010 season: A change in our working week and scheduling walks on consecutive days has proved to be beneficial in not only improving efficiency but cost effective in areas of transporting supplies to the lodge. Efficiencies in food buying and preparation have resulted in less waste and a reduction in fuel consumption.</p>
<p>Fresh produce is purchased from local suppliers whenever possible. Sourcing produce locally has reduced supermarket shopping which in turn reduces the number of heavy vehicles on the roads and produces less fuel emissions. We try to ensure that where possible ingredients travel the shortest distance possible.</p>
<p>Staff recycle and transport waste to the recycling plant on a weekly basis: Because of the remoteness of Shearwater Lodge journeys to the recycling plant in Kaikoura are undertaken by staff at the end of each week. This saves on having to organise collection by the local authority and adds minimum Kms to vehicles already being used to transport guests and staff back to Kaikoura.</p>
<p>We have refrained from using table napkins for every meal preferring to use them only at dinner. We have found that guests do not always use the napkins but they were often soiled as a result of spillage or crumpled then thrown away. Table napkins are always available for use.</p>

Tablets of soap are available for guests if they prefer solid soap to liquid soap. These are recycled for use in the staff quarters.
Small and end of toilet tissue rolls are recycled for use in the staff quarters.
Reuse policy for towels and linen for 3 day /2 night walk: Guests are encouraged and reminded to read our policy for reusing towels and linen. The policy is documented in the Guest Compendium. As the maximum stay at the lodge is 2 nights this policy works extremely well and during our two seasons we have had no occasion to change linen during a guest's stay.
Change of policy for staff towels: Staff are encouraged to bring and use their own towels to reduce the amount of laundry we send to Blenheim. Their towels can be laundered with the family wash. However, if using KWW's towels we have requested staff extend the use of the towels for an extra night rather than changing them after the 2 day/1 night walk and then having clean ones for the 3 day/2 night walk.
All laundry is packed in reusable laundry bags and sent to a central location in Kaikoura, collected, and returned on a weekly or as needed basis. Using a commercial laundry is the most cost efficient way of laundering to a high standard. We have changed our supplier from Christchurch to one in Blenheim thereby reducing the distance travelled and causing less fuel emissions. Our supplier -The Wash House in Blenheim has efficient and economical machinery for this purpose.
We use rechargeable batteries for 'phones, radios and equipment, thus avoiding unnecessary waste to landfill.
On day one and two of the walk guests have a pre-packed lunch. The use of re-useable lunch boxes is proving to be successful, particularly saving on plastic or foil food wrappings.
We use 'old fashioned' crockery for picnic lunches. All guests appreciate this gesture and it certainly saves on recycling of plastic cups previously used.
Cardboard boxes previously used to transport our lunches have been replaced by reusable, practical and purpose-made canvas picnic bags.
Office recycle/reuse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We use recycled paper or paper sourced from sustainable forests and/or 100% plantation fibre for stationery requirements and printed collateral • Boxes marked 'for recycling' paper used for notes and hard copies and a reuse policy are provided • The amount of paper is reduced by printing double sided • Our recycling and reuse policy discourages printing emails by using a small phrase at the end of emails • We fill in application forms, supply information and writes letters online. We predominately use the computer for all correspondence, notes etc. • For editing purposes draft copies are used rather than full ink printing functions thus saving ink • Refill cartridges are used whenever possible
All new furniture and fittings have been made locally from renewable or recycled timber. A local joiner was commissioned to make shelving, batons for the towel rails and storage units for the bedrooms. Recycled rimu or renewable macrocarpa has been used, together with 100% wool carpet seconds and end of rolls for the flat surfaces.
We used a 100% eco-friendly recycled product for the wall covering around the new storage units. Autex wall covering with acoustic properties is a safe, non-toxic, non-irritant, recyclable & environmentally friendly product.

We use eco-friendly guest toiletries:
Complimentary toiletries, sourced in bulk quantities, are supplied to all guests' rooms.
Re-usable dispensers have replaced single package toiletries.

Eco-friendly cleaning products are used for general cleaning, for floors, bathrooms and kitchen areas. A variety of brands was tried over the last season, as efficiency and bulk buying are high on our priority list. We have recently purchased, and are currently trialling, a 'mechanical' cleaning system using water only.

Art work at the lodge is made from recycled materials. Following the Eco Art exhibition in 2009 Nicky's unsold works hang in the guest corridor. This artwork was made from recycled materials to raise environmental awareness.

Hidden amongst the trees, out of sight of the service road and lunch spot, a composting loo is provided. This is recycling at a basic level, keeping our waterways clear of contamination from human waste and providing a welcome facility for our walkers 1 ½ to 2 hours into the walk.

Community

Nicky has produced a number of artworks for local exhibitions, such as ECO Art. This was a community project not only for creative members of the community but also to bring public awareness of social issues in Kaikoura, particularly around waste, recycling, reusing and conservation. All Nicky's eight pieces were Kaikoura inspired and used mainly recycled and reused materials. As well as participating in ECO Art Nicky was invited to judge 'Eco-Bags' - art work created from miscellaneous items from the local recycling plant. She participated in the opening of the exhibition and spent a day helping out and talking to the general public.

Nicky's commitment to initiatives in Kaikoura and the Canterbury Region has seen her support the Christchurch Arts Festival. This year the business donated six, three-day walks worth \$6,000 for auction at one a fundraising initiative.

Conservation

We have joined the 'Tree for Travellers' initiative of encouraging visitors to purchase a native heritage tree or shrub to be planted in reserve areas at Kaikoura. As visitor numbers to Kaikoura increase, there is a corresponding increase in greenhouse gas emissions from higher traffic levels and energy use. 'Trees for Travellers' will dramatically help the reduction in greenhouse emission levels and ensure Kaikoura plays its part in the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

The old musterers' hut which sits alongside Shearwater Lodge is in the process of being renovated to display local Kaikoura history, stories of Puhi Peaks Station, information on conservation of flora and fauna, including the Hutton's Shearwater projects and our responsible tourism initiatives. All materials within the hut are being recycled. All other materials will be sourced from recycled or renewable products.

The Puhi Peaks Nature Reserve is home to one of the two remaining colonies in the world of the endangered Hutton's shearwater which nest in burrows high in the mountains just north of Shearwater Lodge. Nicky is not only a member of the Hutton's Shearwater Trust, but also convenor of the Friends of the Hutton's Shearwater formed to ensure the future of this endangered species.

The Kaikoura Wilderness Experience team has worked with the Department of Conservation (DOC) to monitor the nesting site. In particular, focus has been on stoat control which at 6,500ft has proved a mammoth task involving a local helicopter company and volunteer staff.