

Media Release

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Mud Fish study and fence protection device wow Fair judges

Exhibitors, family, friends and enthusiastic onlookers gathered at 'The Centre' in Kerikeri last week to check out the wonderful array of exhibits at the 2007 Top Energy Far North Science & Technology Fair.

Open to Years 7 through 13 students and covering any area of science or technology, exhibitors were encouraged to choose a topic which involved investigation, challenge and imagination.

Projects judged the most deserving were recognised at a Prize Giving ceremony on Saturday evening and prizes were handed out.

The senior Top Energy Prize for Overall Excellence was won by Year 11 Kerikeri High School students, Claire Nicolson and Jasmine Yorke for their exhibit, "The Wetland Habitat of the Burgundy Mud Fish – a Comparative Study". Their project studied the habitat of this very endangered Mud Fish and compared it with other wetland habitats around this part of Northland, looking at such aspects, as pH, soil solids and water clarity. The Burgundy Mud Fish require a habitat with particular properties, especially with respect to water quality, pH and surrounding vegetation. The girls worked with DOC people to gain access to the sites and to help with the environmental monitoring.

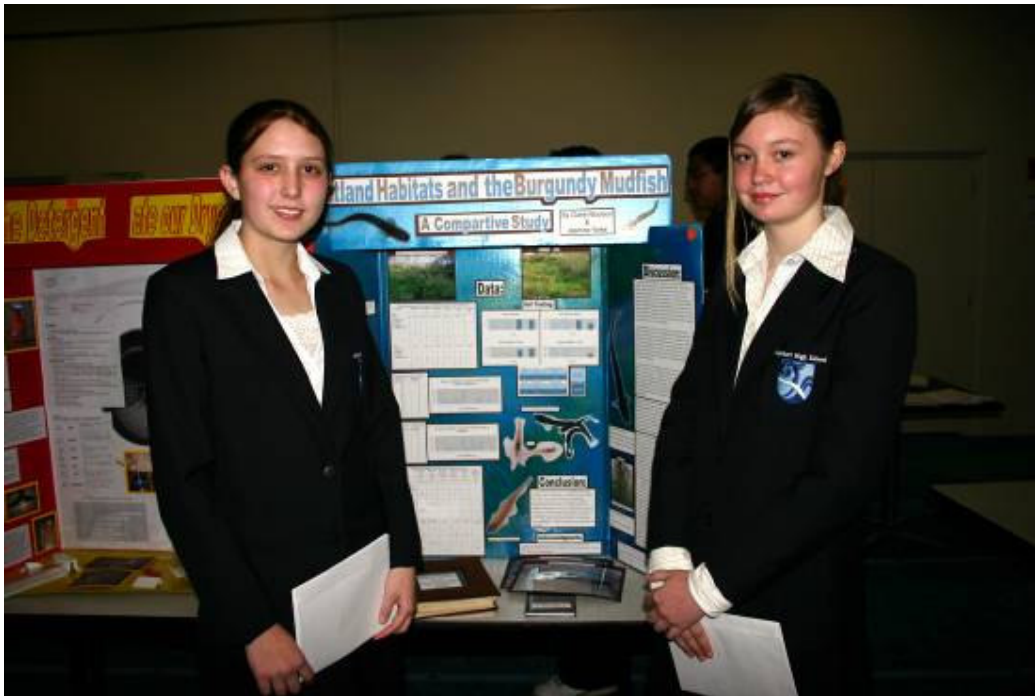
The junior Top Energy Prize for Overall Excellence was won by Aidan Moyle, also from Kerikeri High School. Aidan invented a clip device for attaching a fence wire to a post in such a way that when the fence is subjected to undue pressure (for example, as it could be when flood debris builds up behind it) the device releases and collapses the wires, so reducing damage to the fence as a whole.

Top Energy General Manager Contracting, Kevin Wilson, was on hand to present overall winner prizes. "This is the 5th year Top Energy has proudly sponsored the Far North Science & Technology Fair. Our aim is to encourage young people to get involved in science and technology and we hope that many will develop a passion for the subjects that will last

throughout their lives. Perhaps here today are the great scientists who will shape our future world." said Wilson.

Wilson also believes the Far North Science & Technology Fair fits well with other education initiatives his company sponsors in the Far North. These are; WaterSafe - a programme which teaches primary school kids to swim and be safe around water; Enterprise 4 Education (E4E) - a programme based originally on the Far North pilot, the Young Entrepreneur Programme, designed to develop an enterprise culture in schools and focusing on delivering the whole curriculum in a way where students can see the relevance of their learning - and to help them develop into enterprising people and the School-to-work Programme - recognising not all senior students are gifted academically or have entrepreneurial skills, Top Energy set up the School-to-work Programme which offers scholarships that encourage secondary school students to stay at school while getting paid, part-time work experience. END.

Contact: Top Energy General Manager Contracting, Kevin Wilson. Ph: 0-9 401 5601



Pic.:Claire&Jasmine; Left to right. Overall Excellence senior prize winners, Claire Nicolson and Jasmine Yorke and their exhibit, "The Wetland Habitat of the Burgundy Mud Fish – a Comparative Study".



Pic: Aidan Moyle; Top Energy General Manager Contracting, Kevin Wilson presents the Overall Excellence junior prize to Aidan Moyle, Kerikeri High School.