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Report to the Landcare Committee
from Andrew Annakin, Divisional Manager, Landcare

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Landcare Committee about activities and matters of interest within the Landcare Division since the last Landcare Committee meeting, 16 November 2000. Departmental activity reports are also attached.

2. Christmas Long Gone

It seems ages since the Chairman's shout! The focus this last month has been on finishing the Business Plan updates, the Six Month Review and preparing for this Committee meeting. Meanwhile, the "real work" continues apace in the departments towards completing the 2000/01 workplan.

Our Six Month Review meeting with the General Manager and Chief Financial Officer is on 9 February. As at 31 December, the Division has a favourable operating surplus of \$402,000. Despite this, we still expect to materially complete all of our Annual Plan projects, other than those that have already been adjusted or may ultimately lie beyond our control. As this is the first full year of the new Long-term Financial Strategy, the Landcare Division is particularly focused on ensuring that we meet the challenges entrusted to us by the Council.

The 2001-2010 Business Plan management review is also on 9 February; in preparation for the Special Landcare Committee, 21 February. As we bed down the LTFS work programmes, some necessary or prudent variations have emerged. However, these remain within the total LTFS envelope for Landcare. I will outline all of this at the 21 February meeting.

3. Out and About

Items of interest for Committee members:

Hutt River Advisory Committee, 30 November: The meeting had to be cancelled because of diary conflicts for Territorial Authority members. The meeting was essentially for information purposes. However, attendance will be important for 2001, as this is the year to complete the Plan! Particular efforts have been made to ensure members' availability, but we remain in their hands on the day.

The Landcare Management Steering Group has critiqued some early drafts of the Hutt River FMP; great to see the overall package coming together. Amended versions are now with technical associates in other councils for a further initial review. A consultative draft is to be available for the March Advisory Committee meeting.

Dinner with Dick, 5 December: Councillor Werry took the Landcare Managers and Secretaries out to dinner to celebrate the year's work. A great opportunity to reminisce, tell tall stories, and exchange time-share anecdotes! Thank you Dick.

Kilmister Block Walkway Opening, 10 December: An excellent event, facilitated by Parks and Forests staff, but largely co-ordinated by the enthusiastic members of a "friends" group and their supporters and friends. The event was well attended. I believe I was the only WRC representative to actually walk the length of the track - with welcome juice supplies handed out by Ross Jackson from his Parks and Forests truck (in which he then assisted my wife Kerry up one of the steepest slopes!).

Greg Moore Presentation, 12 December: Bruce Andrell arranged for a visit from Greg Moore, Executive Director of San Francisco's Golden Gate National Parks. Greg held a series of technical workshops on a wide range of park management and environmental issues. A number of Council staff and outside guests attended these sessions. Greg also met separately with Howard Stone and myself. Despite the vast differences in resources and population between our two operations, there were many useful comparisons and Greg was very complimentary about the Regional Parks and forests. Greg's visit was a major coup for Parks and Forests and a valuable external relationship has now been cemented.

Christmas Holiday Wanderings: Despite the wind, I had the pleasant task these holidays of "putting some miles" on the rebuilt engine in my old Alfa Romeo. Amongst the trips were:

- ***The Wainuiomata Water Treatment Plant:*** The Landcare Ranger, Scott Farrell, was on leave, but we exchanged pleasantries with Water Group staff and picnicked in the environs;
- ***The Hutt River Trail:*** Very busy over the holiday period;
- ***Ridge Track, Kaitoke Regional Park:*** Probably the hottest and "stillest" afternoon of the entire holiday, but still a memorable walk - great vistas over Hutt Valley. The transition from riverbed and regenerating forest to sub-alpine grasses is striking. The flowering Rata were stunning.

Tapu Raising Ceremony, Kaitoke Regional Park, 16 January: Along with Chairman Macaskill, Councillor Werry, Parks and Forests managers, ranging staff, and members of the Police, I attended this sad event following the 13 January homicide. We are grateful to Liz Mellish from Wellington Tenth's for arranging the Tapu raising ceremony. A large group of friends and associates supported the murdered woman's family. The Regional Council will facilitate a tree planting memorial and arrangements are in hand for that.

The Parks and Forests debrief notes appeared in the Councillors Bulletin, for information. There are some operational aspects that can be improved - mainly communications. However, the basic cause was regrettably unavoidable.

SH58 Consent, WRC Submission: Susan Edwards and I attended a meeting with Regional Transport, facilitated by Environment Division, to co-ordinate the Regional Council submission on Transit NZ's Resource Consent application to widen State Highway 58. Clearly, there are different perspectives on the effects on Belmont Regional Park and it is important for the Landcare Division to be consulted as the Regional Land Transport Strategy unfolds into specific initiatives. I will be working with Dr Watson to achieve this.

Doris's Wedding, 20 January: A contingent of WRC staff attended the wedding of Doris Hawe, Landcare Division Executive Secretary. I was able to say a few words at the reception noting Doris's long working association with the Regional Council and to pass on everyone's best wishes to her and James. My only regret is that we had no WRC wiaata to support my comments!

Second Kiwi Walk opening, 22 January: Several Councillors attended the opening of the second Regional Council Kiwi Walk; Tane's Track in the Tunnel Gully Recreation Area, Pakuratahi Forest. The event, a joint initiative between the Regional Council and the Hilary Commission, was well attended.

Afterwards, Kerry and I mountain biked from Tunnel Gully to Ladle Bend on the Rimutaka Incline Walkway (our second training run for the Big Coast mountain bike event, 17-18 February); a bit of a struggle after the Christmas excesses! The Incline Walkway remains a particular favourite of mine; an easy, enjoyable and very accessible bike ride. I counted over thirty cars in the car park (well over capacity!); most had changed over on our return. Despite dry conditions in the Region, the area around the Incline Walkway has greened-up a lot since logging operations ceased in the lower sections; the scars are slowly healing, though slash and other debris remain unsightly. Parks and Forests have a small riparian restoration project booked for this year as part of our RPS/ecological contribution to the Long-term Financial Strategy.

Otaki River Iwi Management Plan: I attended meetings with Environment Division on Flood Protection's wish to discuss this plan directly with iwi. There are several fundamental links between the Iwi Plan and the Otaki River Floodplain Management Plan, plus the broader environmental and sustainability themes from *Towards a Greater Wellington*. Aspects of this will filter through Ara Tahi, e.g., proposed technical workshop topics. We plan to meet with iwi to discuss the Otaki Plan, some time in March.

4. Recommendation

That the report be received and the contents noted.

ANDREW ANNAKIN
Divisional Manager, Landcare