



Report 03.112
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Committee Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee
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Wetland Action Plan

1. Purpose

To seek the Committee's approval of the Wetland Action Plan. The Wetland Action plan is enclosed separately with the Order Paper.

2. Background

Greater Wellington Regional Council has undertaken work to manage and protect wetlands since 2000, when GWRC increased its investment in the Region's biodiversity. The Wetland Action Plan details the future direction of GWRC's wetland programme.

The draft Wetland Action Plan was released for public consultation in July 2002, after being endorsed by the Landcare and Environment Committees. Feedback was sought from other agencies (such as the Department of Conservation and Territorial Authorities), Iwi and interested community groups, including *Take Care* groups.

Preparation of the Action Plan has involved staff from the Environment, Landcare and Wairarapa Divisions.

3. What was the response to the Draft Plan?

Overall, the people we talked to were positive about GWRC's approach to wetland management. Consultation showed strong support for opportunities to work with GWRC, particularly in developing and providing incentives for private landowners. The Action Plan now includes a process for getting feedback from interest groups during its implementation.

Another issue raised during consultation was the need to co-ordinate effectively over the management of Lake Wairarapa. The Action Plan includes measures that will help co-ordination between agencies. For example, promoting more contact with agencies involved in managing the Lake.

Only minor changes have been made to the Wetland Action Plan following consultation on the draft.

4. **What does the Action Plan propose?**

The options for supporting wetlands in the Region are:

- investing in wetlands on GWRC land
- encouraging wetland restoration on private land using advice and incentives
- regulating activities that effect wetlands.

The Action Plan proposes using all of the above methods, with a stronger emphasis on encouraging wetland restoration rather than regulating activities on private land.

The key actions proposed under the Action Plan are to:

- a) develop an inventory of wetlands in the greater Wellington Region;
- b) increase our knowledge of wetlands and, in particular, wetland hydrology;
- c) protect and restore wetlands on land owned or managed by GWRC;
- d) work in partnership with other agencies and Iwi to improve Lake Wairarapa;
- e) protect the very best wetlands on private land under the Key Native Ecosystem programme;
- f) provide practical advice and assistance to encourage wetland restoration on private land;
- g) provide an effective regulatory bottom line for wetlands; and
- h) monitor our progress towards achieving our vision.

5. **Funding for the Action Plan**

The funding for this programme was considered in the development of the proposed Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). After public consultation the original figure proposed in the draft Action Plan for the Wetland Advisory Service was reduced. In addition, the proposed LTCCP has delayed the Lake Wairarapa Wetlands Regional Park proposal from 2005/06 to 2007/08.

6. **What happens next?**

If the Plan is accepted, implementation of this programme will be reported to the relevant committees of GWRC (for example, a report on wetland restoration on GWRC administered land will be prepared for the Landcare Committee).

7. **Communication**

The Wetland Action Plan recommends a number of methods to educate people about wetlands and promote involvement in their management. For example, the development of a wetland brochure for landowners, media promotion, and talking directly to landowners.

8. **Recommendations**

That the Committee:

1. *receive the report.*
2. *note the contents of the report.*
3. *adopt the Wetland Action Plan.*

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Enclosure: Wetland Action Plan