

Report 03.93
Date 28 February 2003
File N/03/09/08

Committee Landcare
Author Steve Murphy, Operations Support Engineer

Proposed motorcross events in Moonshine Park

1. Purpose of the report

To advise Councillors of an application by the Kapi-Mana Motorcycle Club to hold an annual motorcross event on the Hutt River berm and to seek the Committee's approval or otherwise for these events to take place.

2. Present situation

The Kapi-Mana Motorcycle Club have been granted a resource consent by Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) to hold an annual motorcross event in Moonshine Park Upper Hutt. A condition of the consent is that the club "*shall obtain written consent of the Wellington Regional Council's Landcare Committee for the use of Moonshine Park*".

Moonshine Park is on the eastern river berm area of the Hutt River, immediately south of the Moonshine Bridge. The land is owned by Greater Wellington – The Regional Council (GWRC), but is leased and maintained by UHCC. The lease document for Moonshine Park allows for active recreation.

3. Background

In November 2001, Flood Protection gave a one off approval for a motorcross event in Moonshine Park following an approach by UHCC. Conditions were attached to safeguard the flood protection system. While the event did cause some damage to the berm areas, which required remedial action from the motorcycle club, it also attracted a large crowd and was considered very successful by the organisers. The success of that event led to an application by the club to hold it on an annual basis. In December 2002, UHCC granted a consent for two further events in 2003 and 2004.

The proposed events concern GWRC both as a landowner and as the manager of the Hutt River corridor.

4. GWRC issues

Damage

As landowner, GWRC needs to consider the risk of damage to its assets, namely the flood protection scheme.

The use of motorcycles on the grass berms is actively discouraged because of the damage they can cause. While motorcycles are permitted on metalled tracks in open areas, many visit the river area for 'wheelies', doing considerable damage. The concern was that the event might send the wrong message in this regard. To counter this, the organisers of the event were required to publicise the 'rules' for riding a motorcycle on river areas.

The conditions imposed on the first event proved adequate to protect Flood Protection assets. There was no damage to the stopbank beside the course. There was some surface damage to grassed berm areas, but this was eventually repaired following the event. The club is also required to post a bond against inadequate reinstatement.

Hutt River environmental strategy

The proposal raises some concerns because of its conflict with the environmental strategy in regard to management of the river corridor.

The proposed activity does not sit well with the policies set out in the 'Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan'. Policy 40 on page 136 emphasises passive recreation and the active discouragement of incompatible uses. The 'Hutt River Environmental Strategy' also discourages motor cycles. Page 49 outlines some issues in regard to vehicles. Page 131 sets control of motor vehicles as a high priority.

Flood Protection staff receive regular complaints about motorcycles from other users of the Hutt River berms. To counter this there is an ongoing programme of encouraging passive recreation by installing vehicle barriers and providing road end carparks. Regular patrols by the new River Ranger also discourage misuse.

5. Conclusion

As landowner, sufficient conditions are in the consent to safeguard Flood Protection assets. No noticeable increase in motorcycle use or an increase in berm damage was noted following the event in 2001. Regular patrols by the new River Ranger will also discourage improper use.

The conflict with stated policies is a more difficult issue, but it could be argued that those policies were aimed at individual users and not an organised club event which is well supervised, confined to a distinct site and will only be held once per year. The event itself also serves as a way of publicising Council's motorcycle policy to the correct audience. The majority of adverse affects occurs on the day of the event, and are well covered by the conditions of consent.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **receive** the report.
2. **note** the contents of the report.
3. **grant** approval to the Kapi-Mana Motorcycle Club to hold motorcross events on Moonshine Park in 2003 and 2004 in accordance with the conditions of the resource consent granted by Upper Hutt City Council on 3 December 2002.
4. **agree** that any future requests to Greater Wellington – The Regional Council to hold motorcross events at Moonshine Park after 2004 will be subject to an assessment of environmental effects resulting from the two previous events.

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Steve Murphy
Operations Support Engineer

Geoff Dick
Manager, Flood Protection

Rob Forlong
Divisional Manager, Landcare