



Report **05.464**
Date 9 September 2005
File E/06/16/03

Committee **Landcare**
Author **Geoff Dick and Murray Waititi**

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress of the Landcare Division since the Committee's last meeting.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Managers' reports

The Departmental Managers reports are attached.

4. Comment

At this meeting, we are currently without a Divisional Manager for the Landcare Division.

Tina Walker, who has been acting in the role for the last couple of months, is about to re-embark on a career of contracting accounting services to the open market. Tina's contribution to the Landcare Division has been immense over the three years she has been with us. As a member of Landcare's management team, she has been a key figure in running Landcare's operation, making sure that every dollar is accounted for and that we complied with all the requirements of the Audit Office. Tina has also helped keep the managers sane. She will be greatly missed on Level 9.

In the absence of a Divisional Manager, this month's Divisional Manager's report is relatively brief. We have addressed all the current "goings on" in our respective departmental reports, and have used this report to focus on the questions that were asked by Councillors at the last Committee meeting.

5. Questions from last Committee meeting

5.1 Synergies between health providers and the Parks and Forests network

Councillor Aitken asked if Parks & Forests would contact the Capital and Coast District Health Board (CCDBH) to see whether there were some ways that our two organisations could work together on initiatives for the benefit of the public. Murray Waititi has contacted the CCDHB and meetings are being organised with chairs of the relevant CCDHB committees. Murray will report back at a later date regarding how this is progressing.

5.2 Parks and Forests management planning update

The Queen Elizabeth Park management plan is currently in the final drafting stage. Submissions for the draft plan closed on 31 July 2005 and Councillors will be receiving an analysis of these submissions at the Policy and Finance Committee meeting on 18 October. Hearings are planned for early November and Council may consider final changes to the draft at the 15 December Policy and Finance Committee.

Submissions on the East Harbour Regional Park management plan closed 30 June 2005. Trecia Smith, who was running the East Harbour management planning process resigned from the Council in early July and has not been replaced as yet. It is envisaged that the analysis of submissions will be completed in September and an October workshop will be held to discuss any issues that need to be dealt with in the plan. A draft plan will then be prepared for Council consideration in early 2006.

Advertisements calling for submissions on the draft Belmont Regional Park management plan will be placed in newspapers in early November, so that the closing date will fall at the end of January, rather than Christmas time. It is envisaged that this plan will be completed by the end of 2006.

The management planning process for Battle Hill Farm Forest Park (the final park management plan) will begin in February 2006 and is programmed for completion in March 2007. Management plans for Kaitoke Regional Park and the Regional Forest Lands have been completed.

Given the proposed growth in the network, management plans will also need to be developed for Whitireia Park, Wairarapa Wetlands and potentially Whareroa Farm.

A copy of the new timetable, including the effect of proposed land acquisitions was distributed to you in the September 9 Councillors bulletin.

5.3 Council input into the Proposed Western Link Road Proposal

The Grenada – Petone link road is part of the western corridor plan. GWRC will be making a submission to the proposal and a workshop has been scheduled for 13 October to allow Councillors to discuss the Council's submission and allow an opportunity for input from all Councillors.

5.4 Waimakariri River Park

Councillor Turver asked whether or not the "River Park" concept that Environment Canterbury have adopted for the Waimakariri River, can be translated into the operation of GWRC's river management systems. In a nutshell, from a recreation perspective, the river park concept is similar to that adopted along the Hutt River and encompasses many of the same issues. However, if there is a primary objective for the river i.e. flood protection or water reticulation, the responsible authority has to give a lot of consideration to whether or not a "River Park" branding of the river will create an expectation that recreational activities will take priority and detract from the primary objective.

5.5 Parks & Forests calendars

It will cost around \$4,000 + GST to print 500 copies of an A3 full colour wire bound calendar. This excludes design charges.

A calendar is an excellent option when one's target market represents a core of repeat customers whose loyalty is important, and who appreciate token gifts such as this. It may also help to promote the organisation to others who incidentally see it on display. While we could produce a calendar for our care group members, we may be "preaching to the converted" who already treasure the landscapes of our parks and forests.

Calendars in themselves aren't a good marketable commodity to the general public because they are so prolific. We suggest aiming for the larger market of residents and visitors to the region who may not be aware of what lies out there waiting for them. Visual media such as posters, billboards, press advertisements and film would all help promote the diverse settings of our parks and forests in a more effective manner.

5.6 Volunteers

Councillors were keen to hear more about corporate and volunteer activities, what GWRC does to encourage this, and whether there was an opportunity of GWRC offering an awards programme. I have spoken to the various departments within GWRC who deal with volunteers, and we will jointly present information on this topic at an upcoming Environment Committee meeting.

5.7 Otaki River walkway

Mr Gilbert raised the issue of whether the current walkway on the north bank of the Otaki River is at an acceptable and safe standard where it passes the Winstone Aggregates gravel plant.

In response to the enquiry, and as a check on the Flood Protection Department assessment, Chris Wootten, Belmont Ranger from Parks & Forests was asked to have a look at the track. Chris has now inspected the track and in his view it is safe and acceptable for public use. Winstone Aggregates is also planning to

shift their plant upstream of the railway line within 12 – 18 months which will substantially improve the river environment at this location.

A paper on progress with implementation of the Otaki River environmental strategy, and discussing the various users who have an interest in the river is proposed for the November Landcare Committee meeting.

6. New land management

6.1 Farm purchases

There has been considerable development regarding the possible purchase of the Waitangirua Farm block since the last meeting. As Council is aware, the Crown has agreed to pay a half-share of the purchase of the Block within Belmont Regional Park from Landcorp Farming Ltd with GWRC and Porirua City Council funding the other half. However, in addition to this, they have also agreed to an outright purchase of Whareroa Farm. There is still a lot of detail that needs to be worked through with both of these purchases, but I intend to report on both of these matters to the Council at its meeting on 18 October.

6.2 Whitireia Park

Ngati Toa have advised the Department of Conservation (DoC) and the Whitireia Park Board that they are comfortable that the transfer of the management and control of the park be transferred to Greater Wellington. The next step is to confirm the support of the Raukawa Trustees and then to go through a process of cancelling the management of the park by the Whitireia Trust Board and vesting it in the Regional Council. I will keep you posted as this evolves.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: Departmental reports