

Utilities Group Quarterly and Year End Review

Parks

30 June 2011

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General Manager

Parks Executive summary

1.1 The year in review

- Parks Network Plan was completed and approved by Council following public consultation.
- The Baring Head block purchase was officially opened to the public in February 2011 and now forms part of the East Harbour Regional Park.
- Greater Wellington took over operational control of Whitireia Park in March 2011 and six new Park Board members were appointed in May - three representing Greater Wellington and three representing Ngati Toa Rangitira.
- All parks assets have been recorded in the SAP system with a GIS reference.
- The Parks Activity Plan has been completed.
- The awareness survey records that 59% of the region's population visited at least one park during the year. This is up from 53% in the previous year, but Whitireia Park was included for the first time.
- A number of events were run during the year including the Great Outdoors Summer Events programme and buggy walks.
- Various planting days were held with assistance from Friends groups and the community. Ten thousand 'plants' were planted during one day at Queen Elizabeth Park.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) documents were signed with the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park and the Friends of Baring Head. A MoU is being developed with the Akatarawa Recreational Access Committee.

1.2 Financial

Regional Parks	Budget \$000	Actual \$000
Income	6,260	6,232
Expenditure	6,385	6,475

Parks

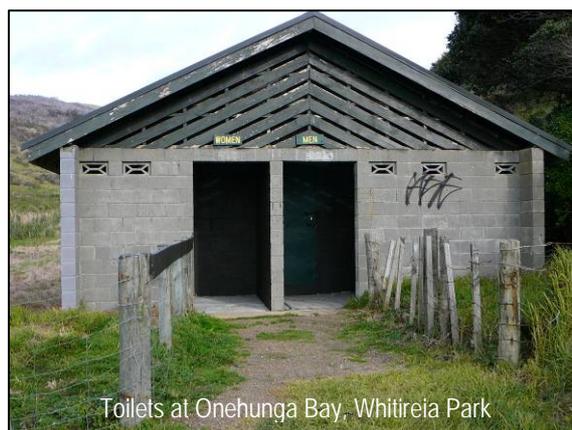
Managers' commentaries

Parks service levels

The Parks Activity Management Plan for the Parks and the Marketing and Design Departments is now complete. This document defines the generic service levels that we have adopted across the Parks. Now that this is complete, current service levels for each specific Park are being pulled together, and prioritised. This exercise will be completed by September 2011 for the LTP process.

Asset management

A work programme for Whitireia Park for the upcoming year needs to be developed for discussion with the Park Board. Greater Wellington started providing a service for this park on 1 March 2011. Officers are currently assessing the state of the existing assets at the Park and recording that data in SAP and GIS. While the park does not have many assets, the main asset, the road is in a poor condition. A proper management programme will ensure that the roads and carparks are properly maintained. The toilet block is also in need of attention. Some remedial work is to be undertaken on the facility to make it more user-friendly. In the longer term, it is likely to be replaced.



After the Whitireia assets stock take is completed, all park assets will be recorded in our SAP and GIS systems. We will then look to undertake a full revaluation of park assets.

Roading report

Carpark Services have assessed our roading network and designed a system to classify our roads, the maintenance standards for the various classifications, and an estimate of the costs for maintaining them. Ranger staff are currently applying the classifications to the roading assets held in our Plant Maintenance system. Once that is completed, the Asset Management team will be able to map the roading types into GIS, and apply the standard maintenance costing rates to calculate an annual maintenance cost for our network.

Building maintenance

Opus have been engaged to inspect all of our facility buildings (toilets, ranger offices, etc). Once the inspection has been undertaken, a comprehensive 10 year maintenance programme for our buildings will be developed.

Ranging services

With Whitireia Park becoming part of the network, we have reduced our ranger service in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Catchment in order to provide a ranging resource to Whitireia. However, with the acquisition of Baring Head, a review will be undertaken on how Parks can most effectively use our ranging staff across our network of Parks.



Park ranger rosters

There were a few issues arising from recent conversations with rangers regarding their rosters. The two notable ones being the requirements to work three out of four weekends, and the number of days that should be worked consecutively without a break. These issues will be dealt with quickly as they are important to the rangers.

Principal ranger recruitment

Bronek Kazmierow has been appointed to the newly formed Principal Ranger Assets position. The asset management programme and maintenance crews are now under his control. We were not able to fill the vacant Eastern and Western Principal Ranger positions and these jobs have been re-advertised.

At year end, Parks has four staff vacancies - Principal Rangers (2) and work gang staff (2).

Towing heavy loads

We have had a number of mechanical problems with the vehicles. The vehicles in our current fleet have a 2.5 tonne towing capacity and are often used to tow some heavy loads (e.g. diggers, metal and power barrows). The NZTA guidelines for safe towing state that a vehicle must be able to stop within 7m at a speed of 30kmph. After testing the braking capability of our vehicles under normal carrying loads, we consider that our current fleet is not suitable or safe for towing these loads. We are looking to replace the Ranger Teams utilities with another type of vehicle more suited to towing heavy loads.

Maintenance jobs

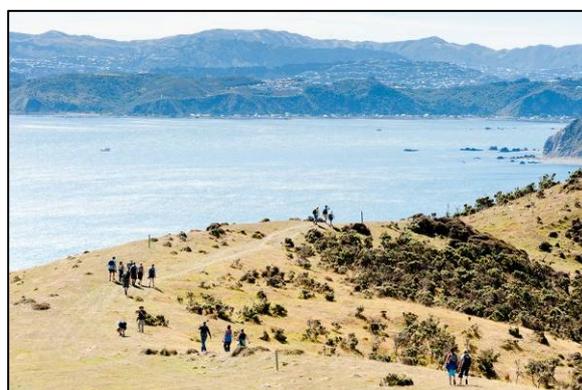
The maintenance status at 30 June 2011 is:

Quarter end: June 2011	Created	Closed	Open
Planned	143	141	2
Unplanned	46	46	0
Breakdown	17	17	0
Capex	0	0	0

Year end: June 2011	Created	Closed	Open
Planned	706	704	2
Unplanned	560	560	0
Breakdown	41	41	0
Capex	6	6	0

Promotions/publications

The *East Harbour Regional Park* brochure was updated during the period. With Baring Head now part of the park, the brochure has become 33% larger and now features new maps of the three areas showing landforms and vegetation cover along with new text and photos. The updated information is also available on our website.



Further work was done on a *Filming in Regional Parks* brochure. However, final details will be clarified in the first quarter of the new financial year.

This brochure will be available from our website although there may be a very small print run to start with.

The opportunity to furnish our regional parks information for a parks-specific iphone application (app) became available during the quarter. Named *MyParx*, the app is being developed by an Australian company and is due to be launched in September. We will supply photos, text and compatible maps for our five regional parks, and for no cost, the company will make them available for the public to download for free onto their iphones. The revenue opportunity for this company is the potential for selling its (G-rated) games to iphone users as part of the package.

It is also possible for park agencies to develop tours for their parks that they may charge users for, or make available for free. However, this does entail a licence fee commitment. We have decided not to take up this option now but possibly do so later when smartphones become more widely used by park visitors

Research

Results of the Parks Community Usage & Awareness survey were received during the period. This year saw the highest ever figure achieved for parks visitation since surveying began in 2005. A total 59% of the region's population visited at least one regional park in the previous 12 months, up from 53% last year. The result was boosted by Whitireia and Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Parks being included for the first time, but even with the effect of those parks being removed we achieved 57%. This equals the visitation reached in 2007/08 when we experienced excellent summer weather.

Other measures were also very positive. Parks awareness remains high (81%), while there has been a slight improvement in overall satisfaction levels (94%). Following the purchase of Baring Head, the percentage of people expressing that they were "very satisfied" with East Harbour Regional Park has almost doubled (to 73%). Wairarapa Moana Wetlands is the park with the highest level of *new trialists*, with almost one-in-three visitors experiencing the park for the first time.

While results are very favourable regarding park facilities and information, there are various recommendations regarding the latter and the way we could improve our offering to regional residents

Events

Buggy walks continue to be popular with the May event at Whitby lakes attracting 190 parents and babies. We are now looking for some new routes which offer suitable parking for up to 60 cars, ideally a loop walk of 45 minutes, access to toilets, off-road and of a suitable gradient - all easier said than done in the Wellington region!

Buggy walks have been a successful joint venture with Sport Wellington (SW) for several years now. We have recently finalised a Memorandum of Agreement which formalises our relationship and clarifies roles and responsibilities.

Arbor Day celebrations this year went very well. Over 280 students, teachers and parents from three local schools attended the Queen Elizabeth Park Arbor Day planting in nice sunny weather. The Arbor Day planting site continues to build on the 10,000 trees planting area south-west of the remnant bush.

The Battle Hill Arbor Day involved 100 students from Paekakariki and Holy Family schools who planted at a new area next to the Horokiri stream.



With the Rugby World Cup expected to dominate the events scene over the next three months, we may experience some increase in visitation. To support the regional programme, we are offering a free ranger-guided walk at Kaitoke Regional Park two days before each pool and quarter final match. These will be promoted via the Upper Hutt RWC office, at the temporary campervan park at Trentham Racecourse and other locations around the region.

The Events Advisor has provided guidance to Biodiversity in planning the Robin release event at the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area.

Concessions

The new concessions database (which features the online application form) is working well with no apparent issues from the public.

In addition to the steady stream of enquiries, we have recently had two from small tour companies with activities to be centred on different regional parks. One company has signed their contract and will shortly be able to begin tours, with another yet to confirm details. Both companies are setting themselves up to take advantage of increased visitor activity expected during the Rugby World Cup.

It has been pleasing to see an increase in revenue for the parks from concessions. This is a combination of having a nominated person to take ownership of the role along with the online database to help keep track of invoices and payments as they relate to individual concessions.

Communications

Following the discovery of Canadian pondweed at Lake Kohangatera, we liaised with the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust to develop a targeted communication plan that would bring the issue to the public's attention and guide discussions with duck hunters.

Considerable material to publicise planting days has been produced, such as posters and press releases. Noting the success of the "10,000 trees" planting day last year and the tree planting target after the Whitireia fire, we set the public a challenge to plant 19,000 trees at Queen Elizabeth Park this season.

Many of the parks Friends were among the 25 people to the following planting day, and really appreciated all the publicity. Even better, another participant was an IBM staff member who subsequently brought along 25 workmates to do more work at a corporate event on the same site.

Community engagement

During the quarter, members of all the parks Friends groups were interviewed as part of the Volunteers Review project. Several of these people also took part in a workshop that also involved GW staff. A range of views was heard, and some very useful feedback obtained. The report is being finalised at present, with the final version expected early in July.

Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park

The main achievement of note was the completion and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Greater Wellington and the Friends. This was the first MoU signed with a Parks Friends group and both parties were very happy with the outcome. Besides laying out the roles and responsibilities of each party, the MoU identifies planning timeframes so that GW and the Friends will work together earlier than we have in the past so the community will be more effectively involved in protecting and enhancing the park values. The photo shows John Lancashire and Cr Nigel Wilson signing the documents.



Friends of Belmont Regional Park

A project to fence and retire a small area of Belmont Regional Park near the Hill Road entrance will now go ahead. Funding for the fencing has come from a \$5,000 grant, cash reserves from the Friends and related supplies from GW, while some plants have bought by the Honda Tree Fund.

Friends of Maara Roa

There have been numerous discussions regarding recreational access into Belmont Regional Park from Cannons Creek, mostly centred on a Porirua City Council proposal for a 4WD track across Cannons Creek. This idea has since been discarded, and it is likely that GW will support a PCC-led recreation planning project in the area from early 2012. In the meantime, the restoration plan is being written up and should be completed during the next quarter.

The Friends continue to hold planting mornings every fortnight. On 25 June, a Honda Tree planting event was attended by 20 people and with holes pre-drilled by volunteers over 1,000 plants went in the ground. This was an excellent effort considering the difficult terrain and foul weather experienced on the day.

Friends of Baring Head

The major achievement this quarter was completion and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends. Similar to that signed with the Friends of QEP, this MoU is of added value in that it has laid out how we will work together very early in our relationship. The photo to the right shows Cr Nigel Wilson and Joy Baird (seated) and Cr Sandra Greig and Colin Ryder (standing).



Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee (ARAC)

Officers have continued to meet with ARAC members over the period with the meetings chaired by the Manager, Parks. This arrangement has worked very well. As the relationship has evolved over a long time and remains quite challenging, we expect that it will take some time to build it up and work through issues over the next year or so.

Much of the meeting time has centred on developing a draft MoU to articulate roles and expectations of each party. A substantial piece of work remains the Track Protocol and some criteria for monitoring impacts of motorised recreation on the forest. As this is a specialist area of knowledge it is likely that we will need some external assistance to make much progress in relation to it.

A project outline and planting plan were developed for the Whakatikei Wetland, and discussed with ARAC at the most recent meeting. All the members are very supportive of the proposal, and we expect a good turnout at the planting day in September.

Landscape/environment

The main theme of work over the period has been the adaption or presentation of GIS-derived geographic information such as air photos, topography, vegetation or park assets to show landforms, vegetation character, and human use. Numerous maps have been produced to meet a range of requirements from Marketing & Design, Parks, Corporate Planning and Biodiversity. These have covered such matters as the pondweed at Lake Kohangatera, the Rocky Hills purchase discussions, Belmont Regional Park grazing leases and park boundary clarification, an analysis of the Baring Head visual sensitivity and background material for the QEP Heritage study.

The landscape architect has been the main liaison point between Biodiversity and Water Supply on mitigation of the Macaskill Lake buttressing works on the two adjacent bush remnants at Te Marua. As a result of these discussions, people were able to come up with timely solutions to the impacts and only three native trees needed to be felled. The trees were subsequently donated to local iwi.

Comment has also been provided to Water Supply on the landscape concept for the proposed Lake 3 development.

New Zealand cycleway – Nga Haerenga

The concept has continued to gain support as part of various informal meetings with potential partners. The next step is to formally present it to relevant councils and iwi and gain their support to take the project to the general public. A meeting is to be held with iwi representatives in mid-July, to familiarise them with a route, consider the potential for a Maori name and other issues that may arise. A presentation to Hutt City Council is planned for 17 July, and one to a GW Council workshop on 7 September.

Parks' statement of financial performance

Last Year YTD Actual \$000	Regional Parks Income Statement Year ended 30 June 2011	Full Year Actual \$000	Full Year Budget \$000	Full Year Variance \$000
5,510	Rates & Levies	5,347	5,347	-
900	Government Grants & Subsidies	-	-	-
516	External Revenue	487	438	49
200	Investment Revenue	-	-	-
548	Internal Revenue	398	475	(77)
7,674	TOTAL INCOME	6,232	6,260	(28)
	<i>less:</i>			
2,096	Personnel Costs	2,118	2,189	71
771	Materials,Supplies & Services	769	710	(59)
130	Travel & Transport Costs	157	114	(43)
1,067	Contractor & Consultants	1,000	1,346	346
-	Grants and Subsidies Expenditure	-	-	-
1,093	Internal Charges	1,079	969	(110)
5,157	Total Direct Expenditure	5,123	5,328	205
232	Financial Costs	233	202	(31)
15	Bad Debts	-	-	-
568	Corporate & Department Overheads	491	491	-
764	Depreciation	638	702	64
(54)	Loss(Gain) on Sale of Assets / Investments	(10)	(49)	(39)
6,682	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	6,475	6,674	199
992	OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(243)	(414)	171
Last Year YTD Actual \$000	Regional Parks Funding Statement Year ended 30 June 2011	Full Year Actual \$000	Full Year Budget \$000	Full Year Variance \$000
992	Operating Surplus(Deficit)	(243)	(414)	171
764	Add Back Depreciation	638	702	(64)
(254)	Other Non Cash	(10)	(49)	39
1,502	Cash Operating Surplus from Operations	385	239	146
	<i>less:</i>			
2,234	Net Asset Acquisitions	176	367	191
-	Net External Investment Movements	-	-	-
2,234	Net Asset & Investment expenditure	176	367	191
(732)	NET OPERATING CASHFLOW BEFORE FUNDING REPAYMENTS	209	(128)	337
270	Repaid Debt	283	279	4
(64)	Net Reserves (Increase) / decrease	(97)	160	(257)
(1,066)	NET FUNDING BEFORE DEBT ADDITIONS	(171)	(247)	76
988	Internal Debt Additions	163	247	(84)
200	External Debt Additions	-	-	-
1,188	Net Debt Increase / (decrease)	163	247	(84)
122	NET FUNDING SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(8)	-	(8)

Financial performance

Overall, the Parks operating deficit came in at \$243,000 (a favourable variance of \$171,000), with the total spend \$199,000 less than budget.

The major variances are attributable to:

- Whitireia Park: The planned ranging and asset maintenance service did not commence until 1 March 2011 (\$62,000 underspent).
- The Wainuiomata/Orongorongo 1080 possum control operation has been deferred to 2011/12 because of low pre-operation possum number (RTC's). An amount of \$145,000 has been re-budgeted to 2011/12
- Baring Head: The unbudgeted work programme approved for Parks resulted in additional costs of \$76,000.

Capital works programme

- \$34,000 of fencing works at Waitangirua farm, Belmont had not been completed during the year because of staff turnover. Works will be completed in 2011/12
- Boardwalk replacements in the Northern Block, East Harbour Regional Park were not required to be done this year \$25,000 F

Plant and equipment replacement

Three 4WD vehicles that we planned to replace this year have been deferred because those vehicles are yet to travel 100,000kms to justify replacement. Some \$75,000 has been carried over to 2011/12.

Explanation of major variances

Contractors and consultants (\$346,000 favourable)

Most of the under-spend has been caused from a delay in taking over management services at the Whitireia Park until March, the Wairarapa Moana work at a lower than expected level, and postponing the 1080 drop in the Wainuiomata area. Some of this saving has been offset by the opening of the new park at Baring Head and attendant costs.

Parks and forests

LONG-TERM targets by June 2019	Actual
Visits will exceed 1.5 million per annum.	An estimated 766,545 visits were made to the regional parks in 2010/11, compared to 800,544 in 2009/10.
65% of the regional residents aged 16+ will have visited a regional park or forest at least once in the past 12 months.	59% of the regional population visited a park or forest at least once in the last 12 months, compared to 53% in 2009/10.
90% of visitors will be satisfied with their most recent park experience.	94% of visitors were satisfied with the park they had last visited as a place to carry out their respective activities, compared to 93% in 2009/10.
More than 14,000 people will participate in the Regional Outdoors Programme.	A total 10,918 people participated in the Great Outdoors Summer Events programme, compared to 12,236 in 2009/10. Several of the events were affected by poor weather.
The health of ecosystems in the parks and forest areas will show a continual improvement.	In 2010/11 the Environmental Action and Monitoring Programme was implemented as planned.
There will be no loss of regionally significant landscapes and heritage features.	There has been no loss of regionally significant landscapes and heritage features of the regional parks. Following our purchase of Baring Head in June 2010, we are in the process of protecting this significant landscape as a Scenic Reserve.
Facilities will be developed and maintained according to asset-management plans that have been approved by the Council.	The Asset Management programme has been implemented annually as planned. The condition of Park assets remain better than average however not as high as it was 5 years ago due to the acquisition of new parks.

Activity: Recreational, facilities and services

SHORT-TERM targets by 30 June 2010	Actual
Park and forest assets will be maintained in accordance with the relevant asset-management plans and reported to the satisfaction of the Council, within a budget of \$1,774,000	The annual Asset Management programme has been implemented as planned. Some unplanned maintenance was undertaken during the year on newly acquired Park lands. Actual costs were \$1,525,000
Ranger services will be provided for seven days per week in four parks and for five days per week in the remaining parks and forest areas (excluding Whitireia Park and Lake Wairarapa). This will amount to 7,000 hours of ranger time, within a budget of \$818,000	Park Rangers spent 9,000 hours undertaking compliance, security and community engagement during the year. When we took over the day-to-day management Whitireia Park the ranging service in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area was reduced from 7 days to 5 days per week. Actual costs were \$745,000

Unforecast activity:

Following the purchase of land at Baring Head for inclusion into East Harbour Regional Park in June 2010, unplanned asset inspections, minor construction works and maintenance was needed to facilitate access and ensure the area was safe for the public to visit.

Activity: Parks network planning

SHORT-TERM targets by 30 June 2010	Actual
A new approach to the structure of park management plans will be developed and approved by the Council, within a budget of \$306,000	The Parks Network Plan, which provides an integrated management plan for all regional parks and forests managed by Council, was approved by Council in December 2010. Actual costs were \$238,000
Governance arrangements for Lake Wairarapa (including Lake Onoke) will be confirmed, within a budget of \$176,000	A governance model for Wairarapa Moana Wetlands was implemented and pest management work was done. Actual costs were \$120,000
Governance arrangements for Whitireia Park will be confirmed and a partial park service introduced, within a budget of \$120,000	Council agreed to manage Whitireia Park in partnership with Ngati Toa Rangatira during the year, and implemented a day-to-day Park Ranger service. Actual costs were \$82,000. The Park service did not start until 1 March 2011.

Unforecast activity:

Following the purchase of land at Baring Head for inclusion into East Harbour Regional Park in June 2010, additional work has been required to begin the preparation of a management plan. This has included research on biodiversity, heritage, tourism and recreation. This work was completed within existing budgets.

Activity: Environmental protection and enhancement

SHORT-TERM targets by 30 June 2010	Actual
Compliance with the Environmental Asset Management Plan – pest plant control will be achieved, within a budget of \$1,041,000	<p>All actions in the Parks Environmental Asset Management Plan for 2010/11 were achieved this year with the exception of the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area 1080 possum control operation. This operation was again postponed as possum numbers in the area were not at high enough levels to justify completing the work.</p> <p>Actual costs were \$783,000 and \$148,000 has been carried over to 2011/12 for the possum control work.</p>
A report on the health of the ecosystems of park and forest areas, using the monitoring results, will establish a baseline for further reporting, within a budget of \$43,000	<p>Due to other work commitments associated with the formation of a Biodiversity Department, the report was not completed but will be undertaken in 2011/12.</p> <p>Actual costs were \$34,000</p>

Activity: Marketing and community relations

SHORT-TERM targets by 30 June 2011	Actual
<p>A marketing plan will be implemented such that 85% of residents will be able to freely recall a regional park or forest and 59% of residents will have visited one regional park in the previous 12 months</p> <p>The regional outdoors programme (<i>Great Outdoors</i>) will be delivered and at least 4,900 people will attend the events led by Greater Wellington</p> <p>within a budget of \$226,000</p>	<p>The marketing plan was implemented such that 81% of residents recalled at least one regional park or forest and 59% of residents visited at least one park in the last 12 months.</p> <p>The Great Outdoors Programme was delivered and attracted 3,848 participants. Five events were cancelled (4 due to poor weather) and participation in Bike the Trail was significantly affected by poor weather.</p> <p>Actual costs were \$213,000</p>
<p>Eight "Friends of the Park" groups will have been actively involved in parks planning and management, within a budget of \$19,000</p>	<p>Ten "Friends of the Park" groups are actively involved in parks planning and management.</p> <p>"Friends of Baring Head" formed in 2010/11 and a Memorandum of Understanding with them was agreed in June 2011.</p> <p>The Friends of Onehunga Bay have expanded their scope to include the whole of Whitireia Park, managed by Greater Wellington since 1 March 2011.</p> <p>The Belmont Area Mountain Bike Association became increasingly active in Belmont Regional Park, with a strong focus on track maintenance.</p> <p>Actual costs were \$29,000, due to the increased number of "Friends of the Park" groups</p>
<p>There will have been a 10% increase over the baseline measure in on-park volunteer hours</p>	<p>On-park volunteer hours were 6,167 hours and increase of 35% on the 4,573 hours recorded in 2009/10.</p>