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Report to the Landcare Committee
from Derek Wilshere, Consultant, Landcare

Friends of the River Groups : Otaki and Waikanae

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Present the terms of reference for the Friends of the Otaki River and the Friends of the Waikanae River to the Landcare Committee.
- Seek Committee endorsement of the Memoranda of Understanding establishing the relationship between the Friends of the River groups and the Flood Protection Group of the Landcare Division, Wellington Regional Council.
- Appoint a representative of the Wellington Regional Council to the Otaki and Waikanae Friends' groups.

2. Background

The establishment of Friends of the River groups is proposed in Section 7.4 of each of the Waikanae and Otaki Floodplain Management Plans. The stated intention is to ensure a future role for the communities in monitoring the achievement of the plans. In line with this the Kapiti Floodplain Management Committee, at its meeting on 6 May 1998, recommended the formation of Friends of the River groups.

A condition on the long term resource consents for operations and maintenance programmes in each river also requires the formal involvement of such groups in the monitoring of the annual programmes.

The public, regional councillors, and members of the various agencies and groups involved in the Otaki and Waikanae consultation processes for the plans were invited to attend meetings in March 1999, to establish the Friends. Attendees considered Draft Terms of Reference, which were amended and tabled at annual meetings in May 1999.

Interim committees were formed. Each committee established working groups to further develop Terms of Reference that would reflect the unique requirements of each group. The committees have met several times to review and agree their Terms of Reference and to attend to other business of interest to them.

3. **The Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference are the Friends' documents and properly reflect their aspirations for the rivers and their environments. These aspirations are wide-ranging, comprehensive and ambitious; beyond the scope needed to satisfy input to Flood Protection interests and activities.

The groups have agreed their Terms of Reference at meetings in December 1999 (Otaki) and February 2000 (Waikanae). The development of the Terms of Reference was a thorough process and the attached documents (**Attachment 1**) have been agreed unanimously. The differences between these reflect the two rivers and the aspirations of their communities. The Otaki River is relatively "wild" and the floodplain has a significant rural component, whereas the Waikanae River has more of an urban landscape.

Each group provides for Regional Council representation on its committee. It is suggested that this should be either the councillor representing Kapiti or the appointee to the Landcare Committee representing Kapiti.

4. **The Memoranda of Understanding**

As noted above, the Terms of Reference reflect the wider aspirations of the Friends in relation to the respective river and its environs. There is, however, a need for a specific relationship between the Friends and the Flood Protection Group.

To reflect this, the interim committees have agreed to develop Memoranda of Understanding to establish their specific relationship with the Wellington Regional Council and the Flood Protection Group. These memoranda are appended as **Attachment 2**.

5. **The Future**

The groups will operate under their Terms of Reference and, as a first step, the community will be invited to annual meetings to establish their committees.

Each group will each hold an annual meeting, two committee meetings and a walkover every year. The initial cost to the Flood Protection Group of servicing the Friends is estimated to be \$6,500 per year. The input from the Regional Council will be reviewed when the groups become more established.

6. Community Connection

These groups will provide a very valuable conduit between the activities of the Wellington Regional Council and the Otaki and Waikanae committees.

Every opportunity will be taken to involve the groups in other non specified council activities, projects and initiatives such as resource consent reporting, Arbor Day, riparian planting, care groups, and other Environment Division programmes.

A press release will announce the formalisation of the Friends and advise the first annual meetings.

7. Recommendations

That the Landcare Committee:

- (1) *Receive the report and note the contents.*
- (2) *Endorse the Memoranda of Understanding between the Wellington Regional Council's Flood Protection Group and the Otaki and Waikanae Friends of the River groups.*
- (3) *Appoint a representative to each of the Otaki and Waikanae Friends of the River committees.*

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1 : Terms of Reference for Otaki and Waikanae Friends of the River Groups

Attachment 2 : Memoranda of Understanding for Otaki and Waikanae Friends of the River Groups