

## **Report 00.401**

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Report to the Landcare Committee  
from Geoff Cameron, Manager, Natural Forestry

### **Forest Ecosystem Monitoring : An Update**

#### **1. Purpose**

To advise the Committee of the successful conclusion to Landcare's role in a project on indigenous forest monitoring, and the publication of a booklet on the subject to be tabled at the meeting.

#### **2. Previous Work Reported**

Report 99.667 detailed the history of forest ecosystem monitoring in Regional Council forests and described our involvement in a Sustainable Management Fund project on the subject. The manager of that project prepared a report on early results from old and new monitoring techniques in Regional Council forests, and that was an attachment to the report.

That report indicated a booklet on monitoring techniques would be published at the end of the project. Also, the techniques would be used to monitor environmental asset condition as part of implementing Landcare's Environmental Asset Plan.

#### **3. What Has Happened Since**

Regional Council Parks and Forest Rangers worked with the project manager (Peter Handford from Forme Consulting Group), to refine some of the original techniques. The Regional Council forest lands were ideal for this, given their botanical variability and different environmental pressures. This development work has now stopped with the completion of the project.

The range of monitoring techniques defined will now be made available nation-wide. A booklet to describe the techniques and the rationale behind them will be published in two volumes to a standard similar to the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust's "Native Forest Restoration Guide". The booklet will be available after 22 June, but we hope to have an advance copy for the Committee.

A paragraph in the Acknowledgements section states:

"The Wellington Regional Council, Natural Forestry Department was the major partner in this project. The on-going support of this organisation - from enthusiasm for the original idea, to the provision of direct support, staff time and field costs for trials is gratefully acknowledged".

#### 4. **Future Uses**

The monitoring techniques will be defined in the levels of service, as part of implementing the *Parks and Forests Environmental Asset Management Plan*.

Also, a number of techniques have been proposed for inclusion in the draft Vegetation Management Plan for water collection areas. These are:

- foliar density - to assess possum impacts on the canopy.
- understorey structure - to assess the impact of all animal pests on the lower parts of the forest structure, including regeneration.
- ground cover - to assess the amount of mineral soil exposed.

It is proposed that a standard monitoring checklist will be used by all Parks and Forests Rangers so a complete and systematic record is kept of special sites, or sites where they perceive a problem is beginning.

#### 5. **An Invitation**

The publication will be launched at a function to be held in the Regional Council's Committee Room at 4.30pm on Thursday, 22 June. There will be a technical seminar beginning at 1.30pm.

Councillors are invited to attend.

#### 6. **Communication**

Landcare staff will work with the Communications section to produce a media release. Because this has been a co-operative effort, Forme Consulting and MfE will be involved as well.

**7. Recommendation**

*That the report be received and its content noted.*

Report prepared by:

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