

## **Report 00.510**

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Report to the Landcare Committee  
from Andrew Annakin, Divisional Manager, Landcare

### **Divisional Manager's Report**

#### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Landcare Committee about activities and matters of interest within the Landcare Division since the last Landcare Committee meeting, 13 June 2000. Departmental activity reports are also attached.

#### **2. Regional Parks Natural Forestry Integration**

The new *Parks and Forests* group slipped quietly into being on 1 July; a formal launch is on 5 July. Vehicles have new logos, and business cards will be reprinted as stocks run out.

The Integration exercise is now almost complete. At the time of writing, one of the Senior Ranger positions has been taken up by Fraser Oliver; most recently a contractor, but well known to the Landcare Division as a past Ranger at Kaitoke Regional Park and for his work as a Catchment Ranger. The second position has been offered to an incumbent Park Ranger. One consequential Ranger vacancy may eventuate. The Landcare Advisor – Environmental Stewardship (Strategy and Marketing) has also been offered to the preferred candidate.

Through the Integration process, Geoff Cameron has decided to seek opportunities outside the Regional Council. Geoff started with the Council as Manager, Forestry in 1993, and has worked in the Landcare Division since its inception in 1995, latterly as the Natural Forestry Manager. Geoff Cameron is nationally recognised for his work developing forests health monitoring standards. Geoff is also the Regional Council's last Principal Rural Fire Officer - a lineage stretching back to 1948! A true gentleman, Geoff's knowledge of the natural forestry estate and his contribution to the Landcare Managers team will be missed. However, Geoff's decision to leave the Regional Council has been a considered one and he goes with my very best wishes. Geoff will remain with the Regional Council through to 29 September 2000.

### 3. **Paul Tryon's New Challenge**

I was very pleased to learn of Paul Tryon's appointment as Manager, Employment Relations. Paul has been the Landcare Divisional Accountant since 1997. He has made a significant contribution to Landcare, the Regional Council (as part of the SAP implementation team) and to the Coast to Coast multi-sport event! For some time now Paul has wanted to try something new. So, I was keen to support his application for a promotion within the Council.

Paul's decision to leave Landcare is a sad one, though hopefully he will still join our regular Ninth Floor get-togethers to discuss the finer points of the English language, social mores, Canterbury rugby, and the general weirdness of life.

I also now have to find a new Divisional Accountant!

### 4. **Forest Lands Workshop, 13 June**

At the conclusion of the last Landcare Committee meeting, Councillors were able to finish the Forest Lands Workshop, started on 23 May. Howard Stone made some useful opening comments on the context of the forest lands review in terms of the imperatives that existed when the Utility Services and Landcare Divisions were established in 1995, and his understanding of changing Council values since then - particularly for environmental management. Councillors then worked through the questions I had prepared for the 23 May workshop.

At the end of the workshop, Howard Stone undertook to develop the issues further. Howard, Dave Benham, John Allard, Councillor McQueen and I have now met to discuss the workshop's conclusions and to map-out a way forward. The meeting was very useful in confirming the principles we will use to develop policy recommendations for the Council to consider, later this year.

### 5. **Out and About**

**Totara Grove, Arbor Day, 10 June:** Bruce Andrell's team did a great job preparing the site. Ross Jackson and Rose Armstrong designed the excellent planting layout and the signage. Angie Gooch superbly organised the sponsorship and Doris held the whole thing together back at the office!

Six year old Laura, from Plateau School, and I planted several trees while we searched out the one marked for the past Chairperson of the Landcare Committee, Ernie Gates, who was unable to attend.

Committee Members might be interested to know exactly *why* the heavy rain held off, just long enough for the planting. Earlier on, Ted Maguire and I parked-up next to each other. Fighting into our gumboots moments later, Ted said, "*well at least it isn't raining*". That very moment, the heavens opened for a savage 10 seconds burst, "*Oh God, no*" wailed Ted. And so it was!

**Site Visit, Belmont Regional Park, 21 June:** This started out as a quiet catch-up with Chris Wootton, the Belmont Regional Park Ranger. The menagerie at the Ranger's house has changed a bit; a collection of orphaned ducks and bantams has been taken over by a goose that thinks it's a sheep and a fat lamb that thinks it's a human. The fur-stripping possum-killing dog that likes to play with the family cat is a worry too!

We visited the area around the Stratton Street park entrance where a difficult, and important, contracted possum operation is underway through the significant remnant bush areas. Next, we inspected the Rahui Reservoir site; the leftover land is scheduled for transfer to the Park.

It was then down to the Cornish Street entrance and a walk up the popular KoroKoro track to see the ageing stands of pine trees further up the valley. Chris has a huge fondness for all animals, except pests! Several mobs of feral goats congregate on the inaccessible upper-slopes and Chris had me "spotting" the big white ones, which he then discreetly dispatched with a high powered rifle. I did my duty in the interests of regional pest eradication, but I couldn't bring myself to point out the nanny goat and kid scampering off into the gorse.

I had an important meeting with Howard Stone that afternoon and could only stay the morning with Chris. When we needed to get back into town, Chris set off down a familiar four-wheel drive access track. Commenting on how there had obviously been some illegal off-road use recently, we suddenly entered a newly created bog with a deep hole and became instantly stuck fast! I had to feel sorry for Chris. There he was, only stuck for the second time in eight years, with the Divisional Manager on board getting increasingly frantic about his appointment with the General Manager! Various jovial taunts from passers-by culminated in two Regional Parks rescue trucks appearing after a distress call to the Upper Hutt office. Chris' reputations as a go anywhere do anything Ranger is now in tatters.

## 6. **Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan (FMP)**

The recent Advisory Committee meeting was another milestone for the Hutt River FMP project. Chairman Macaskill took pride in telling the Advisory Committee of the Regional Council's financial commitment to implementing the Floodplain Management Plans; confirmed that very morning through the final LTFS sign-off.

Debriefing a week later, Brendan Paul and I reflected on the huge distance this project has come since we took hold of it after the 1998 Annual Plan submissions and committed ourselves to achieving the Design Standard for consideration through the LTFS process. Little did we know that less than six months later, the biggest floods of a generation would hit the western rivers.

The contribution made by Brendan Paul, Geoff Dick, Daya Attapatu and their teams, both for the Hutt River FMP exercise and the Flood Damages project, has been outstanding; very rewarding, but also demanding and challenging. There is a lot left to do in the drafting, consulting and publication of the Hutt River FMP. But I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on this milestone and to publicly thank all those involved.

**7. Recommendation**

*That the Divisional and Departmental reports be received and the contents noted.*

ANDREW ANNAKIN  
Divisional Manager, Landcare

**Attachment** : Departmental Reports