



Report 05.377
Date 19 July 2005
File PK/03/05/01

Committee Landcare
Author Murray Waititi Manager, Parks and Forests

Whitireia Park: Annual contribution to park maintenance

1. Purpose

To seek the Landcare Committee's endorsement to make a \$20,000 contribution to the maintenance programme at Whitireia Park in the 2005/06 financial year.

2. Significance of 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. Background

On 1 December 1998, the Whitireia Park Board wrote to the Regional Council Chairman asking that the Council consider taking over the control and management of the park. The letter states that since its establishment in 1978, the Board has struggled with limited funding to maintain the park to the standard it deserves. The Park Board considered that the attributes of the park are similar to those in the Regional Park network and because park users come from around the Region, the Regional Council would be an appropriate Park Manager. The Landcare Committee considered this request in Report 99.482. The relevant resolutions were:

- (i) *Agree that Whitireia Park has regional significance and at some point, in the future the Wellington Regional Council may be the appropriate level of government to manage the park.*
- (ii) *Agree that should the Wellington Regional Council take over Whitireia Park, then it would be appropriate to bring it up to the standards and service levels of the Regional Parks network and that sufficient funding will need to be allocated for this purpose.*

- (iii) *Request Officers to model the cost for consideration through the Long-term Financial Strategy for the year commencing 2000/01.*

The Landcare Committee considered a financial model to take over the management of Whitireia Park as part of the Council's Long-term Financial Strategy. The Council made financial provision to take over the management and control of the park in 2005/06, in *Towards a Greater Wellington – 10-Year Plan 2000/2010*; \$20,000 was also budgeted annually until the Council takes over the management and control.

4. Current status of the transfer of management and control to Greater Wellington

The Department of Conservation and the Whitireia Park Board are currently running a public process to gauge support for the transfer to occur. This involves consultation with Iwi and the local community.

At this point, the proposed transfer is being deliberated by Ngati Toa. Once a level of comfort is received from the Iwi, a public meeting will be facilitated to gauge support from the local community.

5. The maintenance programme

The work programme for the use of the Council's contribution to the maintenance of the park is developed annually with the Department of Conservation

The main priority within Whitireia has been to bring pest animal and plant numbers down. Generally, with lower numbers of pest animals and plants, the Park can be left to regenerate into bush, wetland and coastal habitats. The next priority is to stock-proof sensitive habitats. The work plan has allowed for fencing of the Onepoto Stream, wetland gullies and some escarpment areas.

5.1 The proposed 2005/06 work programme

If the annual contribution was made this year, it would be applied to projects to control the gorse that is getting away on the block and to maintain the main track between Te Onepoto Bay and Onehunga Bay. Given the seasonal nature of these works and to fit into other works already programmed, they need to be done relatively soon to enable them to be done in this financial year. There are sufficient funds in the existing Whitireia Park budget for 2005/06 that can be applied to making the contribution.

If Council declines to grant this request, the work will be put on hold until after Greater Wellington is granted management and control of the park.

6. Communications

No communication opportunities arise as the result of this paper.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- (1) **Receive** the report
- (2) **Approve** a \$20,000 contribution to the annual Whitireia Park maintenance programme for 2005/06
- (3) **Authorise** Officers to develop and implement a work programme for the contribution with the Whitireia Park Board and the Department of Conservation.

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Murray Waititi
Manager, Parks and Forests

Tina Walker
Acting Divisional Manager,
Landcare