

Manager – Marketing and Design

Report for period ending Friday 16 March 2007

1. Manager's comments

1.1 Wellington Region Recreation Initiatives Group (WRRIG)

The group, which now includes representation from Hutt Valley District Health Board as well as Capital Coast DHB and Regional Public Health, has conducted two reviews of the "At the Heart" Physical Activity Strategy to ensure it remains at a high level and considers regional issues. An associated Implementation Plan will provide some direction for individual authorities or those working in partnership who wish to contribute in this area.

As part of its development, "At the Heart" will be submitted for peer review by a committee of representatives from the sport and recreation (including SPARC), local government, and health sectors. At the same time we will be consulting with relevant people in our respective organisations to get their views and how each may contribute to fulfilling its objectives. We intend that once "At the Heart" has been peer reviewed we will submit it to the stakeholder organisations for adoption.

1.2 East Harbour Community Volunteers

Officers have forwarded a proposal to the East Harbour Environmental Association (EHEA) regarding the establishment of a volunteer group to address the issue of weeds alongside up to four tracks into the park.

EHEA has also expressed a wish for quarterly meetings with GW regarding the work programme for the park and how their activities could feed into this. It is likely we will convene a regular meeting to which we invite representatives of all the community groups (MIRO, Eastbourne Forest Rangers, Forest & Bird, Hutt Valley Mountain Bike Club etc.) but we need to finalise arrangements that would suit those concerned.

2. Signs

2.1 Queen Elizabeth Park

As part of securing the 2002 resource consent for the Mackays Crossing realignment work, Transit NZ agreed that geologist Tony Edwards would be permitted to develop interpretation panels describing the local geology and landform near Queen Elizabeth Park. One of these was to be sited on the park with the other two on the other side of the State Highway.

To date this has involved a significant amount of work on the part of Mr Edwards and contractors Fulton Hogan. We have met with Mr Edwards and will be working with him, and an interpretation writer, on the panels to ensure that they are consistent with our interpretation guidelines and add to the visitor experience in the park.

Following a review of the budget we will be painting the facades and refurbishing the signs at the Marines memorial near Mackays Crossing. These have been in place since 1993 and are in need of attention.

2.2 Kaitoke Regional Park

Transit and Upper Hutt City Council have confirmed they are happy for us to move the sign at the southern Te Marua entrance to a new position where it can be better seen by the public entering the park. This will be undertaken as soon as practicable.

2.3 Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

Following Ngati Toa's confirmation of the park's resource information, we are working with a writer on drafts for the battle site and cemetery interpretation panels.

3. Brochures

New holders are now in place in Tawa and Johnsonville libraries and we are investigating other sites, display and re-stocking options for Parks brochure displays.

4. Events

We are liaising with the Paraparaumu Rotary Club and Transit regarding the arrangements for the opening of the new MacKays Crossing SH1 road on 24 March. The event will be based at QEP with attendees walking out to the new road so does involve significant traffic management and organising of the site.

Ross Jackson and Catherine Hunt are helping the Environment Division plan for the Restoration Day to be held on 12 May at the Tauherenikau Racecourse near Featherston.

4.1 Greater Wellington Buggy Walk

These have remained very popular with around 100 people attending the Wainuiomata (weather affected) and Kaitoke events in early February and March. There is one more buggy walk to go at QEP in early April and then the series shifts to the cities for the colder months.

While we will continue to take the lead in this event with Sport Wellington Region, we want to encourage people to set up their own walking groups and organise individual excursions around the region. Ongoing communications via newsletters, email, the website and the press, will highlight the organised events but will also encourage individuals to take action with their own friends and networks.

4.2 Regional Outdoors Programme

We are now well into the second half of the programme with the end in sight and the weather patterns relatively stable. Feedback from many attendees has been excellent - those who attended the Go Bush! Mountain Safety Bushcraft course, run in conjunction with the Mountain Safety Council's team, were particularly enthusiastic.

Established favourites such as the Rimutaka Rail Trail, the second Battle Hill Heli-Tramp, 4WD Sunset and Mt Climie tours and the Lighthouse and Lakes were all fully booked out. New events linking with various volunteer and Friends groups including Over the Tops Open day in Belmont Regional Park and Project Pateke Pest Patrol at Battle Hill were well attended with excellent feedback to build on for next year's programme. Once again these events gave the volunteers plenty of opportunities to raise their profile and interact with the public.

A full report will be presented to the Committee at the May meeting.

5. Parks visitor research

Despite the vagaries of the weather and co-ordinating casual staff, the survey work was completed in Kaitoke, Queen Elizabeth and Battle Hill Parks in mid-March. Results are being collated to present in a separate report to the Committee in May.

6. Upper Hutt Active Recreation Plan (UHARP)

Upper Hutt City Council has received SPARC funding for three officers and a cadet to implement UHARP in conjunction with the community and clubs in the city. Based at the old CIT campus in Trentham, the team is making contact with potential partners and learning about the resources available to the city. This process has included familiarisation visits with the Hutt River Trail, Kaitoke Regional Park and the Akatarawa/Pakuratahi Forest rangers.

7. Mackays Crossing/SH 1 Upgrade

The sealing and hard landscaping around the ranger's office and the barn have been completed. We expect that there will be some budget available from this mitigation fund to go towards the new geological interpretation signs planned for the park.

8. Community Liaison

8.1 Queen Elizabeth Park

The Friends met 19 February and again on 19 March. They have been assisting John Morrison with the barn project, securing a donation of paint and wood stain from Watty Taubmans.

Following Arbor Day last year some of the Friends, along with Simon Kennett, Ross Jackson (GW) and Linda Kirkmeester (KCDC), rode through the park to consider opportunities for commuter and recreational cycle links. While these are still very much at the "envisaging" stage there is potential for developing routes from around Tilley Rd to Raumati South that would cater to cyclists of all ages and abilities. Simon Kennett has since been asked for a cost estimate for a more detailed scoping of the project.

8.2 Hutt River Trail

As the Trail is an important dog exercise area for Hutt City Council (HCC), the Operations group invited the HCC dog control officer along to the meeting on 6 March. This was a productive first step towards greater consultation about the messages conveyed to the city's dog owners regarding the Hutt River Trail.

8.3 Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee (ARAC)

A meeting was held on 26 February and another is scheduled for 26 March. With all consents received and one of the members managing the project, the rebuilding of the Orange Hut is going well. The March meeting will include discussion of a possible "re-opening" event.

8.4 Friends of Belmont Regional Park

Staff attended the Friends meetings on 12 March. Part of this meeting was a review of the publicity for the Over the Tops Open Day as attendance was lower than expected.

8.5 Environmental Awards

We met recently with Environment Division staff to refine the timeline for the Awards and identify elements of a project plan. We will be working towards a target date of 7 November for the ceremony. Applications will close in mid August to allow time for judging and to accommodate the local body elections.

9. Lake Wairarapa

During the period staff have been visiting the lake with DoC as part of preparing broad landscape plans for Lake Domain and Boggy Pond/Matthews Lagoon and Oporua Spillway. These plans will compliment the recreation report and ecological studies due for completion on 20 March.

10. Staff

Our landscape architect, Annabel Riley, will be taking a year's parental leave from mid April. Recruitment is underway for a person to take up a fixed term approximately 30 hour per week contract in her stead.

Amanda Cox
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