

Manager – Marketing and Design

Report for period ending Friday 4 May 2007

1. Manager's comments

Our ongoing work is demonstrating a recurring theme of reaching out to the community and involving volunteers, agencies and businesses in the activities and promotion of the regional park network. This “web” of opportunity and interaction is delivering great variation and interest across the sphere of our work and starting to create a mass of new users and greater appreciation of what is available at the region's back door.

Although it does take time this should lead to a structural shift in our visitation numbers; and it is good to make further progress with our Visitor Monitoring Framework so we can have more confidence in the reported results.

2. Signs

There are numerous opportunities around the parks network for identifying key tree species and adding to visitors' knowledge and enjoyment, and in some cases this has been done. However many of the existing signs are in need of replacement. We have sourced botanical name plates from the Royal Zealand Forest & Bird Society for Kaitoke, Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP) and the Wainuiomata Recreation Area. Opportunities at other sites will be followed up in due course.

2.1 Queen Elizabeth Park

Local interpretation expert and geologist, Les Molloy, is to develop a series of panels based on the work done so far by Tony Edwards in relation to the unique geological features of the MacKays Crossing area. Current commitments mean that this work will likely take place in the new financial year.

The American Marine interpretation panels will be updated and modernised in the next month. Quotes have been obtained for the design of the new panels.

3. Brochures

Eight new revolving brochure display stands have been delivered to six Lower Hutt City Council libraries and I-sites in Levin and Otaki. We are planning to work with Metlink as they put the timetable re-stocking service out for tender in the next month or so, adding our requirements to the tender documents.

4. Events

4.1 Regional Outdoors Programme (ROP)

The last event in the ROP was the Porirua Grand Traverse on Sunday, 1 April. It is estimated that over 10,000 people attended the events, with only one event being cancelled.

During the period we have conducted a full review, including meeting with the rangers to look at what worked, what could be improved on, and ideas for 2008. Volunteers have been formally thanked and asked for their comments about the programme as well.

Dwights Canvas has had a number of people visiting their outlets with discount vouchers received at the various events. Comments about the ROP from these people have been invariably positive.

A full report is to be presented separately outlining the results in more detail.

4.2 Buggy Walks

Around 70 mums, dads, grandparents and children come along to QEP on 5 April to enjoy perfect weather on a round trip from Whareroa Beach to Paekakariki. With coffee again supplied by Café Laffare, goodies by Weight Watchers, and tailored commentary by Park Ranger, Dean Scott, the event was well received by both habitual and new participants.

We have also been working with Sport Wellington and Wellington City Council for Buggy Walk options for the winter months. Walks are planned for the Hutt River Trail (Poets Park) in May, Oriental Parade (Waitangi Park – Cog Park) in June and Karori Cemetery in July.

4.3 Restoration Day

There has been considerable planning and preparation for this event to be held on 12 May at Tauherenikau Racecourse near Featherston. Invitations were completed and sent out in the first week of April to members of care groups around the region. We expect that around 130 people will attend Restoration Day.

4.4 Arbor Day

Planning is underway for Arbor Day celebrations, with plantings to take place on Wednesday, 6 June at QEP, and Friday, 8 June at Battle Hill. At the QEP event, we will also incorporate the 65th anniversary of US Marines coming to Paekakariki for training, rest and recuperation. As in previous years we will be inviting local schools, members of the community and councillors to attend.

4.5 Of Gorse Of Course

The NewDowse is to launch an exhibition of gorse sculptures by Regan Gentry entitled “Of Gorse Of Course” on 2 June. Following an approach from the gallery’s concept developer, we have identified a site and are organising a public planting day on the afternoon of Sunday 17 June at the Wainuiomata Recreation Area. The NewDowse will be promoting the event, organising registrations and providing afternoon tea, while we will be arranging two buses, purchasing plants and organising the logistics of the event which will start and finish at the gallery in Lower Hutt.

5. Parks visitor research

A separate report outlines the result of the survey work carried out at QEP, Kaitoke Regional Park and Battle Hill Farm Forest Park.

Shortly, we will be conducting our annual telephone survey of regional parks’ awareness and usage amongst regional residents (n=500). Once again we will carry this out with the Emergency Management Community Preparedness survey.

6. Wellington Region Recreation Initiatives Group (WRRIG)

The “At the Heart” Regional Physical Activity Strategy is evolving towards a stage that it may be submitted for peer review and for consultation with officers, councillors and board members in the stakeholder organisations. One of the main areas of emphasis is to identify where organisations have common strategic objectives and encourage a collaborative approach as much as possible.

7. Community Liaison

Staff recently met with Derek Wilshere, regarding the review of our GW Friends groups. Derek has been asked to return with a proposal for how he believes this should proceed.

7.1 Friends of QEP

Planning is underway for the winter planting programme. The Friends are providing significant assistance with the restoration work on the barn, and are planning a “barn dance” in September to celebrate the completion of the project.

7.2 Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee (ARAC)

The group met with GW officers on April 23. Progress is steady with the rebuilding of the Orange Hut and it is scheduled for completion by mid-June. A “re-opening” is planned for the first weekend of July.

7.3 Friends of Belmont Regional Park

The monthly meeting was held on 10April. The review of the Park management plan is one of the main points of focus for the group at present.

7.4 Friends of Maara Roa

The Friends are planning their winter planting programme including an Arbor Day planting. They are also planning an open day at the Trees For Survival native tree nursery at Porirua College, on 12 May, to be attended by their Patron Winnie Laban; and Councillor Chris Laidlaw on behalf of GWRC. Ross Jackson has also assisted with planning some work experience in the parks for two French agronomy students here for 10 weeks with the sponsorship of the Friends.

8. Lake Wairarapa

A draft recreation plan has been completed for Lake Wairarapa prior to the lake being vested into a regional park, with comments invited from DOC and GW staff.

The recreation study is a scoping document that looks at existing activities in and around the lake and opportunities for recreation in the future. The report is presented as a series of plans working from the broad scale down to indicative concept plans for key nodes. The study was conducted in tandem with an ecological restoration study and botanical survey of the lake.

9. Whareroa Farm

With the possibility in mind that we may take on the management of Whareroa Farm in the future, we are to undertake a study of the recreation issues, values and opportunities for the area. This will be an abbreviated version of the report developed for Lake Wairarapa and will complement the farm management plan developed by AgResearch.

As part of that process staff visited the site during mid April with Guardians member Leon Kiel to discuss details for entrance gates, parking and planting areas for various species of revegetation plant material.

10. Staff

Ross Jackson attended the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects “Landscape of Lifestyle” Conference in Napier. This explored the positive and negative impacts that the pursuit of lifestyle is having on the landscape, and included a presentation from former SWDC mayor John Reid.

Our landscape architect Annabel Riley departed on 11 months’ parental leave in mid April. Nicky Treadwell has been appointed on a fixed term contract to start in May.

Amanda Cox
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