



Report 07.492
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Committee Landcare
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Water Supply, Parks and Forests

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To:

- Comment on items of interest/note
- Receive the attached activity reports for the period ending 8 June 2007. (*Attachments 1 and 2*).

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision 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. Managers' reports

The department managers' reports are attached.

4. Comment

4.1 Parks

A number of Parks' performance indicators are to be reported in Greater Wellington Regional Council's (GWRC) Annual Report. Several of these require a report to be forwarded to the Landcare Committee. Hence there are a number of separate reports for this purpose but, just as importantly, to inform the Committee of the outcome of a number of activities during the year.

It is pleasing to note that the Akatarawa Ranger, Dean Hearfield, has received an award from Rotary for his contribution to the parks in the Upper Hutt area.

The Historic Places Trust has given a Category 2 designation to Belmont Road which runs through the Belmont Regional Park. This is only expected to have a slight effect on operations within the Park and the Waitangirua Farm in particular.

4.2 Marketing and Design

The annual Community Awareness Survey of Regional Parks has been completed, as reported separately by the Manager, Marketing and Design. It is pleasing to note that the awareness of the parks has increased over the last year. However, the number of residents visiting a park has remained largely static, at about 50 percent over the last few years. The longer term challenge is to increase the number of visitors.

The July buggy walk was held in the Karori Cemetery which, given its sealed paths, was no doubt a suitable place for a winter walk. Holding buggy walks at various locations is reflective of the co-operation between the city councils, GWRC and Sport Wellington.

Mention is made in the manager's report of various groups who have held corporate planting days in the parks. Support from the corporate community for this type of activity is appreciated and is also an opportunity for Parks' staff members to showcase the parks.

Kapiti Coast District Council's (KCDC) cycle-way strategy announced fairly recently caught us a bit by surprise. The situation though is being recovered and staff members are working with KCDC officers to ensure that the proposed cycle-ways through Queen Elizabeth Park fit in with the overall park plan.

4.3 Renewable Energy

RES New Zealand Ltd is making progress with their investigations for a wind farm at Puketiro. Public consultation has started and an open day was held at a venue in Whitby on Saturday, 28 July.

When Tenders were called for the right to develop a wind farm, the document included a map indicating the extent of the land GWRC considered suitable. Some parts of the Puketiro area were known to be windy but were considered too valuable from an ecological point of view to release for a wind farm development, for example, Mt Wainui.

As part of their investigation work, RES has identified another ridge which is between 2 km and 5 km to the east of the main western ridge at the top of the Battle Hill Farm Forest Park. This new ridge is rather remote, though there are a number of access tracks to it. Part of the ridge is in grass, mainly near the three transmission lines across it, and the remainder has been logged but there is some regenerating native bush. RES commissioned a preliminary environmental assessment, which has concluded there are no unique species of plants on the ridge. Perhaps not unexpectedly, it has been noted that some of the growth has suffered damage from severe winds. RES has indicated that there is the potential for approximately 21 megawatts of renewable generation on this ridge. This is sufficient for the annual needs of approximately 10,000 households and, just as importantly, it would displace thermal generation and the carbon emissions that come from it (20,000 tonnes of CO₂ a year).

It is proposed to indicate to RES that they can continue to investigate the particular ridge but it will be up to them to obtain the resource consents for its use and indicate what mitigation measures they might offer as part of the consent conditions.

4.4 Carbon Sequestration

The Ministry for the Environment recently called a meeting of several of the regional councils to see what land may be available for Carbon Sequestration. Apparently at least six government departments have expressed an interest in planting trees to cover their carbon footprint. The feeling from the regional council representatives at the meeting was that it may be better to retire various hill country areas on private land. This would not only contribute to negating a carbon footprint but also create more sustainable land management. It seems that the various regional councils do not have large areas of land available for planting. Certainly this is the case with this Council where apart from open spaces in the parks, most of the Council land has already been planted or may be needed for planting associated with mitigating some of the possible effects from wind energy developments.

5. Communication

No communications are needed.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

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Attachments

- 1 Manager, Parks report for period ended 27 July 2007
- 2 Manager, Marketing and Design report for period ended 27 July 2007