



Report 07.791  
Date 23 November 2007  
File E/06/28/03

Committee Parks, Forests and Utilities  
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## **Divisional report for period ended 9 November 2007**

### **1. Divisional Performance**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This is the first divisional report to the new Parks, Forests and Utilities Committee. It includes Parks, Marketing and Design, Forestry, Water Supply, Engineering Services and Renewable Energy activities. As effectively one Committee round has been missed with the recent elections, this report is more comprehensive than would be normal for a report covering a six week Committee cycle.

#### **1.2 Parks**

Work is proceeding on a number of planning and policy issues. At this stage it is hoped to present the Committee with a draft Belmont Regional Park Plan at its February meeting. In the meantime, Reserving of the Waitangirua Farm will proceed. The next stage is a public advertisement. This is likely to be placed in early January, with an indication that any comments are to be received by mid-February.

At the final meeting of the Landcare Committee it was decided the Battle Hill Regional Farm Forest Park Plan would be subject to a further round of public consultation. As one of the drivers behind this was possible concerns about the impact from a Puketiro wind farm, it has been decided to delay the consultation until RES New Zealand Ltd, the wind farm developer, can provide additional information. This will be in terms of their preferred wind farm layout and preferred access route to the wind farm. Further comment about this is in the Renewable Energy section of this report.

The 1080 operation in the forest areas near Upper Hutt was successful. There was a long dry period after the bait was dropped, resulting in a good possum kill rate.

The Manager, Parks' report includes a number of activities where the community has used the parks or assisted Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) staff with park operations.

A separate report is about the possible release of North Island robins in the East Harbour Regional Park, specifically in an area that has been subject to intensive animal control. A decision to release birds in the park would normally be a management one and not referred to the Committee for a decision but rather information. However, in this case there is a requirement to commit to approximately \$25,000 a year for ongoing pest control before the Department of Conservation will approve the release of the robins.

Closing the scour valve in the disused Wainuiomata Dam has resulted in the water backing up behind the dam to form a new wetland. Eventually it is expected the public will be able to visit the site. Before then, though, a number of facilities need to be rationalised.

Summer sees greater utilisation of the parks and activity over the last few months has focused on preparing for the influx. Subsequent to the end of the period, I walked the coastal and inland tracks at Queen Elizabeth Park with the Manager, Parks and the Principal Ranger (Western Sector).

The Government has released discussion documents on carbon trading since the last meeting of the Landcare Committee. One of the issues raised is whether there should be a free allocation of carbon trading units (NZUs) for pre-1990 indigenous forest. A pro forma submission was made on behalf of GWRC stating that GWRC supports a free allocation. This is on the basis that the indigenous forests in our existing and future water catchment areas are to remain. The Committee is requested to approve the pro forma submission, which is *Attachment 1*.

### **1.3 Marketing and Design**

For the first time we are about to publish an annual report for the regional parks and forest areas. With a large number of customers and stakeholders, it seemed appropriate to showcase the work carried out in the parks each year.

Our regional outdoors programme is one of the highlights of the Parks' year and we are gearing up to open bookings on 3 December. This year's programme is a refinement on last year's programme and hopefully will be even more popular. The programme is outlined in more detail in the Manager's report.

As part of stepping up our water conservation programme, we introduced a spring garden mulching campaign, the objective being to keep more moisture in the ground and therefore make watering more effective. The campaign will be assessed once it finishes at the end of November. This then leads into the Summer Water Conservation Campaign which runs in January and February and is targeted at gardeners.

The history booklet of the Wellington water supply has now been distributed and an electronic version is on GWRC's website.

Interpretation panels are a key part of our parks and forests, and the information about United States marines at Queen Elizabeth Park are our latest addition.

## **1.4 Forestry**

Unfortunately the lift in forestry prices experienced last Christmas only lasted about six months. Prices are now back to about where they were prior to that. Logging rates for the Plantation Forests are good and in excess of 70,000 tonnes is a possibility this year for the first time. For the Wairarapa Reserve Forests areas, land transport costs are working against us. They are too high to allow for the export logs. Nevertheless we will continue to log as long as we can find local markets.

## **1.5 Greater Wellington Water**

Work on the Wellington Water Strategy is close to a conclusion. It is expected we will be in a position to provide the Committee with a comprehensive suite of information in the first quarter of 2008.

Previously a 2 percent annual failure probability had been adopted as the security standard for supplying water. Expressed more simply, this could be termed as having sufficient water for a 1 in 50 year drought event. A failure to supply means one day in any year where there is insufficient water to meet full demand. Based on this standard, the population that can be supplied in Metropolitan Wellington was assessed at 377,000. Statistics New Zealand's latest population figure for Metropolitan Wellington is 379,000 as at 30 June 2007. Hence we have breached the security of supply standard. If no action is taken by time the population reaches 390,000, the annual failure probability is about 10 percent or a 1 in 10 year drought.

Therefore, it essential that we proceed with some system enhancements to maintain the standard. We are currently working on the possibility of reducing the minimum flow at the Kaitoke weir from a minimum of 600 litres per second down to 400 litres per second. This and additional reservoir storage within Wellington City will see the 2 percent annual failure probability restored for a population of 390,000. Some years ago we approached Wellington City Council (WCC) about the possibility of a new joint reservoir. At about the same time it was recognised that the Wellington Hospital complex in Newtown did not have sufficient water to see it through a very large seismic event. Consequently WCC has been in discussion with the Capital and Coast District Health Board (CCDHB) about its emergency storage requirement, and the possibility of building a reservoir to meet the needs of the three parties. After several years of trying, CCDHB has been unable to commit to the project. We have now informed WCC that the matter is urgent and we would like to work with them to build a reservoir that would be used by WCC and GWRC.

The drinking water legislation has now been passed and a requirement of the Act is for GWRC to prepare public health risk management plans by 1 July 2009.

During the period the wholesale water distribution system received an A1 grading, which is the highest available. This complements the A1 grading for the Wainuiomata and Te Marua Water Treatment Plants.

Waterloo Water Treatment Plant remains a thorn in our side, as it cannot achieve better than its current B Grading without chlorination.

## 1.6 Renewable Energy

RES New Zealand Ltd, the developer for the Puketiro site, has engaged several consultants to assist with the evaluation for the resource consent application. It is expected those will now be lodged in the first half of 2008.

Progress is being made with the Stoney Creek wind farm site and there is a separate report on this.

## 2. Financial Performance as at 31 October 2007

Last Year to Date \$000s		Year to Date Actual \$000s	Year to Date Budget \$000s	Year End Forecast \$000s	Year End Budget \$000s
	<b>Water Supply</b>				
9,075	Income	9,065	9,078	27,234	27,339
8,944	Expenditure	8,604	9,872	28,160	29,166
<b>131</b>	<b>Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>(794)</b>	<b>(926)</b>	<b>(1,932)</b>
79	Operations	367	--	--	--
705	Strategy and Asset	707	--	1,006	--
(687)	Support	(670)	(796)	(1,941)	(1,941)
28	Engineering Consultancy	30	2	9	9
6	Laboratory Services	27	--	--	--
<b>131</b>	<b>Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>(794)</b>	<b>(926)</b>	<b>(1,932)</b>
	<b>Plantation Forestry</b>				
1,694	Income	1,696	1,733	7,338	7,338
2,396	Expenditure	2,268	2,148	6,433	6,433
<b>(702)</b>	<b>Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(572)</b>	<b>(415)</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>905</b>
	<b>Reserve Forests</b>				
409	Income	422	394	2,072	2,072
778	Expenditure	707	659	1,975	1,975
<b>(369)</b>	<b>Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(285)</b>	<b>(265)</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>97</b>
	<b>Parks</b>				
2,104	Income	2,135	2,183	6,548	6,548
1,721	Expenditure	1,933	2,310	6,869	6,869
<b>383</b>	<b>Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>(127)</b>	<b>(321)</b>	<b>(321)</b>

## 3. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

- 1. Receives the report.**

2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Approves the indigenous forest submission about carbon trading (Attachment 1)*

Report prepared by:

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#### **Attachments**

- 1 Indigenous forests carbon trading submission.
- 2 Parks, Marketing and Design, Forestry, Water Supply, Engineering Services and Renewable Energy reports for period ending 31 October 2007/9 November 2007