

Report 2016.273
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Committee Environment Committee
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Draft Hutt and Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Collection Areas Management Plan (2016)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Hutt and Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Collection Areas Management Plan to the Committee and seek approval for its release for partner and stakeholder consultation.

2. Background

A plan for the water collection areas was previously developed in 2008 but not adopted by Council. Whilst the Parks Network Plan (2011) is the overarching management plan for the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) park network, its scope does not encompass the two water collection areas (WCA) which are managed primarily for water supply purposes.

The renewed need for the Hutt and Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Collection Areas Managements Plan arose with the commencement of shared management of the water collection areas between Wellington Water Limited (WWL) and GWRC. The draft Plan identifies shared goals and objectives and details agency actions as the basis for ongoing collaborative management of the water collection areas and is provided as **Attachment 1**.

The draft Plan has been developed under the guidance of a project steering group comprised of representatives from GWRC and WWL. It is different from management plans for recreation and scenic reserves because the primary purpose of land management is water collection with limited visitor access and management and maintenance of the high conservation values of these areas for water quality.

This draft Plan draws on both the 2008 management plan and a resource statement also developed at that time, which identifies and describes the important values to be conserved. It focuses on management of the water catchments of the Hutt and Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo rivers upstream of the water intakes to address primary goals of achieving:

- water quality which meets or exceeds drinking water standards
- catchment management to maximise volumes of raw water.

Secondary goals encompass protection and enhancement of biodiversity and heritage values, and providing for limited recreation opportunities.

The draft Plan is structured as four parts:

- section one and two introduce the Plan and outline the core shared goals for management
- sections three, four and five outline the planning, landscape and natural and cultural heritage context and features of the water collection areas
- section six reflects drinking water safety plans, documents the key threats to water quality and supply, and identifies actions to minimise or mitigate them.
- sections seven and eight are focused on management operations. A management framework of goals, objectives and work actions is outlined. Decision making responsibilities and agreements are also documented to ensure that all the core components of the management of drinking water (quality and supply) are defined, and responsibilities between agencies clear.

Recreation and other activities in water collection areas can pose a significant threat to water quality and supply. Section 7.5 of the draft Plan encompasses rules for permitted activities presented in a quick reference format (consistent with the Parks Network Plan). This section also encompasses and replaces the Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Collection Area Access Plan (2008) which identified overall maximum visitor numbers and access conditions.

The plan is also expected to be a useful general reference for rangers, volunteers, and others with a general interest in the water collection areas.

3. Communication

The water collection areas are held under the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972 for water supply purposes. Under this Act the preparation of management plans and public engagement is not required.

The preparation of the draft Plan has involved extensive internal communication with subject matter experts within GWRC and WWL and discussions with representatives from other agencies such as DOC and iwi. However further engagement to review the draft Plan is considered appropriate. This engagement is proposed after endorsement by the Environment Committee and before the final draft plan is prepared and presented to Council for adoption.

The Three Waters Decision Making Committee of WWL has reviewed and endorsed the draft plan. The final plan will be presented for approval after stakeholder feedback has been received.

A general public consultation period is not considered to be appropriate. This is because public visits to the water collection areas are not encouraged, other

than guided access tours into Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo WCA. In addition, much of the plan is policy and operational guidance to ensure cohesive management between agencies and achievement of water quality and supply objectives.

The draft Plan is quite extensive. A three to four page summary of the plan will also be developed and presented with the final plan at a later date.

4. The decision-making process and significance

Overall the plan is considered to have low significance. The matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act).

4.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington Regional Council to consider the significance of the decision. The term ‘significance’ has a statutory definition set out in the Act. Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance and engagement policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance because of the ‘closed’ nature of the water collection areas for public visits, and the focus of the plan as GWRC and WWL policy and operational guidance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

4.2 Engagement

Engagement is proposed with mana whenua, adjoining land owners, including the Department of Conservation, and groups that undertake volunteer conservation work in the water collection areas, such as Rimutaka Forest Park Trust. Engagement proposed includes review of the draft management plan and one to one discussions as appropriate. Feedback is expected to be provided via meetings or written submissions.

The feedback will be considered by officers in preparing the final plan for consideration and approval.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*
- 3. Notes that the Three Waters Decision Making Committee of Wellington Water Limited has endorsed the draft plan, with final approval to be sought after stakeholder feedback has been received.*
- 4. Approves the draft Plan for partner and stakeholder feedback.*

5. *Delegates to the Chair the ability to make minor editorial amendments to the draft Plan prior to publication.*
6. *Notes that following engagement, the final water collection area management plan will be prepared and presented to Council for adoption.*

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Attachment 1: Draft Hutt and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Areas Management Plan 2016