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Committee Landcare
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Management Plans Update

1. Purpose

To:

- update the Committee on the process and timetable to complete the five regional park management plans and the draft Regional Forest Lands Plan: Future Water Collection Areas.
- ask the Committee to consider options for hearing and considering submissions on the Regional Forest lands and Regional Parks management plans.

2. Significance of decision

The matters 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. Background

3.1 Park management plans

In December 2001, the Committee approved the process for reviewing the regional parks' management plans (report 01.822), including preparing a network plan. The *Regional Parks Network Management Plan* was adopted last year (report 03.488) and provides a clear framework for management and strategic issues across all of the regional parks. The review of individual park management plans began last year and the plans are expected to be completed in the 2006/2007 financial year (reports 03.450 and 04.136).

3.2 Forest management plans

The existing Interim Forest Lands Plan was completed in 1996 and a review commenced in 2001 (report 04.372). The review resulted in the plan being split into two; the current water collection areas and future water collection areas. The current water collection areas plan was prepared by the Utility Services Division and Council adopted *Greater Wellington's Water Collection*

Areas Asset Management Plan earlier this year. The Parks & Forests department is preparing the future water collection areas plan.

4. Regional parks planning process

Land parcels within the five regional parks are held in a variety of ways; fee simple; reserve lands vested in Greater Wellington; and agreements to manage and control other agencies' lands including the Crown and Hutt City Council. Management plans are required in accordance with section 619 of the Local Government Act 1974 for each of the five regional parks (this provision has been retained within the Local Government Act 2002 until 2007). In addition, lands within the Belmont, Queen Elizabeth and East Harbour Regional Parks are also subject to the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977. Management plans over these lands must meet both the provisions of the Local Government Act 1974, as well as the Reserves Act 1977. The processes for reviewing management plans are similar and are undertaken concurrently.

Each plan is estimated to take about 13 months from the start of the process to Council adopting the final management plan. Each review is split into three phases, with each phase being approximately three to four months in duration.

4.1 Phase 1

The first phase gives people the opportunity to learn about the process and allow officers to understand the range of issues requiring consideration in the plan review. At this point Greater Wellington advertises its intent to review the management plan and submissions are invited from the public in accordance with the Local Government and Reserves Act.

4.2 Phase 2

Submissions are analysed along with the current plan in the second phase. A paper outlining the issues and options identified in the first phase will be prepared for the Committee to consider alongside the submissions. Decisions on this paper will form the basis of the draft management plan's content. The draft management plan will be workshopped with Councillors prior to seeking approval to release the draft for formal consultation.

4.3 Phase 3

The final phase of the plan's preparation includes considering, hearing and responding to submissions before redrafting the final plan as required. Once all amendments have been completed, a request will be made to the Council to approve the final plan. Approval will then be sought from the Department of Conservation (for 'scenic reserves') and/or the Hutt City Council, as required.

5. Park management plan reviews

Five regional park management plans must be reviewed and new plans completed. Once a plan is completed, the next plan will be prepared until all plans are completed. Plans will be reviewed and prepared concurrently, at

staggered intervals. We anticipate all plans being completed by late 2006 or early 2007. Delays in preparing any one plan will have a flow on effect and delay the overall programme. The current status of each management plan review is provided in the following sections.

5.1 Belmont Regional Park

The first phase of the management plan review has been completed. A draft plan has been prepared following submissions on the current plan and the park. Councillors have attended two workshops providing Officers with direction and signalled their support for the draft plan's approach. This review is currently in abeyance until all the land management agreements have been concluded, including the completion of the Takapu Block vesting by the Department of Conservation under the Reserves Act. The final plan will be completed next year.

5.2 Kaitoke Regional Park

This review is now into its second phase. Ten submissions were received in the first round of consultation. A draft plan was released for public consultation in October and submissions have been invited until the end of this year. The draft plan is consistent with the Regional Parks Network Plan. Copies of the draft plan released for consultation are available. The final plan will be completed next year.

5.3 Queen Elizabeth Park

This review has just begun. Notices were placed in the region's newspapers in October 2004 inviting people to make a submission by the end of the year.

5.4 East Harbour Regional Park

This plan review has not yet begun but is scheduled to begin in April 2005 and will be completed in 2006.

5.5 Battle Hill Farm Forest Park.

This will be the last the management plan to be reviewed and is not expected to begin until November 2005 and will be completed in late 2006 or early 2007.

6. Draft Regional Forest Lands Plan: Future Water Collections Areas

Council approved the release of this plan for public consultation in June 2004. The draft plan was available for comment over a two-month period that concluded at the end of September this year. Fifty-one submissions were received and some submitters wish to be heard. A hearing process must now be agreed to allow these submitters to be heard. Copies of the draft plan and submissions are available now from Trecia Smith but will be provided, with an accompanying analysis prior to the hearing.

7. Future processes: Analysis of Options

Staff are seeking direction from Committee on how Councillors would like to hear and consider the submissions received on the draft Regional Forest Lands and Regional Park plans. There are two main options.

7.1 Option 1

Submitters can be heard in the public participation part of the Landcare Committee. A paper can then be prepared analysing the submissions and the Committee's deliberations at the following Landcare Committee. However, should there be more than a few submitters, or people wish to present their submission at some length, this could be disruptive to the Committee's agenda.

7.2 Option 2

Secondly, a sub-committee could be formed to consider submissions, hear submitters and make a recommendation through the Landcare committee to Council. Officers would collate and provide any required analysis prior to submitters being heard. Officers would then work with the sub-committee to provide a set of recommendations to the Landcare Committee.

Should the Landcare Committee wish to consider a sub-committee then selecting 4-5 people to sit on the sub-committee may provide an opportunity for a range of external expertise to be incorporated. For example, a representative from the Department of Conservation might be advantageous for parks that contain land vested in the Department or require approval from the Minister of Conservation. Similarly, a representative from the Hutt City Council may be appropriate for Belmont and East Harbour Regional Parks. In addition, the Committee may like to consider inviting an Iwi representative to be part of this process.

Should a sub-committee be adopted by the Landcare Committee, staff could draft a terms of reference for the sub-committee to be considered at the next Landcare Committee meeting.

8. Communication

The proposed plan preparation process provides a range of communication opportunities, including newsletters to those interested in the management plan reviews, public meetings and press releases.

9. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *receive the report.*
2. *note the contents of the report.*
3. *instruct officers to investigate a terms of reference for a sub-committee of the Landcare Committee to consider and hear submissions on the*

management plans for the regional parks and draft Forest Lands Plan and report to the next Landcare Committee.

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