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Report to the Landcare Committee
from Andrew Annakin, Divisional Manager, Landcare

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Landcare Committee about activities and matters of interest within the Landcare Division since the last Landcare Committee meeting, 29 March 2001. Departmental activity reports are also attached.

2. Divisional Manager Shoots Through

This is my last Order Paper for the Landcare Committee; having served the Committee since its inception in 1995. It all seems such a blur since my first (very nervous!) Committee meeting. The six years as Divisional Manager have literally flown by. It is difficult to identify highlights without inadvertently missing something out. However, some points of particular satisfaction are:

- Restructuring the Division into its current shape (1996/1997 and 1999/2000);
- Finishing the Kapiti Coast Floodplain Management Plans;
- Fronting ARAC, leading to national leadership in motorised recreation policy;
- A changed Landcare culture, from professional enthusiasm to strategic commitment;
- Developing a strong Asset Management philosophy;
- A refurbished WRC Upper Hutt Depot;
- Our contribution to enhanced ecosystem and heritage management (the *Signature* values), Environmental Education and Biodiversity on Council lands;
- The implicit vote of confidence in Landcare from the LTFS;
- Never giving up on a more integrated management of the WRC forest lands;
- Bringing together the Draft Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan.

I well remember my first few weeks as the Divisional Manager, Landcare. Three crises arose simultaneously: Belmont Road residents upset over a proposed Belmont Regional Park “landscape zone”; the company overseeing a major flood protection project sent in a hand written fax claiming upwards of a million dollars for “variations”; then the contractor demolishing the old Ewen Bridge took a short cut, explosives! About that time, someone asked me how the new job was going! I remember lamely replying, “the neighbours are revolting, I’m being sued for a million bucks, and someone just blew up the old Ewen Bridge”! Things have certainly looked up since!

When thinking of the Landcare Division, I recall Brian Small’s words (he gave a presentation on the Council’s Communications Strategy). He said that the Council’s greatest strength was its staff - a pervading quality of professionalism and dedication that many private sector corporates would “die for”. Those qualities are very strong within Landcare and my leaving certainly won’t change that.

It is time for me to move on and pursue other opportunities. I leave the Regional Council with a mix of sadness and a terrific sense of achievement. I have taken the Landcare Division as far as I can within the current divisional structure. The strategic plan is set; managers and staff are clear on expectations, and in good heart.

However, a new energy will soon be required to pick up the sustainability themes now gaining traction from *Towards a Greater Wellington* and the Council’s Communications Strategy. Further gains and efficiencies in the Regional Council won’t come from budgets and accountabilities. Rather, from co-operating to maximise the full range of organisational knowledge, experience and talent; sharing ideas and resources, recognising the common goals and being able to repeat the new mantra - whatever the Council finally decides that will be. Gee, that sounds exciting. Maybe I should stick around?

3. **Business As Usual**

Some points of interest:

Regional Transport Liaison: I recently met with the Divisional Manager, Regional Transport, to discuss various crossovers between our portfolios. In particular, the Hutt Corridor, Hutt River crossings, and possible future roading impacts on Belmont Regional Park. We discussed establishing a watching brief for Landcare on these areas and, no doubt, my successor can pursue this further.

Kapiti Rivers Site Visit: I accompanied Geoff Dick and Garry Baker on a field trip to look at Kapiti water courses; as considered at the last Landcare Committee meeting. I was particularly taken with the modified environment around the Waitohu River; from catchment and drained farmland to lifestyle subdivisions and a section of ignominious drainage channel. The catchment and floodplain have been heavily modified over time. I suspect that following the programmed Flood Hazard assessment, a mini-floodplain management plan is a likely consequence.

New Divisional Manager, Landcare: I met with the General Manager on recruiting my successor (advertising closes 12 May) and to prepare final briefings and hand-over documents. In conjunction with the Third Quarter Review (3 May), Committee members should be pleased to note that, in my view, the Landcare business is well placed to complete most expectations (Annual Plan) for the financial year. I have been able to tidy-up my affairs and prepare briefing papers, reasonably well.

Biodiversity Workshop: I was pleased to see the quality of presentations and clear linkages across contributing divisions towards the Regional Council's implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy. Another exciting project I won't be part of!

4. **Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan Consultation Draft**

As indicated in Brendan Paul's report (attached), we have a number of submissions on the Consultation Draft. I have continued to work with the Flood Protection Group on the best approach to this. I have also forwarded my last set of edits on the draft document. The team continues to suffer from the compressed timetable but the emerging product is excellent, nonetheless. I have every confidence that the Advisory Committee will see fit to recommend a draft Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan to the Landcare Committee. Indeed my last duty as Divisional Manager is likely to be signing-off the Advisory Committee Order Paper.

Following comments at the last Environment Committee meeting, Councillor Buchanan and Jane Bradbury met with Councillor Werry, Alistair Cross and I, to discuss links between the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan and the Environment Committee's responsibilities. We have also received a complimentary memo from the Environment Division on the quality and content of the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan Consultation Draft.

5. **Recommendation**

That the report be received and its contents noted.

ANDREW ANNAKIN
Divisional Manager, Landcare