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Report 01.608

14 August 2001

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Report to the Landcare Committee
from Dr Philippa Crisp, Landcare Advisor - Environmental Stewardship

Environmental Asset Management Plan Performance Indicator

1. Purpose

To report to the Committee on progress on the Environmental Asset Management Plan (EAMP) and management of the environmental assets for the Council's parks and forests during the 2000/01 financial year.

2. Annual Plan Performance Indicator

The 2000/01 Annual Plan contains the following Performance Indicator:

Environmental assets within the Regional Parks, Forests and Water Collection Areas will be monitored, protected and enhanced in accordance with the Parks and Forests Asset Management Plan service levels, within a budget of \$410,000. To be reported to the Landcare Committee following the end of the financial year.

The performance indicator was substantially achieved at a cost of \$370,800.

3. Process During 2000/01

During the 2000/01 year, we analysed the results from the forest health monitoring work undertaken over the last five years. We needed a good understanding of the current state of the environmental assets so that we could assess them against the service levels outlined in the EAMP, find any gaps and develop a work programme targeting priority areas to achieve the required service levels.

The analysis resulted in some interesting and, in some cases, surprising findings. We have previously reported the results from the forest areas (including the water collection areas) to both the Water Group and Landcare Committee (refer Report 01.49).

Following the analysis exercise we developed an environmental work programme in the parks and forest in light of the findings, to ensure that:

- Pest control reflected the highest priority needs identified through the monitoring work.
- The 2000/01 year's monitoring work programme provided the information we required to make decisions on future pest control work and forest monitoring.

Parks and Forests Operations undertook the monitoring work outlined in the programme, which was subsequently audited by Parks and Forests (Strategy & Marketing) and Landcare Research (vegetation monitoring data).

As well as delivering the work currently provided for in the EAMP, we needed to improve the Plan. Presently, it has some policy and service level gaps, particularly in the area of pest plants. To fill these gaps, we completed a Pest Plant Strategy, which will shortly be incorporated into the AMP. We also identified weed infestations in the parks and forests, so that weed control work plans can be prepared during the 2001/02 year.

4. **Key Aspects of the Work Programme Achieved**

The following is a summary of the key aspects of the work programme achieved during the year.

Monitoring

- Forest health surveys in the Hutt and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Areas.
- Vegetation monitoring in Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, Belmont Regional Park and the Akatarawa Forest.
- Rata digital photography in Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area, Akatarawa Forest and East Harbour Regional Park.
- Seed fall plots installed in Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area, East Harbour and Kaitoke Regional Parks.
- Possum numbers monitoring in the Hutt Water Collection Area and the Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forests.
- Additional pellet lines for large vertebrate monitoring installed in the Akatarawa Forest.
- Bird counts at Kaitoke Regional Park and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area.

- Weed infestations mapped in all the parks and forests.

Pest Animal Control

- Large vertebrate (mainly goats, some deer and pigs) control operations in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo and Hutt Water Collection Areas, Pakuratahi Forest, the Korokoro Valley, Belmont Regional Park and at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park (585 goats, 18 deer and 41 pigs were killed).
- Recreational hunting ballot (11 deer, 10 goats, 10 pigs were killed) in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area.
- Possum control, 1080 drop and post-operation monitoring in the Whakatikei - Puketiro block, of the Akatarawa Forest (possum numbers reduced from a pre-operation residual trap catch (RTC) of 19.1 percent to a post-operation RTC of 0.9 percent).
- Annual animal pest control maintenance programmes throughout the parks and forests (targeting possums, rabbits/hares, mustelids, and large vertebrates).

Pest Plant Control

- All pest plant control currently required under the EAMP was undertaken in the parks and forests, with the exception of the Old Mans Beard control work in Belmont Regional Park (now programmed for the 2001/02 year).

Fire Protection

- All commitments were met and we assisted fighting two large regional fires.

5. Where to From Here?

During the 2001/02 year we will further refine the AMP by:

- Improving service levels for forest health monitoring and pest control in the parks and forests.
- Adjusting the work programme to reflect recent monitoring results.
- Reflecting more of a risk management approach to our work to better protect the long-term health and sustainability of the biodiversity in the parks and forests.
- Progressing the pest plant control work plans.
- Incorporating the requirements of the Council's new Regional Pest Management Strategy.

- Refining the costs of the environmental work.

6. **Communication**

There are no communication opportunities arising from this report.

7. **Recommendation**

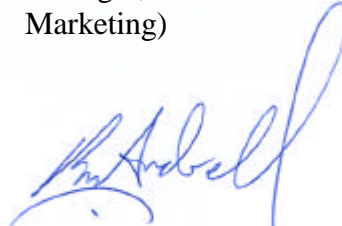
That the report be received and the contents noted.

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