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Report 98.296

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Report to the Policy and Finance Committee
from the Landcare and Utility Services Divisions

Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Access Operational Plan for 1998/99

1. Purpose

To. present the proposed *Wainuiomata-Orongorongo Access Operational Plan 1998/99* (attached as a separate document) and seek approval for its adoption and implementation.

2. Progress Following April Workshop

An outline of a proposal for managed access was presented to Councillors at a workshop in April. Officers were asked to prepare the Access Operational Plan on a managed access basis. Adoption of an actual programme was subject to an access plan being prepared for the 1998/99 financial year being presented to and approved by this Committee.

Since April, staff of the Divisions have prepared the attached Plan. With the assistance of several Councillors, a number of groups and individuals have been consulted on the proposals including:

- Te Ati Awa
- The Medical Officer of Health
- Neighbouring landowners
- Clubs and environmental organisations
- Staff of both Divisions

The Divisional Managers are satisfied that the plan is complete and takes suitable account of all views.

3. Key Elements in the Plan

The Plan provides for the following access opportunities:

- (1) Three open days for the general public. The first will be on Sunday.. 13 September and will involve an opening ceremony. The other two days will be in the summer and will have a family recreation theme.
- (2) Access on the first Sunday of each month (except July) for recreation and conservation organisations, and tangata whenua. Access is by application and subject to standard conditions.
- (3) The four local branches of the New Zealand Deer Stalkers Association will be able to organise one hunting day each over the one year term of this plan. They will have exclusive use of the area on this day and their use will be subject to standard conditions.
- (4) Staff hunting will continue under a revised permit system but will not be available on days allocated for public access.
- (5) Sensitive areas and intakes will remain closed at all times.
- (6) Consideration will be given to granting concessionaire permits for commercial tour services.
- (7) No after-hours access or camping.
- (8) Part of the Orongorongo River Catchment downstream from the pipe bridge will be zoned for general access.

4. Previous Council Resolutions

In January 1997 (Report 97.02) the Landcare and Utility Services Committees resolved to delay access to the Wainuiomata-Orongorongo Water Collection Area subject to improvements to the Wainuiomata Water Treatment Plant being completed. The required improvements are underway and are expected to be completed by December 1998.

However, the access proposed in the attached Plan can proceed *in conjunction with* the modifications to the water treatment process because the increase in risk of contamination to the water supply is very low. This is due to the limited number of days for public access, the control measures and the monitoring proposed in the plan.

5. What Happens After 1998/99?

As this Plan covers only the first year of access, further access plans will need to be prepared and submitted to the Council for consideration. The Landcare Division, which is responsible for day to day access management under the proposed plan, will seek to have longer term plans reflected in the next full review of the Council's Long term Financial Strategy (Operation Emerald II). This will require a comprehensive assessment of the resources required to provide an appropriate longer term level of service for public use of the area. The coming year provides the chance to learn much more about the nature of public demand for access and what will need to be directly, managed.

Another one year plan will be submitted for consideration by April 1999. Any subsequent plan is likely to cover a longer period.

6. Recommendations

- (1) *That the proposed Wainuiomta-Orongorongo Access Plan 1998 be approved, and implemented by the Landcare and Utility Services Divisions in the new financial year (1998/99).*
- (2) *That the Landcare and Utility Services Committees be informed of progress in the Plan's implementation and any significant outcomes arising from public access.*
- (3) *That Councillors be informed of arrangements for the formal "opening" of the area when these are finalised.*

Report prepared by:

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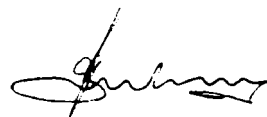
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Attachment : 1