



Report 04.427
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Committee Landcare
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Ranger services performance indicator

1. Purpose

To report to the Landcare Committee on the Ranger Services delivered in the 2003/04 financial year.

2. Annual Plan performance indicator

The 2003/04 Annual Plan contains the following performance indicator:

Ranger services will be provided that facilitate public access, educate and inform visitors and users, liaise with community and stakeholder groups and ensure compliance with Council policies.

The service will be to the satisfaction of the Landcare Committee and reported following the end of the financial year, within a budget of \$713,000.

The performance indicator **was achieved** at a cost of \$712,000

3. Summary of services provided in the 2003/04 Annual Plan

The service we provide is:

- A seven day per week residential ranger service at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, Queen Elizabeth Park, Kaitoke Regional Park and the adjacent Hutt Water Collection Area, and Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Collection Area;
- A ranger service is provided five days per week (including weekends) at Belmont Regional Park, Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forests and Hutt River corridor;
- A new five day ranger service was established within the East Harbour Regional Park;

4. Facilitation of public access to the regional parks, forests and water collection areas

All park rangers have managed approved access into their respective regional parks, forests and water collection areas. Rangers have issued permits as required for concessions and restricted activities.

Ranger staff have run 15 interpretative tours as part of phase two, of the Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo access plan.

One hundred permits were issued for recreational access into the Akatarawa Forest, for four wheel drive and motorbike usage. The Akatarawa Forest hosted 85 motorised events during the year. Permits were also issued for approved recreational hunting areas.

The Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo rangers managed several professional goat-hunting operations and a successful balloted public hunt during the month of April. These have been reported separately to Council.

Overall, estimated visitation fell slightly from 811,789 visits in 2002/03 to 806,757 visits in 2003/04, in five regional parks and on forest where visitation is estimated. (We do not estimate visitation at East Harbour Regional Park, Hutt Water Collection Area and Wainuiomata Recreation Area). This result is pleasing considering the poor weather this summer.

Wet and windy weather over the summer period was a major factor to lower visitor numbers this year.

5. Educating and informing visitors

Rangers have informed the public on the recreation, environmental and heritage values of the regional parks and forests by answering public enquiries, providing interpretative talks, facilitating education programmes, implementing environmental initiatives that involved the community.

5.1 Highlights for the Year

The Rangers helped successfully implement the Regional Outdoor Programme over the summer period delivering over 40 events within the parks and forests. The rangers undertook environmental education and interpretation training prior to the events as part of ongoing skill development. A number of the events were undertaken jointly with community and friends groups.

The “Farm Visits” education programme was successfully run at Battle Hill attracting pre-school and primary school children and parents.

A number of rangers have taken part in the “Take Action” environmental education programme. They have developed and maintained infrastructure and helped run the field programmes. The programme has introduced many new user groups to the parks.

Other events held throughout the year included:

- International visitor walks;
- Guiding media groups and public through the *Lord of the Rings (Return of the King) premier* at the Hutt River and Rivendell site;
- Music events – *Wonderland Alternative Music Festival* held at Tunnel Gully and *Whopper Chopper* at Queen Elizabeth Park.;

6. Liaison with community and stakeholder groups

Rangers managed all concession, lease and licence holders within the terms of their agreements. They also liaised with user and stakeholder groups to present Council's policies during the management plan process and explain park and forest values. Rangers have a key role in community liaison and supporting care groups as they have daily contact with key park user groups and other agencies.

Rangers gave a number of presentations to community groups and stakeholders including tramping clubs, community service groups, Girl Guides and Scouts.

Community planting days were held at Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP), Belmont and Kaitoke Regional Parks. Planting days at QEP included volunteer involvement from Friends of QEP, Forest and Bird, Kapiti Environmental Action, tramping clubs and school groups. At Belmont Regional Park, the Friends of Maara Roa undertook regular planting days with support from Council staff.

Rangers organised work programmes and did some supervision of the Conservation Corps who worked at Battle Hill throughout the year on environmental and farm based activities. The Corps provides a valuable resource in helping with native tree propagation, planting and re-vegetation. Department of Correction's groups were active in various jobs throughout the Eastern Sector. A significant achievement included maintaining 1,000 native trees as part of riparian management in the Summit Yards of the Rimutaka Walkway. A total of 400 hours was carried out at Kaitoke Regional Park as part of Youth Aid supervision in conjunction with the Corrections Department.

Rangers wrote numerous articles for local newspapers and for Elements that highlighted events, volunteer recruitment and general park happenings.

The Belmont Ranger has been involved with the Friends of Belmont Group, hosting Hutt Corridor Roving Group and wind farm investigation. The QEP Ranger attended meetings and liaised with the Friends of QEP Group.

The Forest Lands Ranger and the Eastern Principal attended the regular Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee (ARAC) meetings.

Arbor Days were held at QEP and Battle Hill and involved local school children, Councillors, special guests and Ranger staff.

The East Harbour Regional Park Ranger has established relationships with both MIRO (Mainland Island Restoration Organisation) and the East Harbour Forest Rangers, attending a number of evening meetings throughout the year. Regular liaison with Hutt City Council officers has also occurred during the hand over period.

7. Ensure compliance with Council policies

Rangers have enforced Greater Wellington's Parks, Forests, Recreation Area and Water Collection Area Bylaws. This was achieved by regular patrols, providing after hours callout and security services. Our focus is on compliance by co-operation and we try to educate offenders to influence their long-term behaviour. We issue trespass notices and prosecute only when necessary.

The total number of incidents reported and followed up on during the year:

Park/Forest	Number of Incidents
Battle Hill Farm Forest Park	44
Belmont Regional Park	12
Queen Elizabeth Park	50
Kaitoke Regional Park	20
Akatarawa/ Pakuratahi Forests	19
Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo	14
Hutt River	103
East Harbour Regional Park	21
TOTAL	263

Compliance within the Parks is at a satisfactory level. Incidents reported in the parks are consistent against last year's figures (247 incidents in 2002/03) and revolved around the same types of infringements i.e. dumping rubbish, trespass, vandalism etc. This suggests patrolling and visitor behaviour education is achieving the desired results.

The main security issue that we dealt with during the year surrounded the buried ordnance at Queen Elizabeth Park. Security was increased in July to prevent public from entering a buried munition site. Army engineers subsequently dealt with munitions.

8. Communication

There are no communication opportunities specifically arising from this report.

Over the past year Rangers have actively co-ordinated press releases and activities that have been covered by a number of local and regional newspapers. Rangers have also facilitated a number of articles for the *Elements* publication.

A separate news-clipping file has been kept.

9. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *receive the report*
2. *note the contents of the report.*

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