



**Report** 05.347  
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**Committee** Policy, Finance & Strategy Committee  
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## **Wainuiomata - Orongorongo Water Collection Areas: Recreational Access**

### **1. Purpose**

To consider continuing limited recreational access into the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo catchment areas.

### **2. Significance**

The matters in this report do not trigger the Council's significance policy or section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### **3. Background**

Council approved limited access into the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo catchments in 2000. Prior to 2000, public access was not allowed to ensure that the quality of the water supply was protected. With the improvements made at the treatment plant, Council felt that limited access could be made to the catchments, as long as strict controls were put in place (Reports 00.665 and 01.312 refer).

Since 2003, recreational access has been regulated by organised tours into the catchments and a hunting ballot. Report 03.440 (attachment 1) is attached for your information. Trip guides ensure that the walk participants conform to the requirements set down by the Water Group for the protection of the water. Guiding ratios have been set for all walking groups in the catchment. Rangers and trained volunteers ensure that the guiding ratio is maintained and that the trip is safe, enjoyable and informative for all concerned. Hunters are carefully monitored throughout this period to ensure they conform with the conditions of their hunting permit. Hunting is restricted to 40 hunters (with one additional hunting partner allowed) during a four week period, generally in April of each year.

The Wainuiomata trips are approximately five hours long over easy terrain. Participants must be moderately fit to participate and be prepared for the bush environment. In contrast, in the Orongorongo catchment, people must be fit enough to walk for a minimum of eight hours on tracks in steep terrain. Both trips allow people to see superb rata podocarp, sub-tropical emergent forest

above a canopy of hinau, kamahi, rewa rewa and tree ferns. Some black beech is found on drier sites, and silver beech on the high ridge-tops. These areas have some of the highest biodiversity values in the region.

#### **4. Access**

Currently, access is provided for up to 60 people, 12 times a year in the Wainuiomata catchment. This allows for six group trips, which are popular for groups such as the Tararua Tramping Club and six individual trips, where individual members of the public can join an organised trip. The guiding ratio for these trips is set at 1:15. In the Orongorongo catchment, trips are limited to 6 trips of 15 individuals, with a guiding ratio set at 2:15. These tours are restricted to members of tramping clubs, reflecting the more difficult terrain and required level of fitness.

This year, 442 people took part in the Wainuiomata catchment walks. For the Orongorongo catchment, 70 people completed the trip, with four tramping clubs being involved.

#### **5. Access 2005-2008**

While the walking trips and the hunting ballot have proved very popular with the public, indications are that demand for access to the catchment is now being met. Rangers, Planning and Policy staff, and Barry Leonard, as Water Catchment Manager, agree that the current levels of access and controls are appropriate and should be continued for the next three years. If the programme is to be expanded in future, a funding review will be necessary, as resources for this programme are currently at capacity. Should any of the circumstances change, or the area's values become adversely affected, then a report will be made to the Council.

#### **6. Communication**

Promotion of the tours will continue on the Greater Wellington website, local newspapers and in *Elements*. In addition, a press release will be written outlining the Council's decision with information on recreational opportunities available within these areas.

#### **7. Recommendations**

*That the Committee recommend that Council:*

- 1. Receive the report.*
- 2. Note the contents of the report.*
- 3. Agree to the proposals for access until 30 June 2008 in the Wainuiomata Catchment as follows:*
  - 12 trips of 60 people*
  - guiding ratios of 1:15*
  - six 'group tours' and six 'individuals tours'.*
- 4. Agree to the proposals for access for until 30 June 2008 in the Orongorongo Catchment as follows:*

- 6 tours of 15 people
  - guiding ratios of 2:15 (one of the guides must be a staff member).
5. *Agree that a public 'roar hunt' continue to operate through a ballot.*

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Attachment 1: Report 03.440