



Report 05.367
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Committee Landcare
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Environmental enhancement projects performance indicator

1. Purpose

To report to the Committee on the 2004/05 environmental enhancement projects in order to meet the performance indicator requirements of the Annual Plan.

2. Annual Plan performance indicator

The 2004/05 Annual Plan contains the following performance indicator:

The annual environmental enhancement projects as agreed with the Divisional Manager, Landcare, will be completed and reported to the Landcare Committee following the end of the financial year, within a budget of \$138,000

This performance indicator was **achieved** at a cost of \$110,000

3. Contribution to Take 10 Objectives

This performance indicator contributes to the quality of life of the regional community by ensuring that community participation in the regional parks, forests and water collection areas is enhanced. The intent of this Annual Plan performance indicator is to ensure that people are encouraged to use our parks and get involved in their management, and that environmental community care groups are supported.

4. Environmental enhancement projects

Nine environmental enhancement projects were included with this performance indicator. A brief summary of the work that was carried out on these projects this year is set out below.

4.1 Te Marua Bush restoration

Members of the Wellington Botanical Society (Botsoc) have cared for the bush remnant at Te Marua since the early 1990s. They have carried out extensive

weed control work and plantings in the remnant over the years. Greater Wellington have assisted them with weed mapping and pest control activities. In the past year, Botsoc have cleared more pest plants and planted seedlings that have been grown by the Upper Hutt Branch of Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society (Forest and Bird). The seed was eco-sourced from Te Marua bush. Greater Wellington funds have been used this year to produce an interpretation sign. This sign details the partnership between Botsoc and Greater Wellington and provides information about the plant community within the remnant, as well as the history of the bush care project.

4.2 Korokoro Bush goat control

The Judas goat control programme has been continued and goat numbers have now been maintained at low levels for four years. Funds were used this year to continue to keep the goat numbers down. Sixty-two goats were culled this year. There are ongoing problems with reinvasion from the Wellington City Council land to the south of the park. The Environmental Ranger has been discussing an integrated attack on the goats with Wellington City Council in the coming financial year. Bird monitoring established in the valley in 2004 has shown the first recording of a bellbird in the area for decades.

4.3 Mainland island restoration operation (MIRO)

The MIRO group based at East Harbour Regional Park have worked on several projects with officers during the past five years. MIRO volunteers have assisted in keeping possum numbers down within the northern block during the past financial year. The volunteers clear traps and change rat toxin regularly as part of the possum control program. Their hard work has been successful, as a recent monitor showed possums to be at very low levels in the area. Volunteers are also actively involved in the rodent/mustelid monitoring program which involves a week of field work every three months. The committee has made some progress in their aims for East Harbour Regional Park and have been involved in submitting on the management plan currently under review. They are also keen to initiate a restoration planting program in the Lakes Block and to this end, have started up a nursery in Eastbourne. This year, Greater Wellington funds were spent largely on equipment for this nursery.

4.4 Pakuratahi River riparian planting

Over the past 3 years, the emphasis has been on restoring the top of the catchment at the former summit rail yards on the Rimutaka Rail Trail, removing weed species in the riparian zones and carrying out developments at specific nodes as outlined in the Restoration Plan. A lot of log clearance took place following the storms in August 2004 which required further replanting. An area was destumped and cleared to create a camping/picnic area on a low terrace above the river near Ladle Bend. Planting has been carried out around the perimeter to provide some wind protection. Planting of a riparian zone by

the streams at the summit took place at an Arbor Day event in 2002 and has been continued over the past 3 years by staff and prison inmates. A Totara grove is also being established at the Summit and it is planned to reintroduce some of the larger growing species such as Totara, Rimu and Kahikatea amongst the smaller colonising species.

4.5 Queen Elizabeth Park remnant forest restoration

Monitoring of bird numbers began last year. This year's data shows there are more birds in the forest remnant. It is too soon, however, to establish whether this is an ongoing increase or what the potential causes of this increase are. Planting over the past 5 years, plus the concerted pest control programme carried out by staff, should ensure that an increase in birds numbers continues.

An easy strolling 15-min track has been developed through the remnant. On a recent annual walkover with Kapiti Forest and Bird and KEA, the members present expressed delight at the health and vigour of the remnant. The perimeter fence has also been extended outwards and there have been two community plantings carried out beyond the remnant. The plantings will eventually link up with the surrounding wetland areas.

4.6 Queen Elizabeth Park wetland restoration

Detailed planning of the entrance zone of Mackays Crossing to fit in the State Highway 1 upgrade and new overbridge is continuing. The stables have been relocated and will be set on a permanent site later this year.

The 3.5 hectare wetland at the entrance is currently being restored in conjunction with Transit NZ who are contributing funds to the wetland restoration as part of a negotiated arrangement. This was agreed to by Transit NZ because of the impact the new road will have on the front of the park and the adjoining DoC wetlands. Part of this funding is also being used to improve the drainage problems in the area.

Earthworks were carried out in May and planting commenced with a recent Arbor Day celebration attended by Jack Rikihana representing Te Atiawa Ki Whakarongotai, Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park Chairperson John Lancashire, GW Chairperson Ian Buchanan and Graham Taylor from Transit NZ.

Further planting by the community has continued around the restored 2 ha wetland excavated in 2003 adjacent to the Marines Memorial and also in a larger ephemeral wetland close to the remnant bush.

4.7 Queen Elizabeth Park foredune restoration

During the past year there were several organised walks in the dunes looking at aspects of history, geology, plants and ecology. A detailed pest plant control

plan was produced in 2003 and work continues on the control of the most serious weeds. Ongoing fencing and planting of spinifex on the foredune was carried out near Raumati and in front of the Paekakariki Surf Club with active support from the community. Staff have constructed several sand ladders and erected further protective fences at several access points onto the beach. The sand ladders are intended to try and reduce the erosion that is induced by people making numerous tracks through the foredunes.

The annual Restoration Day, which focused on the coast environment this year, was held in the Park with 120 delegates inspecting the work that has been carried out in sand dunes.

4.8 Battle Hill wetland restoration

Construction of several ponds was completed three years ago and the area has now been extensively planted and is progressing well. A large portion of Swampy Gully was fenced off 2 years ago and retired. Since that time additional areas have been retired and a thousand plants were planted by 30 volunteers from the Westpac Bank. In addition, another 400 were planted by local school students at a successful Arbor Day this year. Further extensive planting will continue to take place at Battle Hill over the next five years. Poplar pole planting in the adjoining grazed gullies is continuing each year and some Totaras in stock-proof protectors are also now being introduced. Other corporate organisations are being encouraged and are getting involved in this project doing releasing work as well as planting.

4.9 Cannons Creek Valley bush restoration – Belmont Regional Park

The Friends of Maara Roa continue to do an outstanding job on this project in line with the restoration plan recommendations prepared jointly with GWRC in 2001. Currently, planting and maintenance is being carried out in earnest every second Saturday morning during June, July and August. The largest portion of the Council contribution was used to purchase plants, which has been supplemented by plants grown by the Friends. Contractors have been hired to cut bait lines through the gorse and the Friends continue to maintain bait stations for pest control. In addition, Parks staff constructed and installed two seats and some new signs and are maintaining the new Takapu Track which was officially opened last year. The Friends again ran a series of walks during the summer as part of the Regional Outdoors Programme series of public walks took place.

During the past year the Friends have actively coordinated meetings and been part of deputations to senior politicians over the impending sale of the Landcorp owned Waitangirua Block. The Maara Roa block, which contains two covenanted areas of native bush, falls within the Landcorp farm.

5. Communications

These projects provide excellent public relations opportunities. All of them have been publicised in the local and daily newspapers, and in *Elements*. We are continuing to work with Corporate Communications to ensure ongoing publicity of these projects.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receive** the report.
2. **Note** the contents of the report.

Report prepared by:

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