



Report 05.640
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Committee Rural Services and Wairarapa
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Montford Trimble Foundation - Rewanui Request for Pest Management Assistance

1. Purpose

To advise the Committee in relation to the attached letter requesting assistance to manage pests at Rewanui as a joint Key Native Ecosystem management initiative with the Montford Trimble Foundation.

2. Significance of the Decision

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

3. Background

Rewanui is a 334 hectare property situated approximately 20 km east of Masterton on the Castlepoint Road. The property is located immediately before the turnoff to Riversdale Beach at Blairlogie.

Rewanui is one of 49 Category One Recommended Areas for Protection identified by the Department of Conservation in the Eastern Wairarapa. Rewanui is described as one of the best remaining examples of lowland forest in the ecological district with high species diversity (flora and fauna) and occupying a wide altitudinal range.

Rewanui was considered by the Council in 1999 for possible purchase as a Regional Park. However, an investigation by Council staff revealed that the property did not meet the criteria to achieve Regional Park status.

Rewanui was subsequently purchased by the Masterton District Council (MDC) and later sold by agreement to the Montford Trimble Foundation. The Foundation is governed by a group comprising elected and MDC appointed trustees, who work within the MDC (Montford Trimble Foundation) Act 2003.

The main objectives of the Act are outlined in the attached letter from the Foundation.

4. Key Native Ecosystem Status

Foundation members have recently approached Biosecurity staff with the desire of entering a jointly funded pest management programme for Rewanui. The property has recently been re-assessed under the Department's KNE prioritisation system and identified as being within the top 100 'private land' lowland bush sites.

To qualify as a KNE, the land must be privately owned, be legally protected and have a high biodiversity value. Rewanui is able to satisfy the biodiversity criteria but there are some concerns as to whether the MDC (Montford Trimble Foundation) Act 2003 provides for legal protection of the biodiversity characteristics in perpetuity.

If the Committee is satisfied that Rewanui achieves all the KNE criteria then additional funds for undertaking pest management would need to be provided under the LTCCP in order for work to proceed. Current budgeting does not provide funds for new projects.

A provisional pest management programme of works has been prepared for the Foundation with an initial cost of \$14,000 estimated. Maintenance costs would be approximately 60% or \$8,400 p.a. The programme envisages the use of permanent bait stations and predator traps set on the bush pasture margins. Maintenance could be managed by an input contract to an external provider.

Council staff have also been assisting the Foundation to prepare an application for funds from the DoC managed Biodiversity Condition Fund. Applications close early in December. Successful applicants will only receive funding for a single year.

5. Communications

Rewanui offers great potential as a site to enhance the public understanding of biodiversity. The Foundation have already prepared roadside signage and constructed car parking facilities. As a KNE, the Council would be well placed to add considerable value to the site and gain positive community support.

No additional communications are considered appropriate until decisions are made on whether the Foundations proposal should be supported.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receive** the report.
2. **Notes** the contents of the report and attached letter.
3. **Determines** whether to support a joint KNE pest management programme with the Montford Trimble Foundation with the associated financial commitment.

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