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**Committee** Landcare  
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## Ranger service performance indicator

### 1. Purpose

To report to the Landcare Committee on the Ranger Services delivered in the 2005/06 financial year.

### 2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision 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. Annual plan performance indicator

The 2005/06 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, within a budget of \$809,000.*

*The service will be to the satisfaction of the Landcare Committee and reported following the end of the financial year.*

The performance indicator was **achieved** at a cost of \$614,671.

### 4. Summary of services provided in the 2005/06 annual plan

The service provided 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 the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area;

- A five day per week (including weekends) ranger service at Belmont Regional Park, Akatarawa Forest, Pakuratahi Forest, the Hutt River corridor and East Harbour Regional Park.

A five day per week (including weekends) ranger service at Whitireia Park, Porirua was proposed to start this financial year but has been deferred due to delays in the transfer of management and control from the Crown.

## **5. 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.

Rangers were involved in a number of search and rescue operations throughout the network involving park users, fortunately all had positive results.

Ranger staff have run 10 interpretive tours involving 281 participants as part of phase three of the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo access plan and 64 people through the Orongorongo catchment.

112 consents were issued for recreational access into the Akatarawa Forest. The Akatarawa Forest hosted 100 motorised events during the year. Permits were also issued for approved recreational hunting areas and horse riding.

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

Overall, estimated visitation remained steady from 826,000 visits in 2004/05 to 896,000 visits in 2005/06 in the five regional parks and the Pakuratahi Forest where visitation is estimated. (We do not estimate visitation at East Harbour Regional Park, Hutt Water Collection Area, Wainuiomata Recreation Area and the Akatarawa Forest.) The figure for 2005/06 includes an estimated 40,000 visitors at Karapoti Road extrapolated from previous year's figures. Although the counter has not been active at this particular entrance, there has been no obvious decline in park use at the Karapoti Road entrance and once Upper Hutt City Council reinstates the bridge, we expect to see these figures recorded once again. We are currently working on a more in-depth visitor monitoring system across the entire network.

### **5.1 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 interpretive talks, facilitating education programmes and implementing environmental initiatives that involved the community.

## 5.2 Highlights for the year

At Battle Hill, *Project Pateke* (Brown Teal habitat) is progressing well with good support from volunteers who are assisting with the predator control programme.

At Belmont Regional Park the Puke Ariki track, which transverses the entire length of the park, was formally opened.

Rangers continued to assist implementing the Regional Outdoor Programme over the summer period delivering over 50 events within the parks and forests. A number of the events were undertaken jointly with community and *Friends* groups.

A 40m boardwalk and associated new section of the track has enabled the creation of a fantastic wetland loop walk around Lake Kohangapiripiri at the East Harbour Regional Park's Lakes Block.

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 maintained infrastructure and helped run the field programmes. The programme continues to introduce many new user groups to the parks.

80 professional parks delegates attended two field trips organised by the Principal Rangers as part of the *New Zealand Recreation Association* annual conference. The trips involved visiting local council facilities and parks throughout the Greater Wellington area.

Other events held throughout the year included:

- International visitor walks including 100 Chinese delegates hosted at Kaitoke Regional Park
- A music event was held at Tunnel Gully
- Porirua multisport event utilised Battle Hill and Belmont Regional Parks
- Filming in parks included the 'Lost Children' TV series and the 'Black Sheep' movie
- *Crazyman* Multisport Event – 570 entries using both the Hutt River Trail and East Harbour Regional Park
- International visitor talks/walks including 40 Czechoslovakian choir singers hosted at Kaitoke Regional Park
- Weddings were held at Tunnel Gully and Kaitoke Regional Park
- *Pauatahanui Country Festival* held at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park
- *Big Coast* and *Karapoti Classic* mountain bike rides
- *Kapi Mana Enduro* Motorcycle event, 150 bikes.

## 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, Scouts and school groups.

Community and corporate planting days were held at Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP), Belmont and Kaitoke Regional Parks. Planting days at QEP included volunteer involvement from the *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 provide a valuable resource in helping with native tree propagation, planting and re-vegetation.

A total of 700 hours was carried out at Kaitoke Regional Park as part of community work directed by *Police Youth Aid*, the *Department of Corrections* and our own Park Ranger. Work included gorse removal in the campground area, ongoing cleaning of water tables on all roads and tracks, riparian planting and tidying of grounds around the ranger's office.

Rangers wrote several articles for local newspapers, magazines (such as *Wilderness*) and for *Elements*. These highlighted events, volunteer recruitment and other, more general, features of the parks.

The Belmont Ranger continues an involvement with the *Friends of Belmont* and *Friends of Maara Roa*. The obvious highlight of the year for both groups was the acquisition of Waitangirua Farm. The eventual outcome was pleasing to them both. The majority of the farmland was retained within the park, to be protected under reserve status.

At QEP, the Ranger continued liaising with the *Friends of QEP* Group and assisted with the park management plan review.

Parks staff assisted with visits by Hawkes Bay and Canterbury Regional Council, both authorities looking for our guidance in matters involving parks management. We also hosted an *NZ Recreation Association* field trip during their national conference, visiting Belmont Regional Park, Hutt River Trail and Kaitoke Regional Park.

Ranger staff provided assistance for field trip visits to Whareroa Farm and the proposed Transmission Gully route during the year. These field trips helped community and interest groups to see the issues up close.

The Forest Lands Ranger and the Eastern Principal Ranger 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 continued to build relationships with the *East Harbour Environmental Association*, *MIRO (Mainland Island Restoration Organisation)*, the *East Harbour Forest Rangers*, *Wainuiomata Community Board* and various Eastbourne residents' associations attending a number of evening meetings throughout the year. Regular liaison with Hutt City Council officers has also occurred during the year.

## 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-hour 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	87
Belmont Regional Park	23
Queen Elizabeth Park	39
Kaitoke Regional Park	27
Akatarawa/Pakuratahi Forests	10
Wainuiomata/Orongorongo	5
Hutt River	79
East Harbour Regional Park	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>281</b>

Compliance related incidents within the parks have decreased slightly since last year (281 incidents compared with 297 the in 2004/05). While compliance is still an issue, the figures suggest that ranger patrolling and visitor behaviour education is an effective tool in achieving a reduction in illegal and antisocial behaviour in our parks.

## 8. Communication

There are no communication opportunities specifically arising from the 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 and magazines. Rangers have also facilitated a number of articles for the *Elements* publication.

## 9. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

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

Report prepared by:

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Report approved by:



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