

Report 07.287
Date 4 May 2007
File E/06/16/03

Committee Landcare
Author Murray Kennedy Divisional Manager, Water Supply,
Parks and Forests

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To:

- Comment on items of interest/note
- Receive the attached activity reports for the period ending 4 May 2007 (Attachments 1 and 2).

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. Managers' reports

The department managers' reports are attached.

4. Comment

4.1 Parks

During the summer period, the Council's parks and forests receive their greatest number of visitors in any one month and staff concentrate on visitor activities. Once autumn arrives, staff revert to other duties as the visitor numbers fall. This year is no different and the Manager Park's report reflects the diversity of the activities in the parks and forests.

Expenditure in the Parks to date is a little behind budget but by year-end a small surplus is predicted compared with a budget deficit. The details were reported to the Policy Finance and Strategy Committee at its meeting on 8 May. The reason for the change from deficit to surplus is largely due to the Whitireia Park management arrangement not proceeding and higher than predicted external revenue.

There has been some progress in developing a governance structure for the Wairarapa Wetlands. It is essential though that all parties are comfortable with the outcome. A report back to council is possibly still some months away.

A major programme is underway at present to reduce the number of possums in the Akatarawa and Pakuratahi forests and on nearby private land. There has been extensive communications with the public and interest groups through a cross divisional working group. So far the amount of effort put into communications appears to have paid off.

A separate committee report outlines the proposal by the New Zealand Historical Places Trust to confer a category two Historic Place listing on the Old Coach Road that passes through the Belmont Regional Park. I have some concerns about the way the Historic Places Trust has gone about its investigation. Legal and valuation advice suggests that the classification will not materially affect the Council's Parks activities.

I have written to the Department of Conservation about investigating what is required to upgrade the Rimutaka rail trail on the eastern side of the Rimutaka ranges.

4.2 Marketing and Design

Judged by the number attending, this year's Regional Outdoors Programme has been a success and a separate report reviews the events. At a later date, the committee will be asked to consider the degree of cost recovery to run future programmes.

While it would be great to know the actual number of visitors to our parks each year, with a reasonable degree of accuracy, the logistics of determining this are just not cost effective. Accordingly the best way is to take a snap shot across a reasonably short time interval, and then consider the longer-term trends. Report 07.241 reviews the methodology for counting Parks' visitors.

Council's concessions policy has not been reviewed for several years and a separate report requests approval to engage with the public in carrying out a review.

4.3 Renewable Energy Development

We have been working with the Environment Management Division to prepare a wind energy resource map for the Region. Quotations have been received for the work and it is expected more information will be submitted to the next meeting of the Environment Committee.

RES New Zealand Limited, the holder of the development rights for the Puketiro Wind Farm, has just erected two 80 metre anemometer masts. The photo on the right side of this page shows the last section of one of the masts being lifted into place with the person on top of the mast ready to bolt the final components together.



5. Communication

A media release will be issued indicating that the Council is about to undertake a review of its concession policies for its Parks and Forests.

A separate invitation has been issued to councillors to attend Arbor Day plantings in June at the Battle Hill and Queen Elizabeth Parks. A media release will be issued, later in May, regarding the plantings.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: Manager, Parks report for period ending 4 May 2007

Attachment 2: Manager, Marketing and Design report for period ending 4 May 2007