

Report 07.369
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Committee Parks & Forests Hearing Committee
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Battle Hill Farm Forest Park draft management plan (submission analysis)

1. Purpose

To consider submissions on the draft Battle Hill Farm Forest Park management plan.

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

The draft Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Management Plan was released for public consultation last year (Report 06.660) and submissions were received on the draft until 28 April 2006.

The draft management plan updates the existing management plan to align it with the current management context and recently developed Parks and Forests policy in the Regional Parks network management plan, as well as reflecting the vision the community has for the park.

4. Submissions

17 submissions were received on the draft plan. Committee members received copies of the submissions on 8 June 2007. Further copies can be obtained from Fiona Shaw, if required. Six submitters have indicated that they wish to be heard. A summary of the submissions can be found as Attachment 1 to this report. The submitters that wish to be heard have been bolded. An analysis of the key issues is provided in section 6 of this report.

5 (30%) of submitters directly mentioned their support for the management plan and/or offered suggestions for minor improvements in the plan.

3 (17%) of submitters mentioned the windfarm and its management and impacts on the park and landscape.

3 (17%) mentioned cultural heritage and stronger emphasis on the protection and management of heritage values within the park.

3 (17%) submissions requested more educational opportunities and reference to the Ken Gray centre in the management plan.

5. Iwi

Contact with the Wellington Tenth Trust, Te Runanganui o Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika a Maui and Ngati Toa was sought throughout the plan process. No submissions were received from these Iwi, who verbally indicated that they had no concerns with the draft plan.

6. Key issues

Generally submitters were supportive of the management plan's approach. There were no outstanding "Key Issues" as presented in other management plan processes but two issues of significance are outlined in the discussion below.

Issues raised by submitters, officer's comments and recommended responses are summarised in a table at the end of this section.

6.1 Wind farm activity

Most submissions that make mention of this issue support the intention to have a wind farm at this location but suggest aspects which need to be considered in the final development of the wind farm (such as location of turbines) to fulfil current management objectives (Such as "contributing to the diverse range of landscapes and protecting the park from inappropriate use").

The submission received from the contractor who is working with Greater Wellington to develop the Puketiro Wind Farm (RES NZ Ltd) has raised concerns that the policies of the management plan; whilst they recognise the existence of the development, do not encourage or support the development of the project within the park through the policies in the plan. The contractor has requested several changes to the management plan which are outlined in the table below.

It should be noted that the management plan was developed with the intention to maintain the park in the current management regime and protect as many of the park values as possible. This has been requested by the community through the submission process and was determined through the Regional Parks Network Management plan process.

6.2 Cultural Heritage

NZHPT have recommended that the heritage component of the management plan be revised to more clearly state the issues and desired outcomes for the

management of the historic sites in the park. A comprehensive list of changes has been supplied and can be found in submission number six.

6.3 Recreation

Two requests have been suggested for the recreational management of the park. Firstly that 4WD activity should be a restricted activity across the whole park and in no area of the park should it be prohibited and that access between “Area 2” and “Area 3” should be redefined as “managed”

The second point to be raised is that hang and paragliding in the park be facilitated by rephrasing Policy 3.24. (refer Submission 16)

6.4 Other

Many submitters identified editing and style improvements that could be made. Officers agree, these could be made with little or no substantive changes to the plan’s intent. Tables will be revised according and maps labelled to provide greater clarity. Text boxes could be used to illustrate the plan and inform readers about the land’s values and/or particular management issues.

Issue
Wind farm - Windfarm development be changed from “restricted activity” to “managed activity” - Integration of Puketiro Windfarm development throughout the plan - For decisions relating to the conditional use of the park the policies providing for the Windfarm development are to prevail - The plan is to make clear that Windfarm area above the “350 contour” is an “appropriate use” of the park in the landscape context. - Giving guidelines and criteria on how utility development (ie roading for windfarm or forestry activities) will be treated within the plan. - Clarification of whether RES development is to be treated as a Network Utility or Public Work and therefore policies 3.40 – 3.45 (pages 30.32) apply. - Adjusting wording to accommodate 120MW wind farm and specific reference to the dimensions of the access carriageway be deleted. (Page 33)
Heritage Issues and objectives for Heritage Management be more clearly defined (HPT).
Educational Increased use and promotion of The Ken Gray Centre
Recreation 4WD activity to be restricted across the whole Park, lifting the current “prohibited status in Area 3” - Facilitating Battle Hill as a site for Hang and paragliding by rephrasing policy 3.24 (page 28) to be expressly permitted in the plan

7. Next steps

After the Committee has considered the submissions, officers will begin drafting the final plan in line with the policy direction given by the Committee. A workshop may be held with Councillors to discuss any outstanding issues, before the final plan is considered by the Landcare Committee later this year.

8. Communication

A letter will be sent to all submitters, outlining the results of the Committee's deliberations. Once the Committee is satisfied with the final plan, copies will be made available to stakeholders, submitters, Council offices and libraries. The management plan's adoption will be announced with a media release and will be included in the next *Green Shoots* community newsletter.

9. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **receive** the report and **note** the contents of the report.
2. **consider** the attached submissions on the draft Battle Hill Farm Forest Park management plan
3. **instruct** Officers on how the Committee wish to proceed with finalising the draft Battle Hill Farm Forest Park management plan.

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Attachment 1: Summary of Submissions