

Statement of Proposal

Proposed GWRC Parks and Forests Concessions Guidelines 2013

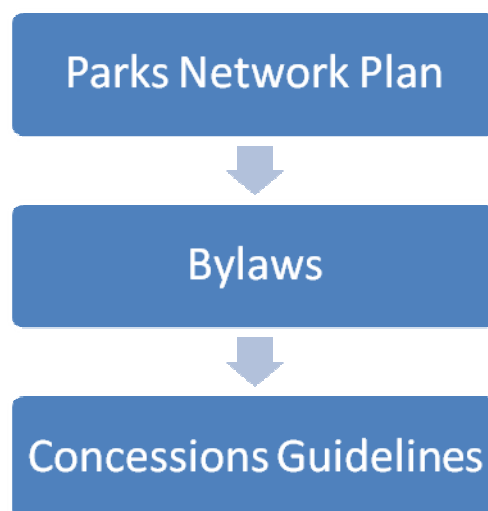
1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to inform the public and seek comments on Greater Wellington Regional Council's (GWRC) Proposed Parks and Forests Concessions Guidelines 2013.

2. Background

GWRC Parks and Forests Concessions Guidelines (Concessions Guidelines) contains the rationale for charging for concessions and lists the associated fees. It is to be read in conjunction with the Parks, Forests and Reserves Bylaw 2009 and Chapter 7 of the Parks Network Plan 2010: Rules for use and development (which outlines the overarching policy for concessions), <http://www.gw.govt.nz/greater-wellington-parks-network-plan>

Table 1: The Hierarchy of policy documents relating to concessions



Specifically the Concessions Guidelines refers to:

- Rationale for charging fees
- Types of charges for permits, leases, licences and easements and how these are calculated
- Information about how fee waivers may apply
- Monitoring of concessions and bonds.

The current policy has been in place since 2008 which replaced the initial policy made in 2001. Since this time a number of issues have been identified which required review of the current policy.

3. Proposal

A review has been completed of the concession guidelines. As a result, there are some changes proposed which are summarised below. A full copy of the Proposed Parks and Forests Concessions Guidelines 2013 can be viewed on our website.

3.1 Fees for processing licences, leases and easements

To date, the concessions guidelines have only specified charges for processing approvals of events and activities on the parks such as festivals, tours and filming. The cost of assessing and where necessary seeking public comment (submissions and hearings) on a lease, licence or easement has fallen entirely on GWRC and ratepayers. Given that there are private benefits to securing this type of concession, it is considered appropriate that the costs of processing an application are apportioned to the applicant, and not entirely borne by the ratepayer. Some examples of approved leases or licences currently operating in the parks include Kapiti Fourx4 Adventures, Battle Hill Eventing (horse riding), Hutt Valley Gliding Club, Paekakariki Surf Club and Wellington Tramways Museum.

To this end, officers have reviewed similar charges by Auckland Council, the Department of Conservation and GWRC's own resource management charging policy to provide a bench mark for setting the charging regime.

It is proposed then, that the processing fee for a lease, licence or easement is to be charged at an hourly rate of \$110 per hour of officer time actually spent. For the purposes of administration, an initial deposit fee will be collected. This has been calculated based on the average time taken to process particular application types. These initial deposit fees will be as follows:

- \$1,400.00 plus GST, for a non-notified application
- \$4,400.00 plus GST, for a notified application. An additional \$2,000 plus GST per half day if a hearing is required

The deposit fee shown above represents the estimated cost to GWRC to process an 'average' concession. Where the processing costs of the application exceed this estimate, additional charges are made for actual and reasonable

costs. Where the processing costs of the application are less than the initial deposit fee, a refund will be made.

A renewal of a previous lease, licence or an easement will be charged at actual time spent by officers to a maximum of \$1,400 plus GST.

In some instances, there is no delegation under the Reserves Act 1977 for GWRC to make a decision and these applications for a lease, licence or easement will be referred to the Minister of Conservation. In these instances, all administration fees associated with a concession are charged by the Department of Conservation.

3.2 Other minor changes to the policy:

3.2.1 Low impact filming

GWRC has been working with Film Wellington to provide the best service to local and international film makers. One issue highlighted is that low impact filming could be better provided for in our parks and forest. For example, a shoot that takes less than half a day, with minimal equipment and crew.

In this situation it is proposed that a lower activity application fee of \$50 (equivalent of a non-commercial application fee) would apply. This recognises that although the filming may be commercial in nature, its impact is minimal and that activity will contribute to the expansion of filming in the region. GWRC will also consider waiving the bond requirement.

Note that the application fees for processing other restricted activities (that do not require a licence, lease or easement) are unaltered from 2008.

3.2.2 Increase in camping fees

Update the prices of camping fees. Currently, GWRC charges \$5 per adult/night and \$2 per child/night. It is proposed that both fees are increased by \$1.00. This is the same charge as DOC for a standard campsite.²

3.2.3 Firewood collection permits fee increase

It is proposed to increase the cost of a permit for the collection of firewood to \$50 per weekend (currently \$25). This more accurately reflects the administration time for issuing keys, organising deposits and associated paper work. There is no capacity to check that firewood collection by the public is non-commercial. The higher fee may also deter those who appear to be on-selling the wood.

² A DOC standard campsite has a limited range of facilities and services. Toilets (usually composting or pit variety) water supply (tap, stream, or lake) and vehicle or boat access. Wood barbecues and fireplaces, showers (cold), picnic tables, a cooking shelter and rubbish bins may be provided.

4. Reasons for the proposal

To date, the administration/processing costs have been collected solely for approved activities and events such as filming, festivals and competitions. It was identified that some changes were required to the concession guidelines to reflect the private benefits accrued to a concessionaire of gaining a lease, licence or easement.

The proposed changes to apply to leases, licences and easements and will ensure that the burden of the cost of processing these applications is apportioned between the applicant and GWRC. Given that there are private benefits to securing this type of concession it is considered appropriate that the costs of processing an application are apportioned to the applicant, and not entirely borne by the ratepayer.

There are also some minor fee changes which have been bench marked against other agencies to reflect the general market price.

5. Submission process

Comments and submissions on the Proposed Parks and Forests Concessions Guidelines 2013 are invited to be received by GWRC **by Friday 4pm, 26 April 2013**. Submissions can be made online or posted to Greater Wellington Regional Council, draft Annual Plan submissions 2013/14, Freepost 3156, PO Box 11646, Wellington 6142