



If calling, please ask for Democratic Services

Environment Committee

Thursday 2 December 2021, 9.30am

Remotely, via Microsoft Teams

Members

Cr Gaylor (Chair)

Cr Blakeley

Cr Hughes

Cr Laban

Cr Lee

Cr Ponter

Cr van Lier

Barbie Barton

Cr Connelly (Deputy Chair)

Cr Brash

Cr Kirk-Burnnand

Cr Lamason

Cr Nash

Cr Staples

Recommendations in reports are not to be construed as Council policy until adopted by Council

Environment Committee

Thursday 02 December 2021, 9.30am

Remotely, via Microsoft Teams

Public Business

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Please note these minutes remain unconfirmed until the Environment Committee meeting on 2 December 2021.

Report 21.495

Public minutes of the Environment Committee meeting on Thursday 21 October 2021

All members participating remotely at 9.33am.

Members Present

Councillor Gaylor (Chair)
Councillor Connelly (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Blakeley (from 10.40am)
Councillor Brash
Councillor Hughes
Councillor Kirk-Burnnand
Councillor Laban (until 10.47am)
Councillor Lee (until 11.48am)
Councillor Nash
Councillor Ponter
Councillor Staples
Barbie Barton

All members participated at this meeting remotely, and counted for the purpose of quorum, as per clause 25B of Schedule 7 to the Local Government Act 2002.

Karakia timatanga

The Committee Chair opened the meeting with a karakia timatanga.

Public Business

1 Apologies

Moved: Cr Connelly / Cr Nash

That the Committee accepts the apology for absence from Councillors Lamason and van Lier and lateness from Councillor Blakeley.

The motion was **carried**.

2 Declarations of conflicts of interest

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

3 Public participation

There was no public participation.

4 Confirmation of the Public minutes of the Environment Committee meeting on 16 September 2021 - Report 21.431

Moved: Cr Brash / Cr Hughes

That the Committee confirms the Public minutes of the Environment Committee meeting on 16 September 2021 - Report 21.431

The motion was **carried**.

5 Update on Progress of Action Items from Previous Environment Committee meetings – October 2021 – Report 21.456

Al Cross, General Manager, Environment Management, spoke to the report.

6 Farming Reference Group update – oral update

Barbie Barton, Chair, Farming Reference Group, provided an oral update on the farming and rural sector.

Ms Barton advised that grass growth is struggling to meet demand now that lambing season has finished.

Ms Barton advised that the farming community is considering strategies around the potential spread of COVID-19 in rural communities. Owner/operator farmers are particularly vulnerable should they be infected with COVID-19 and are starting to consider how operations could continue should they be required to quarantine.

The Farming Reference Group met on 22 September. Discussion centred around water and the various forms in which it is managed. Ms Barton reported that the Three Waters and the water services bill are creating some concern within rural communities that the unique impacts on rural communities are not being considered at the national level.

The Committee Chair accorded priority to agenda item 8 – Environment / Catchment Update, in accordance with Standing Order 3.5.2.

7 Environment / Catchment Update – Report 21.471 [For Information]

Al Cross, General Manager, Environment Management, and David Boone, Acting General Manager, spoke to the report.

Noted: The Committee requested:

- progress updates on the consenting for the Porirua waste water treatment plant.
- to be advised of who received funding from the Community Environment Fund.

8 Department of Conservation Regional Pest Management Programme – Oral report

David Boone, Acting General Manager, Catchment Management, introduced Angus Hulme-Moir, Operations Manager, Department of Conservation, who tabled a presentation and provided an oral update on the Department of Conservation's Wairarapa/Kapiti Wellington ungulate control.

Councillor Blakeley arrived at the meeting at 10.40am, during questions on the above item.

Councillor Laban left the meeting at 10.47am during questions on the above item and did not return.

The meeting adjourned at 10.55am and resumed at 11.10am.

9 Managing Regional Park Land in support of the Toitū Te Whenua Vision - Baring Head/Ōrua-Pouanui – Report 21.427

Jimmy Young, Manager, Parks, and Fiona Colquhoun, Parks Planner, spoke to the report.

Moved: Cr Brash / Cr Kirk-Burnnand

That the Committee:

- 1 Notes the Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan 2020-30 Restricted Activity assessment and recommendations, inclusive of high level option and benefit analysis as outlined in Attachment 1.
- 2 Approves the preparation of a new 13-month, commercial stock grazing licence at Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui, East Harbour Regional Park, and a period of one month public consultation on it. This will continue current land management practices, but with reduced impacts, prior to native vegetation restoration processes commencing in 2023. It is proposed that this licence conclude on 31 January 2023 to coincide with the agricultural cycle and winter planting season. It will not have renewal provisions.
- 3 Notes that in accordance with Toitū Te Whenua Parks Plan 2020-30 policy and rules, an Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) will be prepared to guide preparation of the licence and its operating conditions in support of overall impact reduction.
- 4 Notes that consultation will be undertaken with mana whenua and key park stakeholders on the proposal prior to the future presentation of a proposed short term stock grazing licence agreement for Council approval.
- 5 Notes that this is the first part of the process. Section 74 of the Reserves Act provides for temporary grazing licences (up to 10 years), to be granted over a wide range of reserves including Scenic Reserves. Public notice is required in accordance with section 119; and full consideration given to all objections and submissions in relation to the proposal in accordance with section 120. Council approval for the licence will then be sought.

The motion was **carried**.

Noted: The Committee requested an outline of the various plans related to parks management and further detail on how these plans interconnect.

10 Plan Changes 2022 – Update on Work Programme and Natural Resources Plan Change 2 – Report 21.474 [For Information]

Al Cross, General Manager, Environment Management, introduced the report. Irene Clarke, Senior Policy Advisor, Environmental Policy, Richard Shield, Senior Policy Advisor, Environmental Policy and Kat Banyard, Policy Advisor, spoke to the report.

Councillor Lee left the meeting at 11.48am and did not return.

11 Regional Pest Management Plan Operational Plan for 2021/22 – Report 21.462 [For Information]

David Boone, Acting General Manager, Catchment Management and Davor Bejakovich, Manager, Biosecurity, spoke to the report.

Noted: The Committee requested that regular updates and photos of pest plants be put on Greater Wellington's social media channels to help raise awareness.

12 Whaitua Process Update – Oral report

Tim Sharp, Programme Manager – Whaitua, provided an oral update on the Whaitua Process.

Mr Sharp advised that the Te-Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua Implementation Plan (WIP) was received by Council on 23 September 2021. The WIP documents are currently being designed for publishing. Officers are drafting an initial response to the WIP which will be presented to Council at its meeting on 9 December, with a more detailed report and action plan to be presented to Council in April/May 2022.

Mr Sharp advised the Committee of the progress of presenting the WIP to other territorial authorities in the Wellington Region.

Noted: The Committee requested that the Te Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua reports to Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, and Wellington City Council be provided to Committee members.

13 Wainuiomata Mainland Island Sanctuary update – Oral report

Councillor Nash provided an oral update on the progress of the Wainuiomata Fenced Sanctuary proposal.

Councillor Nash advised that the feasibility study is expected to be delivered by mid-November 2021 and that the recommended governance for the sanctuary is likely to be via a Charitable Trust. Costs for the fence construction are higher than initial estimates meaning that the proposal will likely require new funding via a specific appropriation from central government. Detailed quotes for the fence construction will be included in the feasibility study.

14 Crown Funded Projects and Programmes update – Report 21.485 [For Information]

David Boone, Acting General Manager, Catchment Management, spoke to the report.

Karakia whakamutunga

The Committee Chair closed the meeting with a karakia whakamutunga.

The meeting closed at 12.50pm.

Councillor P Gaylor

Chair

Date:



**Environment Committee
2 December 2021
Report 21.566**

For Information

**PROCESS FOR CONSIDERING SUBMISSIONS AND FEEDBACK ON THE
PROPOSED NEW STOCK GRAZING LICENCE AT BARING HEAD/ŌRUA-POAUNI**

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To inform the Environment Committee of the process for considering submissions on the proposed new commercial stock grazing licence at East Harbour Regional Park, Baring Head/Ōrua-paouni.

Te tāhū kōrero

Background

2. At its meetings on 21 October 2021 the Committee approved the public consultation for proposed new commercial stock grazing licence at Baring Head/Ōrua-paouni (Baring Head).

Public consultation

3. This hearing completes the public consultation for this commercial grazing licence proposal. The consultation period was open from 18 August to 25 October 2020.

Principles of consultation

4. There are six principles of consultation set out in the Local Government Act 2002. One of these principles is that views presented to a local authority should be accepted with an open mind, and should be given due consideration by the local authority, in making a decision.
5. The Committee should also take into account that persons who wish to have their views on the decision or matter considered by the local authority should be provided with a reasonable opportunity to present those view to the local authority.
6. It is consistent with best practice that members should be present for the substantial part of the hearing and deliberations in order to participate in the decision-making of the Committee.

Te tātaritanga Analysis

Submissions and feedback received

7. Greater Wellington received 25 written submissions on the proposal.
8. The written submissions have been distributed to members of the Committee as an attachment to Report 21.563 – Public submissions on proposed new stock grazing licence in East Harbour Regional Park, Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui. It is suggested that written submissions are taken as read by the Committee, and that the Committee members only discuss those submissions on which they want to make a particular comment.
9. Feedback from the community was obtained through 23 submissions via the *Have Your Say* website, together with 2 submissions via direct mail. Analysis on submissions is detailed in Report 21.563 – Public submissions on proposed new stock grazing licence in East Harbour Regional Park, Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui.

Oral presentation process

10. The purpose of the hearing is to hear oral presentations in support of written submissions. At the time of writing this report, one submitter wishes to be heard and is scheduled to speak to their submission on Thursday 2 December 2021. A hearing schedule will be provided to Subcommittee members, with a final version available on the day of the hearing.
11. Five minutes is allocated for the submitter to speak and five minutes is allocated for Committee members to ask the submitter questions.
12. It is proposed that deliberations commence following the hearing of oral presentations.

Consideration of issues raised in submissions and feedback

13. The Committee must consider all written submissions, regardless of whether the submitter spoke to it. The Committee must also consider all of the feedback that was received on the consultation document.

Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei Next steps

14. The committee will need to prepare a report to Council, scheduled for 9 December 2021, setting out its recommendations on the proposal.
15. Each person who made a submission or provided feedback and who provided a contact address will, subsequent to Council adopting or discontinuing the proposal, receive a response outlining Council's decision, and any key changes.
16. A press release will be published, outlining Council's decision and any key changes, and be made available on Greater Wellington's website.

**Ngā kaiwaitohu
Signatories**

Writer	Alex Smith – Kaitohutohu Matua/ Senior Advisor, Democratic Services
Approvers	Al Cross – Kaiwhakahaere Matua Rautaki/General Manager Environment

<p style="text-align: center;">He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations</p>
<p><i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i></p> <p>The Committee has authority to recommend approval or discontinuation of the stock grazing license proposal. This report sets out the processes for the Committee to hear and consider all submissions.</p>
<p><i>Implications for Māori</i></p> <p>There are no direct implications for Māori arising from this report; however, Māori and mana whenua park neighbours did provide a submission, and previously submitted in consultation to develop Toitu Te Whenua Parks Network Plan 2020-30 which signals the intention to phase out stock grazing in regional parks.</p>
<p><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></p> <p>The report sets out the process for the committee to consider submissions on the proposal which supports LTP strategic directions for climate emergency response.</p>
<p><i>Internal consultation</i></p> <p>The Strategic and Corporate Planning department was consulted.</p>
<p><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></p> <p>There are no known risks arising from this report.</p>

Environment Committee
2 December 2021
Report 21.563



For Decision

ANALYSIS OF SUBMISSIONS AND FEEDBACK ON THE PROPOSED NEW STOCK GRAZING LICENCE IN EAST HARBOUR REGIONAL PARK, BARING HEAD/ŌRUA-POUANUI

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To advise the Environment Committee of the submissions received on the proposal for a new commercial stock grazing licence in East Harbour Regional Park at Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui, (Baring Head).

He tūtohu

Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1 **Considers** the submissions on the proposals for new stock grazing licences ([Attachment 1](#)), together with the officer comments in determining its findings and recommendations to Council.
- 2 **Recommends** to Council any changes as agreed by this Committee on the Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui commercial stock grazing licence proposal.
- 3 **Notes** that the Reclipping Papatūānuku/Parks Restoration plan currently in development, will provide directions for future restoration at Baring Head in support of Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan 2020-30 (Toitū Te Whenua) directions.

Te tāhū kōrero

Background

2. The proposal for a new 13-month, 183 hectare commercial stock grazing licence at Baring Head was outlined in Report 21.427 (Managing regional park land in support of the Toitū Te Whenua vision at Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui) in October 2021. The basis for this proposal was to support operational transition in managing park land while plans are prepared for restoration, continuing traditional grazing practices, but with sheep only (no cattle), and a reduction in the area of park grazed and stock numbers.
3. The proposed new commercial stock grazing licence for 183 hectares of park was consulted on from 29 October to 25 November 2021.
4. A total of 25 submissions were received; 23 via Greater Wellington's website 'Have your say', and 2 through direct email.

5. The principles of consultation, set out in section 82 of the Local Government Act 2002, apply to the submission process.
6. The consultation process encompassing hearings for public submissions is set out in the Reserves Act 1977 and outlined in the 'Process for hearing submission on the Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui commercial stock grazing proposal', Report 21.564.

Te tātaritanga Analysis

Submissions

7. 25 submissions were received in total. Of these, 23 were received via the have your say website and 2 were direct email.
 - 14 submitters identified support for the proposal. Of those in support, 4 did not provide any commentary, and one was the existing commercial stock grazing licence holder. Two identified that their support was qualified.
 - 10 submitters were opposed to the proposal, and all provided reasons.
 - One did not oppose but supported more detailed restoration planning.
8. Refer **Attachment 1** for full details of submissions.

Submission summary and commentary

9. Submitters were asked about their support or opposition to the proposal, and if they had any suggestions about possible changes. Feedback and suggestions included:
 - Support for current licence holder. Provisional support on the basis of it being a transition and staged approach to restoration.
 - That stock grazing was not compatible with protection of indigenous flora and fauna in a Scenic Reserve, and a suggestion of legal action.
 - A shorter notice period of 6 months should be given for grazing as an act of goodwill.
 - Questions about the level of detail in the Assessment of Environmental Effects e.g. 'how granting an interim one year licence is necessary for the transition, or advance restoration of ecological health and reduce emissions'.
 - To directly offset stock impacts with tree planting requirements within the licence agreement.
 - Not delaying natural regeneration processes any further with another stock grazing licence (several submitters)
 - Discontinuing grazing and accelerating restoration e.g. 'let the land finally return to nature'. Mowing or hay baling to reduce grass instead of grazing.
 - Concerns for the skink population if grazing were to cease to quickly with no plan in place. Rodent populations may boom if grasses are not controlled.
 - Concerns about controls for stopping stock coming close to waterways

- Concerns for the nationally endangered banded dotterels which breed on the south coast beach and are impacted by stock (several submissions). New stock exclusion fencing was suggested.
 - Interest in the Recloning Papatūānuku restoration plan for parks, currently in development and restoration plan specific to the park (to be developed).
 - Concerns about Greater Wellington not prioritising climate emergency response over grazing.
10. The Friends of the Park provided a detailed submission. They raised concerns about strong winds, flammable grass, and fire risks from people lighting fires on the Wainuiomata Coast road, and the impact this may have on restoration plantings. They identified the need for a detailed transition plan, which they suggested, may include mowing fire breaks, and that they supported the current grazing licence holder operations. They suggest sheep help keep the dotterel areas open and free of vegetation. Refer **Attachment 1** for details.
 11. Tupoki Takarangi Trust, who own freehold Maori land on the northern boundary of the park, have identified their support for the proposal. A member of Tupoki Takarangi Trust is also on the Parangarahu Lakes Rōpū Tiaki.
 12. Wellington Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club, a long term concession holder and recreation activity at Baring Head, were also supportive of the proposal. They were also keen to know more about restoration plans and potential impacts on their activity. The maintenance of cliff-top launch site areas and access tracks is essential for their activities (and will be incorporated into restoration planning).
 13. Forest & Bird/Te Reo o Te Taiao also provided a detailed submission. They identified that they 'do not oppose' the proposal, and support phased restoration including 'thorough ecological assessment'. Their concerns included absence of detailed ecological assessment in the AEE at the time of notification, and absence of a transition plan when grazing ends in 2023. They were particularly concerned that retirement of grazing quickly, and without a plan in place, will lead to the real risk of a proliferation of rodents, which could decimate the lizard population (based on experience at another reserve).
 14. An individual submission from Russell Bell opposed the proposal, and outlined detailed concerns about it, refer submission #21 in Attachment 1. He suggests grazing is on conflict to the reserve classification of Scenic Reserve and protection of indigenous flora and fauna, that lizard habitat could be supported by grazing in some areas if this was considered beneficial, but that the park land should be left alone to 'recover on its own'. He offers the nearby Parangarahu Lakes as an example of natural regeneration and equal fire risk. He questions the limited rationale for the proposal, and provides calculations for carbon emissions impacts from the proposal compared to sequestration from trees and shrubs.

Additional information

15. During the consultation period Greater Wellington Biodiversity officers advised that volunteers have recently commenced monitoring of banded dotterels on the south coast beaches at Baring Head. Banded dotterel raise their chicks from August to

February. Their nests are little more than depressions in the shingle making them very difficult to spot and are easily crushed. They are classified as a nationally and regionally vulnerable species and monitoring is undertaken in line with the recently developed Eastbourne - Wainuiomata coastline banded dotterel management strategy 2021-2026.

16. This monitoring has recently indicated that the main nesting area for banded dotterels is on the western site of the Wainuiomata River estuary (not the east as previously thought), and that sheep on the beach area have trampled at least one active nest and browsing beach vegetation. Nesting dotterels are also subject to predation and disturbance from other species (e.g. birds, stoats/weasels, humans).
17. The pictures below are of current nesting sites and camera footage which was expected to be simply monitoring a nest site, but instead picked up several sheep. This information about sheep impacts on banded dotterels was not available at the time the AEE was prepared for the proposal.



Nest sites

18. Current grazing licence stock are allowed to access the beach via a vehicle track because the Wainuiomata River is one of the stock water sources. To reduce sheep impacts on the beach the dotterel nests can be fenced to protect them from stock impacts. This option is explored further below.
19. The contribution of conservation groups to restoration efforts in the park is acknowledged. Restoration to date, led by the Friends and supported by Million Metres and Conservation Volunteers NZ and others such as MIRO (dotterel monitoring), has

focused on the river flat and beach areas, with over 25,000 plants since 2011, and significant work on weeds and pest animals.

Threat management – weeds and fire

20. Analysis and advice about fire threat and management practices was also detailed in Report 21.427, Attachment 1. A fire threat and risk reduction management plan is being prepared for the park by an expert fire consultant. Preliminary advice has been received, and further information was provided during the consultation period. This includes:
- Fire history for the park was investigated. It was found that ignition source of all fires in or within one kilometre of it over the past ten years were human activities. Six were mobile property fires (vehicles and machines) along road edges or on private with one in the park. Seven were camp, bonfires, or rubbish fires along the road edge, and one was on private property north of Baring Head lighthouse. Of these, four were vegetation fires further east of the park on the Orongorongo River section of the road. There were no recorded fires on the western side of the park beach. One fire was on the private land north of the lighthouse in a paddock between structures.
 - The Wainuiomata River has been identified as 'a very good barrier essentially containing fire between it and the road'. Fuel reduction measures including mown fire breaks (impacts on lizard habitat to be considered), removal of dead understory in non-native species, and maintenance of tracks and roads sides and mowing their verges to support their effectiveness as fire breaks.
 - Fire regulations and education activities to focus on key risk behaviours and activities (e.g. beach fires) and surveillance.
 - Liaison with park neighbours and stakeholders in the maintenance of firebreaks and 'defensible spaces' such as amenity areas and around important assets.
 - Baring Head's location close to Wellington airport allowing for rapid aerial emergency response by helicopter with monsoon buckets should a fire occur.
 - In the long term, speeding up the natural recovery of forests through restoration plantings, or most commonly, a combination of natural regeneration and restoration plantings reduces the threat of fire and risk of significant impacts (avoiding highly flammable native species near key assets).
21. The fire management plan (including wildfire risk analysis) for the park will be completed before large scale restoration work commences. It will inform restoration planting (e.g. 'green' and mown fire breaks) and guide new practices to support risk reduction and emergency response. Other key changes occurring in the park will also assist such as development of the lightkeepers cottages as overnight visitor accommodation (e.g. people providing passive surveillance) and new carefully designed access tracks which may also serve as fire breaks and access tracks in the western escarpment area. The planned car park area to the east of the lighthouse complex for people staying overnight will also provide a break area.
22. An LCAF funded restoration plan is to be prepared which will detail all pre-planting work before restoration plantings can commence in 2023. The Key Native Ecosystem

programme already supports extensive work in the park to reduce the impacts of pest plants and animals on native species and restoration plantings.

Legality of grazing in Scenic Reserves under the Reserves Act

23. The proposed new licence agreement will be made under section 74 of the Reserves Act which provides for temporary licences over a range of reserves including Scenic. The granting of the licence is satisfy the requirements of the Act because it is a short term, reduced activity grazing licence, as part of supporting the longer term goals for the reserve. Freedom of public access will be maintained and restoration plans to be developed will guide enhancement of natural values.

Officer recommended options

24. Based on new information about sheep impacts on endangered dotterels and the public feedback received on the proposal (which was divided in support and against, refer **Attachment 1.**), the following options for changes to the proposal are presented, **either:**
25. **Option 1. (preferred)** Revise the proposed stock grazing licence to protect the nationally endangered banded dotterel nesting areas on the south coast area of the park.
- Costs of fencing to exclude sheep from the southern beach area are considered to be prohibitively expensive at approximately \$23,000 and would be practically challenging. It would require extensive fencing of the main access track at the top of the escarpment and at various access points. Additional investment in farming related infrastructure is not in accordance with Toitū Te Whenua Parks Plan policy (20P).
 - Known dotterel nests on the beach, can however to be protected to some extent at relatively low cost, by fencing their nest areas with temporary (waratahs and sheep wire) fencing. Temporary fencing costs are estimated to be \$3,000 - \$5,000 depending on the number of nests and fencing areas required. Income from the current commercial grazing licence is approximately \$12,000. This will be reduced to approximately \$10,000 in the new proposal with lower stock numbers and reduced area grazed.
 - Sheep will still be able to access and graze beach vegetation and nearby stock from Orongorongo Station periodically cross the river at low tide and enter the park and bird nesting areas. Proposed grazing licence conditions can include requirements for the grazing licence holder to proactively encourage sheep to other water sources away from the river and beach during nesting seasons. The grazing licence holder could do this by providing sheep drinking water elsewhere (at their cost).
 - Protection of nesting dotterels is can be actively done by volunteers while they are regularly monitoring the sites. The Hem of Remutaka Jobs for Nature staff are also to be involved in dotterel work and combined with MIRO can provide multiple patrols per week on the beach for nesting birds.
 - AEE recommendations will inform grazing licence agreement conditions, and the option of early termination (with appropriate notice) added to allow for new or different advice from detailed reports being prepared to guide restoration work.

or;

26. **Option 2. (alternative)** Discontinue the proposed new stock grazing licence. Complete detailed restoration and threat management plans early in 2022, and undertake weed, pest animal (e.g. mice) and fire threat management works, prior to plantings commencing in 2023, funded via LCAF.
- To enable LCAF funded, pre-planting planning and works to occur, a report is being prepared for Council's Climate Committee's 16 December 2021 meeting. It will outline proposed on-ground works at Baring Head, and if approved, enable this to be brought forward to 2022 (instead of 2023). However large scale planting cannot be scheduled to commence until winter 2023 at the earliest, due to the planning required and time to collect seed and propagate plants.
 - Work will however be guided by a detailed restoration plan the threat management plan, expected to be completed by mid-2022. Preliminary advice is that a period of 6 to 9 month of grass growth supports restoration plantings (as opposed to grazed land).
 - Operationally, Parks and volunteers will need to refocus time and resources towards restoration planning and fire threat management. In the short term, this will divert staff and volunteer time away from the other activities, such as the lighthouse complex restoration (where a grant has been received for additional work). In practice this will mean adjustment and trial (and error) of new practices, such as mown fire breaks and flatter open space areas and cumulative effects of adjusting to managing a number of parks without traditional grazing. Working with and learning from other park experiences with land use change, for example, as outlined in the Forest & Bird submission in **Attachment 1**, and Wellington City who are also facing this challenge for the Outer Green Belt Parks.
 - Additional work will be required as part of restoration planning to investigate possible implications on lizard populations, learning from the monitoring that occurs on the eastern escarpment (which has not been grazed for a number of years), and work to avoid possible significant increases in rat and mice populations (which thrive in long grass) which can impacts lizards.
 - Fire threat, and risk management measures, have been explored and addressed above. However, new practices will be required. There is uncertainty from moving quickly into managing the park without grazing. Not having an immediate plan for fire management in place is a risk.
 - NIWA's seasonal outlook for November to January identifies that 'A progression toward La Niña conditions occurred in the equatorial Pacific during October and NIWA has moved to La Niña Alert'. 'Normal or below normal' rainfall is forecast for Wellington. This may mean additional mowing is required in the park.
 - This option will mean stock will be removed from the park at the end of December 2021, and additional investment in fencing to protect dotterel nesting areas from sheep will not be required. Conservation groups are expected to continue their monitoring activities.

- The removal of grazing stock will result in a greater reduction in corporate carbon emissions being brought forward to 2022.
 - This option is likely to create short term challenges, but is more aligned with Toitū Te Whenua Parks Plan vision and directions, as well as response to the global climate emergency.
27. Communication and education activities about land use change across parks is being planned to support awareness and understanding about restoration work and approaches, the different look of landscapes in transition. Other park agencies have described the initial change to longer grass as ‘grassy meadows’ – which have been found to attract butterflies and other insects, and in turn birds. As submitters have identified, longer grass can however also provide useful habitat for mice and other invasive species.
28. Detailed restoration and threat management reports will provide useful additional information and likely provide more certainty about current ‘unknowns.’

Te huritao ki te huringa o te āhuarangi Consideration of climate change

29. The matter for decision in this report was considered by officers in accordance with the process set out in Greater Wellington’s *Climate Change Consideration Guide*.
30. Stock grazing in regional parks accounts for between 20 and 25 percent of Greater Wellington’s corporate carbon emissions. Consideration of climate change and reduction of corporate carbon emissions were a core consideration in the Restricted Activity Assessment outlined in Attachment 1 of the Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui report (Report 21.427).

The Actions of Council’s Corporate Carbon Neutrality Action Plan and corporate carbon emission reduction pathways are key drivers for emission reductions in parks. In particular; Action 1. *Introduce a carbon reduction policy for the organisation. Decisions must consider what impact they will have on the carbon target(s), with a strong bias towards those options that will avoid, reduce or absorb emissions. The carbon reduction policy will be reflected in procurement policy;* and Action 8. *Review the future of grazing licences in regional parks as part of the review of the Parks Network Plan and options to use this land for native reforestation where appropriate to earn carbon credits.*

31. The Recloning Papatūānuku Restoration Plan, currently being prepared, will guide restoration of the grazed areas of regional parks with restoration works progressing over the next 2-3 years largely funded via the LCAF, but also supported by community groups and other funding programmes (such as One Billion Trees). The Recloning Papatūānuku Plan will provide strategic guidance for accelerating emission reduction and carbon sequestration in parks.
32. The new grazing proposal is for 430 (sheep only) stock, which is a reduction from the current licence agreement of 700 (mixed sheep and cattle), and will result in the significant reduction in corporate carbon emissions.

33. Some submitters asked Greater Wellington to respond more urgently to climate change by not continuing to graze stock and accelerate restoration activities. If the committee supports Option 2, a decrease in corporate carbon emissions from this park will be accounted for in the next corporate carbon emissions report, due in 2022.

Ngā tikanga whakatau Decision-making process

34. The matter requiring decision in this report was considered by officers against the decision-making requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002.
35. The decision-making process followed is prescribed by Sections 74 and 119 and 120 of the Reserves Act 1977, and for Baring Head, the Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan 2020-30 requirements for Restricted Activities in parks.

Te hiranga Significance

36. This matter is considered to be of high significance and has followed the consultation process required under the Reserves Act 1977 and Local Government Act 2002. This is because there has been a sustained very high level of public interest in climate change and stock grazing related land uses and proposals in regional parks.

Te whakatūtakitaki Engagement

37. Engagement activities undertaken during the consultation period included a public notices, social media and direct email. Media coverage included an article in the Hutt News.
38. As required by the Reserves Act 1977, submitters will receive a copy of the report identifying the recommendations of the Committee.

Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei Next steps

39. Based on Committee recommendations, a report will be presented to Council at its meeting on 9 December 2021.
40. Submitters will then be notified.

Ngā āpitihanga Attachments

Number	Title
1	Record of public submissions on a proposed new stock grazing licence at Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui, East Harbour Regional Park

Ngā kaiwaitohu Signatories

Writers	Jimmy Young - Parks Manager Fiona Colquhoun – Parks Strategy
Approvers	Jake Gilmer - Manager Corporate & Strategic Planning Al Cross - General Manager Environment Luke Troy – General Manager Strategy

He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations
<p><i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i></p> <p>The Committee has authority to recommend approval or discontinuation of the stock grazing license proposal.</p>
<p><i>Implications for Māori</i></p> <p>Engagement with mana whenua was sought for the proposed new stock grazing licence. Strategic alignment with Te Whāriki, the Maori Outcomes Framework is considered.</p>
<p><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></p> <p>Alignment with the strategic directions of the LTP, Te Whāriki, the Maori Outcomes Framework and Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan were core considerations in preparation of the Baring Head stock grazing licence proposal assessment.</p>
<p><i>Internal consultation</i></p> <p>Officers in the Democratic Services, Legal (and external lawyers), Environment and Strategy, Communications & Engagement and Land Management groups were consulted about the new stock grazing licence proposal.</p>
<p><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></p> <p>Acting on the strategic directions, policies and rules of Toitū Te Whenua Parks Plan, Greater Wellingtons Climate Emergency Action Plan has been identified as important by submitters.</p> <p>Fire threat management information and advice is helping to inform Greater Wellington's approach associated with land use transition to restoration. Many other parks in the network (managed without grazing) are in already in stages of passive restoration (such as southern Belmont and Parangarahu Lakes) and the same approaches to pest plant, animal and fire threat management will be adopted for Baring Head, supported by additional site specific expert advice.</p>

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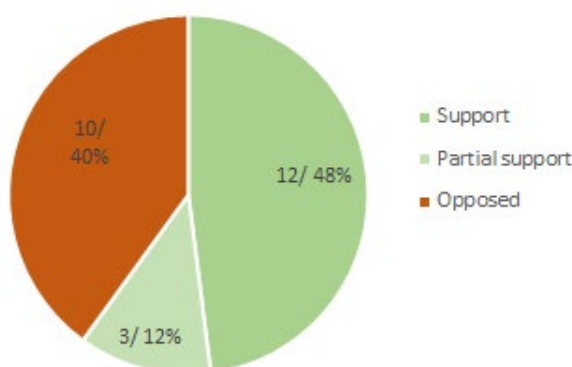
Record of public submissions - proposed new commercial stock grazing licence in East Harbour Regional Park, Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui

SUPPORT / OPPOSITION TO NEW STOCK GRAZING LICENCE PROPOSAL

TOTAL SUBMISSIONS

Twenty five submissions were received in total. Of these, 23 were received via the have your say website and 2 were direct email:

- 14 submitters identified support for the proposal. Of these, 4 identified support and provided no further details, one is the current grazing licence holder, and two identified that their support is qualified.
- 10 submitters were opposed to it, and all provided reasons.
- One did not oppose, but supported more detailed restoration planning.



PART A. SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED VIA HAVE YOUR SAY WEBSITE FEEDBACK FORM

Question 1. Do you support the application for a grazing licence at Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui?

Responses to the following two questions are detailed in the table below:

Q1 a. If you don't support the proposal, please tell us why?

Q2. Do you have any suggestions for what to add or changes in the proposed licence?

Submission	Response	Officer comment/ recommendation
1.	<p>I ride my bike over Baring Head at least once a month, it's one of my favourite places to take visitors to Wellington. I think the sheep add something to the vibe of that area, especially around lambing time. So I would be happy to see that grazing licence extended for multiple years, maybe with the grazing area being reduced each year as new sections are fenced off for restoration to native forest or wetlands.</p> <p>I think a much bigger problem is with all the gorse and goats and possums around the Kohangatera and Kohangapiripiri lakes. The dirt roads around there are great for walking and biking, with spectacular views from the Cameron Ridge and Valley View and Bluff Point lookouts, but sadly so much of the view is full of scrubby gorse. And I've taken people walking around there who were intimidated by groups of goats jumping out onto the tracks. It would be really good to clean all that up before losing revenue from Baring Head grazing. I should add, I really</p>	Supports proposal

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	appreciate the hard work and friendly positive attitude of all your park rangers. I've never met one who wasn't friendly, well informed and helpful.	
2.	Overall I support this idea - so long as planting out the land in native bush happens soon afterwards. I understand that may not be able to be done immediately however, and I assume that's why a grazing license is being considered.	Supports proposal
3. Brent Cuttance	Who will be responsible for fire control on baring head?? Heavily populated area in summer and when a fire gets going in open grass land it will be devastating, also probably killing human life. It will be a matter of if not when. I have personally put out numerous fires on the beach. Certainly worth thinking about.	Supports proposal. Note: the submitter is the current commercial stock grazing licence holder
4.	Start the restoration work straight away.	Opposed
5.	Time to remove the grazing license and let the land revert and begin native tree planting. Suggest giving the farmers goodwill 6 months notice to remove stock for reasons noted above.	Opposed
6.	<p>The park has almost no trees. There are sheep in the wetlands on the barren hill tops. There's no native birds. It's windy and there's no where to shelter. There's sheep poo everywhere. It's not good management of public land to have sheep and cows eating any native vegetation that tries to grow back. It makes me feel sad every time I look at it from where I live on the Miramar Peninsula. Your assessment and great management plan talks about benefits, but the only benefits of this are for the private profit of the farmer. It's a climate emergency and the irony here is that NIWA is monitoring at their station on the park and you have stories about it there. Is the Council not serious about climate change? It's urgent! I love riding my bike out there but I want trees not sheep.</p> <p>Yes, scrap it and get on with planting trees. Don't delay. Do more to support volunteers to help and just get on with it... like at the beautiful lakes I pass on the way there. The gorse shelters the native veg growing back and there's seed plots to help it. Do the same.</p>	Opposed
7.	Let the land finally return to nature!	Opposed
8.	Why are we spending money on establishing more trees when we are unable to look after the bush we already have...? Why don't you use the restoration money for pest control to preserve our virgin bush!!	Support
9.	Camera on a nest at Baring where the sheep graze and suspect we have lost two nests due to sheep trampling. Add fencing to protect the nesting area and so the sheep can get to fresh water. Then I would support grazing.	Supports, with qualification
10.	Two reasons, first grazing beef and lamb is the most intensive carbon footprint and secondly private business should nor profit from exploitation of public land	Opposed
11. Friends of Baring Head	Refer submission detail below	Support
12.	It's unclear from the AEE how granting an interim one year licence is necessary for the transition, or advance restoration of ecological health and reduce emissions	Opposed
13.	The land shouldn't be used for grazing. Ensure there is robust controls to stop stock coming close to water ways	Opposed

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14.	<p>You made the decision as a Council to stop grazing the parks and focus on restoration. How about following your own directions!! Continuing to graze the parks literally stops restoration. The sheep at Baring head have huge impacts on the wildlife trying to nest (mainly on the coastline). The sheep have been invading them so much that GW has had to invest a lot of money onto fencing off little blocks to protect these birds... that's just a band aid on bullet wound... not a solution. Remove the sheep to protect the wildlife. I joined the volunteer group "Friends of Baring Head" but have pulled out because it is being controlled by someone who is pushing her own agenda, controlling everything like it is her own land and spreading propaganda which I and others don't agree with!! She spreads claims there is a fire risk by stopping grazing. You have to be a real fool if you believe that. They are nothing more than conspiracy theorists! Look at all the land around the park which is being left to grow... that hasn't been burning even after reckless vandals have left burning cars on the road side. Also, how is it that you make decisions, and then next minute do something that contradicts your decisions. You are setting a precedent for members of the public to ignore your rules and ignore your decisions because you seem to!!</p> <p>Add to any agreement that for every animal they place on the park they also have to plant a tree on the park... and for every plant their animal kills (eats) or damages, they must also plant a tree on the park.</p>	Opposed
15.	<p>Your survey does not state the duration, the link from Facebook stated 1 year so I assume this is correct. I support this only if those people who are responsible/active in converting the park back to its natural state do not oppose - but basically I would support those active and informed in this area.</p>	Provisionally supports
16. Tupoki Takarangi Trust	<p>As a neighbour to Oruapouanui, the Tupoki Takarangi Trust support the extension of the grazing lease for sheep.</p>	Support
17.	<p>The current leasee does a good job with managing the pasture areas so let's keep doing that. 183 ha is a lot of replant and manage in one go so hopefully a staged approach is used to change in land use.</p>	Support
18. Wellington Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club	<p>The Wellington Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club (WHGPC) supports the new short term grazing license proposal as it provides for a continuation of recreational flying activities at Baring Head. The site has a long flying history and offers spectacular opportunities for club members and visitors from around the country. Baring Head also has special recognition from the Civil Aviation Authority through airspace designation specifically for gliding activities. WHGPC notes the Proposal makes reference to development of a native vegetation restoration plan for the grazed areas of regional parks – called 'Reclothing Papatūānuku'. WHGPC is very keen to be involved in the planning of revegetation in the vicinity of the Baring Head escarpment so that hang gliding and paragliding activities can continue in the future through consideration of safety related issues.</p>	Support
19.	<p>Ōrua-pouanui/Baring Head is a Scenic Reserve and there are no grounds under which grazing is permitted in a Scenic Reserve under the Reserve Act. Going ahead could cost ratepayers money if a legal defence is required for the decision to graze a scenic reserve.</p> <p>If GW chooses to proceed with providing a short term grazing licence (13 months) for Ōrua-pouanui (the Park), then I would like to see more areas excluded to protect their unique nature and natural biodiversity. These areas currently contain rare plants, insects, reptiles and birds. The Reserves Act does not allow for these to be damaged by activities within reserves.</p>	Opposed

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	<p>1. None of the areas between the escarpment and shoreline should be included in the grazing licence. GW's own documentation show that there are endangered birds which nest on the beaches, and rare (and easily damaged) plants on the beaches and beach platforms, as well as on the escarpment and cliffs. It is nigh impossible to keep (or get) stock off the escarpments without fencing. Goats have been a problem for decades. Temporary fencing should be installed until revegetation occurs.</p> <p>2. The Park contains several different kinds of wetlands including fens, flushes, seeps and coastal wetlands. All of these should be fenced off if grazing is going to proceed. At the very minimum examples of each kind of wetland should be fenced as a requirement of the licence. GW's own documentation notes that the wetland in the NE paddock should be fenced before a licence is granted. In addition, by fencing largely along the nearby tracks, it would not be too onerous to fence the area containing Seeps 1 & 2 and Flushes 1 & 2 on the marine terraces down to the already fenced 'grey scrub' on the escarpment as shown on the plan in the discussion document.</p> <p>3. I am glad to see cattle will not be included in the licence and the proposed stocking level will be much lower that previously. Instead of redialing grass (for only a year's use by the licensee) GW should consider speeding up revegetation of the NE paddock and exclude it from the licence? This would have the added benefit of removing the possibility of leaching of nitrogen and the other chemicals the proposed licence allows for. I struggle to believe this level of chemical input is required for just one year's grass. Furthermore, doing this 'just before' the licence is in place seems a bit like bending the rules so GW can say there'll be no cropping or fertiliser during the short lease.</p> <p>4. The inanga spawning area should be protected by fencing too (if isn't already).</p> <p>5. There are large areas of the Park which could be mowed to make hay bales, and if these were removed from the grazing licence this would reduce the area for grazing considerably. GW's own documentation shows that this would have a significantly smaller impact on the CO2 produced from the park.</p> <p>Climate change is the biggest problem facing our generation and the best response for climate change should be considered in deciding on the best way to use the land (of which a short-term grazing licence is one possibility).</p> <p>This Park is a magical place, and I commend GW for helping to put it into public ownership. It can play a significant role in improving the biodiversity, natural values and climate change response for our region.</p> <p>I consider all of these more important than a year's grazing, and any associated financial yield as a ratepayer (especially if you remember the risk of legal action for contravening the Reserves Act). Thank you for considering my submission.</p>	
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Question 3. Do you have any supporting documents you would like to upload?

Supporting document from submitter #9.



2021 November Banded Dotterel Nest sites at Baring. Suggested fencing so sheep can drink but not impact the dotterel nesting areas.



Sheep at nest site on true right side of river

Supporting document from submitter #11. Friends of Baring Head

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Friends of Baring Head Charitable
Trust
PO Box 38 076
Te Puni Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045

Grazing at Baring Head

Baring Head is an extreme environment. Last summer we had 2 months with no rain at all. Today the wind was strong enough to make it difficult to wheel a wheelbarrow up the valley. That means that the park is at high risk of fire, and fires can move very quickly.

Grass fires are hot and move fast. A colleague was caught in one, and managed to get to a ditch and lie down in it, but because he was wearing synthetic clothing, had that melted into his skin as the fire went over. He survived, just, but spent months in hospital. A grass fire at Baring Head would not only threaten important values, as it would be likely to spread to the escarpment or lighthouse, but would also be likely to kill someone.

The last major fire in the area was in Orongorongo Station, started by someone setting fire to a car on the road edge. That took out 8 hectares before the helicopter got it under control. And that was in an area with shrubs and grazed grass, not long dry grass.

Baring Head already has too high a fuel loading because we retired too much of the valley at once. I am in the process of discussing that issue with Rob and Jo. We put strong restrictions on things like use of vehicles and machinery in summer, but it is really only luck that has saved us from a fire in the valley. We have been planting for about 5 years at a high rate (we planted 8500 plants this year), and have still only managed to get some areas less fire prone. Fortunately, our retired areas are not immediately adjacent to the road, where most ignition sources are. But in summer, a cigarette butt from a walker would be enough.

I have been debating with Parks and Biodiversity what would be required for the transition to the proposed "no grazing" regime. The conclusion we have all come to is that the transition would need to be long and there is no short-term way to avoid some grazing. You could mow a lot of the tops and valley, but there are far too many areas with thick grass that are not able to be mowed – too steep, too many rocks, too many plantings or areas of lizard habitat. You can plant, but it takes at least 5 years to get good coverage even on the best sites. My estimate of the direct costs (plants, labour) to plant the main paddock below the carpark is \$350,000. And that would have to be done over a period of about 6 years with grazing or mowing of a fire break while the first plantings become established. So would need fences or use of cattle and electric fences.

You can't just decide to not have grazing. You have to have a transition with active management to make each area safe to retire. So we will need grazing for a long time. And we need a detailed transition plan.

We therefore need a good grazer working with us. Brent is a good partner for the restoration project. He has been quite flexible about giving up areas (like our new south coast exclosure). He runs a good farming operation with stock that is in good condition. He lives just up the road and responds quickly if stock are in the wrong place. He has other grazing licences so can manage a changing situation. It is essential that he is given the proposed licence, and that during the licence period we sort out what he needs to be offered to ensure he is willing to be part of the transition process.

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I'm sure you will get submissions saying that areas should be immediately retired. People will say it is easy. I've heard people say "why can't you at least take stock off the beach", and I have to explain the topography and that there isn't a simple way to do that. I have put forward a possible proposal to retire the south coast, but it will need significant new fencing and there's no point in looking at that in isolation from a broader transition plan. It would create a high risk for the lighthouse to have grass uncontrolled down there, so there would have to be a mowing regime if the rabbits didn't do the job. Compared to lupins, rabbits and horned poppies, sheep are not a great biodiversity problem. They may affect some dotterel nests, but so do people and pests, and sheep help keep the open areas dotterels need if they are to survive predators. You could manage that risk if it was considered important by adjusting when sheep are in that area. And for that you need a sympathetic operator who will be willing to accept the hassle and effects on grass quality of changing grazing regimes.

And retiring Fitzroy Bay would need a lot of fencing, and you would just end up with the sheep from the adjacent lands invading to take advantage of the better grazing (because there is no feasible way to fence into the sea).

If you retired the road paddocks, they would probably end up burning every year, and eventually a fire would get across the river and undo all the work we have put in. And the fires would destroy the values that are in the paddocks, and our river edge plantings. When Mark was the ranger, he estimated that a car was dumped and burned down there about every 2 months. The rate seems to have reduced a bit, and mostly they use the carparks (meaning we have a lot of burnt bollards), but we would only need one. Or a cigarette. Or even a beer bottle in summer.

In summary, there isn't a choice about grazing. It has to continue until an alternative fire control system is in place. And we have the best available grazier operating and don't want to lose them. You therefore can either issue a grazing licence, or contract the same person to do grazing as a management action. As we have no transition plan, there seems no point in moving away from the grazing licence approach this year.

Question 4. Do you wish to be heard by Council in support of your submission?

- Only one submitter identified that they wished to be heard.
-

PART B SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED VIA PARKSPLANNING@GW.GOV.NZ EMAIL ADDRESS

	Submission	Officer comment/ recommendation (where suggestions made)
20.	Forest and Bird – see below	Does not oppose, supports phased restoration and further detailed planning. In relation to point 2, an AEE was available to review with consultation material on website at the start of consultation.
21.	Russell Bell – see below	

Submission # 20



25 November 2021

Submission on Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui Proposed Grazing Licence

To: Greater Wellington Regional Council
Submitted via email parksplanning@gw.govt.nz

From: Amelia Geary – Regional Conservation Manager
Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society Inc (Forest & Bird)
a.geary@forestandbird.org.nz 022 039 9363

Introduction

1. Forest & Bird is New Zealand's largest independent conservation organisation. Our mission is to protect New Zealand's unique flora and fauna and its habitat.
2. We thank Greater Wellington (GW) for the opportunity to engage with this process regarding the intention to grant a grazing licence at Baring Head. We have a number of concerns about this grazing licence, namely the absence of an AEE at the time of notification thereby keeping submitters in the dark in terms of ecological effects, the concern regarding climate change but no thorough consideration of the ecological benefits low-intensity grazing can provide to such sites, particularly to the vulnerable lizard fauna, the absence of any credible transition plan for when grazing ceases in January 2023 and the fire risk posed by mowing (as witnessed at Queen Elizabeth Park) rather than using sheep to keep the grass down.
3. Forest & Bird supports low-intensity sheep grazing as a management tool at Baring Head. We do not oppose this grazing licence, but do question GW's capacity to manage a restoration project of such a scale in such a harsh coastal environment when the term of this licence expires. We would support a more phased approach to restoration at Baring Head. We do not want to see a repeat of what happened to the Whitaker's skink at Pukerua Bay.
4. We do not need to speak in support of our submission.

Submission

5. The Restricted Activity Assessment appended to the Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui Proposed Grazing Licence goes into some depth as to the benefits of retiring grazing at Baring Head in the face of Greater Wellington's self-declared Climate Emergency. However, Forest & Bird is not convinced that a thorough enough ecological assessment has been done to advise decision

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making. We disagree with the assertion that "The overall assessment has found that net benefits of stock grazing at Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui have not been demonstrated."¹

6. The Restricted Activity Assessment is entirely silent on the possible impacts removal of grazing would have on the vulnerable lizard fauna of Baring Head, for example. In the case of Whitaker's skink at Pukerua Bay, removing grazing stock did not result in an increased abundance of Whitaker's skink or copper skink through improved habitat quality, as was intended by the management recommendation. Instead, reduced grazing allowed introduced seeding grasses to proliferate, which may have led to periodic rodent irruptions, supporting a guild of introduced mammalian predators and depleting populations of Whitaker's skink and copper skink. In this instance, attempted protection may have driven a vulnerable population towards extinction.²
7. The Restricted Activity Assessment itself states that Baring Head is not a priority for restoration but somehow there is an urgency for the grazing licence to only last for 13 months with no consideration of a more phased reduction of grazing over a longer timeframe. If a mouse irruption were to occur, the lizard fauna would be decimated. Mice are notoriously difficult and expensive to control at a landscape level. Forest & Bird is concerned that this real risk has been overlooked and also not budgeted for.
8. We are similarly concerned that, as per Paragraph 7 above, there is no transition plan for how Baring Head will be managed once grazing comes to an abrupt end in January 2023. Lawn mowers cannot replicate the work of sheep, furthermore, they pose a significant fire risk in themselves as demonstrated by the fire at Queen Elizabeth Park this year. Forest & Bird would like to see a thorough transition plan developed for Baring Head taking into account all the relevant values, not just climate change.
9. **Relief sought:** Conduct a thorough ecological assessment of the possible benefits as well as impacts of grazing at Baring Head. Include a clause in the grazing licence that leaves open the possibility of extension of the grazing licence once an ecological assessment and transition plan has been completed.

Submission ends.

¹ Page 1 of Restricted Activity Assessment, repeated on Page 27.

² Joanne M. Hoare, Lynn K. Adams, Leigh S. Bull, and David R. Towns "Attempting to Manage Complex Predator–Prey Interactions Fails to Avert Imminent Extinction of a Threatened New Zealand Skink Population," *Journal of Wildlife Management* 71(5), 1576-1584, (1 July 2007). <https://doi.org/10.2193/2006-488>

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Submission # 21

25 November 2021

Submission on Baring Head Grazing Licence

To: Greater Wellington Regional Council
Submitted via email parksplanning@gw.govt.nz

From: Russell Bell

I request that the grazing licence be rejected and if a new reduced grazing proposal can be shown to align with the principles of section 9 of the Reserves Act, then that proposal be submitted to the public.

Legal; Start with the operative legislation- The Reserves Act.

GW manages regional parks and often totally ignores the operative legislation. The legislation is where GW should start. Other departments of GW administer and enforce legislation. Where would we be if flood protection, water quality or safety legislation was ignored by other parts of GW. Parks need to operate within the operative legislation.

Baring Head is classified as a scenic reserve hence it is subject to the Reserves Act Section 9 Scenic Reserves. The intentions around its purchase were for a section (1) (a) of section 9 the Act reserve – for its intrinsic value, not section (1) (b) for its development to become of scenic interest. Therefore 9 (2) of the Act applies.

Therefore;

(a) *except where the Minister otherwise determines, the indigenous flora and fauna, ecological associations, and natural environment and beauty shall as far as possible be preserved, and for this purpose, except where the Minister otherwise determines, exotic flora and fauna shall as far as possible be exterminated:*

This is quite straight forward. Protect native flora and fauna, ecological associations, the natural environment. Exterminate exotic flora and fauna.

(c) *to the extent compatible with the principal or primary purposes of the retention and preservation of the natural or scenic values, open portions of the reserve may be developed for amenities and facilities where these are necessary to enable the public to obtain benefit and enjoyment from the reserve:*

Again this is quite straight forward. GW may develop amenities and facilities in open areas but natural and scenic values are to be preserved.

(e) *to the extent compatible with the principal or primary purpose of the reserve, its value as a soil, water, and forest conservation area shall be maintained.*

Perhaps more difficult to understand, but the reserve's value or the quality of its wetlands, seeps, streams, forests (Perhaps in Baring Head this may be shrublands), and soils are to be maintained.

Lizards

Forest and Bird's submission has concentrated on lizards because of personal Pukerua Bay lizard experience and while that may apply to specific parts of the park, it does not apply to the whole of the park. If the lizards are rare or would be endangered by changing the current regime, then the current grazing in that area could continue. This, it could be easily argued, would be consistent with the principles of the Act. A buffer around such an area could be also be justified and if GW experts say that should happen then I support it.

Grazing to maintain a threatened lizard population would be consistent with the Reserves Act.

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Comparison of Grazing with the Reserves Act

Apart from lizards, (and any other specific native flora and fauna protection grazing) when I evaluate the grazing proposal with the operative legislation, I find that it is in conflict with the it. The indigenous flora and fauna, ecological associations, and natural environment will be eaten (or eaten in between) stopping much regeneration, and trodden and defecated in by sheep. Any developing edible indigenous vegetation will be grazed by sheep. Soils will be eroded by grazing and the paths sheep make along hillsides. Water quality will be diminished by defecating sheep.

With the exception of grazing with the specific objective of protecting native flora and fauna,

- 1) The coastal platform and coastal escarpment contain much indigenous flora and fauna that cannot be protected if stock are not excluded. These areas would continue to revegetate without any help from us. Stock need to be excluded to fulfil the requirements of the Act. This may mean fencing the top of the escarpment if the marine terrace is to be grazed. I understand GW's reluctance to fence this because of the cost though it should be borne in mind that restoring vegetation will not immediately start everywhere in 13 months' time, given the number of regional parks, and the amount of farming in them over previous years.
- 2) The eastern river flats do not need fences to be protected from stock. They only need pest plant control which GW is already committed to undertaking (See 12 of proposed licence.)
- 3) The western river flats and the valley escarpment are not included in the grazing proposal so there no issue.
- 4) The marine terrace is more complex. Some of the higher steeper land has significant areas of native vegetation that should not be grazed. The seeps and other natural landforms e.g. valley like structures, should be allowed to recover from past farming. One specific part is the waterway on the northern side of the access road where a wetland (Terrace Flush 4) would further develop. Areas like this are the beginnings of natural revegetation (Compare with the Hutt Valley eastern hills where natural revegetation started in the valleys and spread to the ridges.) This area remains in the area to be grazed.

It is not OK to reduce stock to hold the current ecological position. That position is not supported by the Act. The argument can and has been made that the marine terrace is a feature that is most revealed by being grazed and that walking along it and viewing the sea is part of the experience. There is plenty of photographic evidence of forest cloaked terraces that look just as dramatic. Viewing the sea maybe would justify keeping part of the flattish terrace clear of vegetation but does not justify grazing 70 ha or so of it.

- 5) Sheep and the exotic grasses sown on Baring head are both exotic flora and fauna and should be exterminated according to the Act. Yet the licence proposes grazing sheep on the reserve and allowing *the licensee to undertake weed control to maintain the area as suitable for grazing!* The extermination clause is to try to achieve indigenous flora and fauna reserves under 9(1)(a), hence grazing sheep should not be allowed.

This grazing proposal is in conflict with the Reserves Act except where grazing can be shown to protect threatened biodiversity.

Leave the land alone and let it recover

There may come a time where active revegetation is undertaken by GW or restoration groups but until that time comes, let the land recover on its own. If we consider the amount of land that GW needs to restore in other RPs where there is not much seed in the ground or nearby, and Baring Heads remoteness, it will probably be years before active restoration takes place. GW may argue that fire is a risk but the land is at no more risk than other surrounding land, e.g. Nearby Parangarau Lakes which had grass covered hills with little native seed in the ground. It is now going through a process of natural regeneration (with a little help from planted seed lots). Granted much of it may go through a gorse stage. The past GW stance, *that if the land is not commercially or volunteer revegetated, it has to be grazed*, is not valid. Neither does it align with the Reserves Act.

Land that is not actively grazed will naturally revegetate. It take longer perhaps. Let that happen.

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Lack of Rationale for considering a grazing licence

GW does not provide any rationale for grazing other than the statement. *The aim of the licence will be to support transition towards GW's LCAF broad scale native revegetation restoration in mid 2023.* That is not a rationale. It is a holding pattern; continuing to do what has been done until the next plan comes out. It could be a rationale if some detail was provided but GW has not explained how it will support a transition.

- GW allows the licensee to maintain the area as suitable for grazing so this is not supporting the transition to broad scale native revegetation restoration.
- GW is dealing with pest plant and animal control so grazing is not supporting the transition to broad scale native revegetation restoration.
- Grazing of (and in between) emerging vegetation is not supporting the transition to broad scale native revegetation restoration.
- The areas proposed to be grazed include areas that are not a fire risk, have their own native vegetation that should be protected and allowed to increase. If these areas were not grazed, that would support the transition to broad scale native revegetation restoration.

GW Has established no rationale for grazing and until it does grazing cannot be justified in a scenic reserve.

Bad for Climate Change

GW agreed that there is a climate crisis. In this proposal, GW is suggesting grazing 430 sheep for 13 months releasing 0.38tonnes of co2e/yr./head equalling 177 tonnes of CO2e/year. The issue with releasing carbon is that it all has to be re absorbed. Let us pretend that GW wants to absorb that 177 tonnes before 2030, when emissions should be halved. GW would have to plant in the same year as grazing begins, 11,000 shrubs and trees.(All figures taken from Tane's carbon calculator or *Climate change and agriculture* Parliamentary Commissioner for the environment 2016.)

Put this another way, what GW is proposing nullifies the planting of 11,000 plants that it, or the public, plants, sometime in the future, and allows to keep growing for 9 years. By grazing sheep, the climate crisis is made worse and this effect will be equalized in nine years' time, only if GW plants extra trees. GW is not treating climate change as an emergency. If there was a compelling reason to graze, that may be acceptable though climate change certainty eclipses all other arguments and will for years to come. Don't commit to releasing an unnecessary 177 tonnes CO2e leaving its sequestration to the future generation.

One suggestion by the report *Climate change and agriculture* is to simply let nature do the regeneration. The proposal is for 186 ha to be grazed. Much of it has plants growing on it and some not. According to the report one ha allowed to regenerate might sequester about 20 tonnes in 9 years. So if the land was simply left to regenerate 3,720 tonnes of CO2e could be sequestered.

Don't graze the land. The sheep will emit 177 tonnes CO2e and keeping the land grazed will stop the sequestration of a 3700 tonnes CO2e.

Bad for Biodiversity which is in Crisis as well

I hope that GW accepts that biodiversity is also in crisis. If GW simply left Baring Head to recover, maybe with the exception of certain lizard populations, biodiversity would improve, especially in those important areas such as wetlands, seeps, rocky escarpments and their associated fauna.

Grazing the land will not allow biodiversity to increase

Conclusion

I request this application for a grazing licence be reviewed and a new proposal put forward if it can be sufficiently established that it aligns with the principles of the Reserves Act, specifically Section 9. The current proposal is not consistent with the governing legislation, it is not best for the Regional Park, It is not good for Climate Change, It makes a mockery of GW's decision declaring Climate Change an emergency and it is not good for biodiversity.

Russell Bell

Environment Committee
2 December 2021
Report 21.511



For Information

UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS – DECEMBER 2021

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To update the Environment Committee (the Committee) on the progress of action items arising from previous Committee meetings.

Te horopaki

Context

2. Items raised at Committee meetings, that require actions by officers, are listed in the table of action items from previous Committee meetings ([Attachment 1](#) - Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings – December 2021). All action items include an outline of the current status and a brief comment.

Ngā hua ahumoni

Financial implications

3. There are no financial implications from this report, but there may be implications arising from the actions listed.

Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei

Next steps

4. Completed items will be removed from the action items table for the next report. Items not completed will continue to be progressed and reported. Any new items will be added to the table following this Committee meeting and circulated to the relevant business group/s for action.

**Ngā āpitihanga
Attachment**

Number	Title
1	Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings – December 2021

**Ngā kaiwaitohu
Signatory**

Writers	Al Cross – Kaiwhakahaere Matua mo te Taiao/General Manager, Environment Management Wayne O'Donnell – Kaiwhakahaere Matua Whaitua/General Manager, Catchment Management
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He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations
<i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i> The action items are of an administrative nature and support the functioning of the Committee.
<i>Implications for Māori</i> Known implications for Māori are identified to the extent advised in Attachment 1.
<i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i> Action items contribute to Council's or Greater Wellington's related strategies, policies and plans to the extent identified in Attachment 1.
<i>Internal consultation</i> There was no additional internal consultation in preparing this report and updating the action items.
<i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i> There are no known risks or impacts.

Attachment 1 to Report 21.511

Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings

Meeting date	Action	Status and comment
18 February 2021	<p>Crown Funded Covid Recovery Projects – progress update – Report 21.51</p> <p>Resolution:</p> <p>That the Committee requests officers to explore and report back to Council of a targeted rate to support predator free efforts in the Wellington City and the viability of inclusion in the draft Long Term Plan consultation document.</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Comment</p> <p>Discussed at Council Workshop on 27 May.</p> <p>Regional Pest Management funding review workshop for 28 October 2021.</p>
Various	<p>Whaitua Implementation update –</p> <p>Resolution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Committee requests officers to prepare two reports, with input from mana whenua, assessing Greater Wellington’s progress against Te Awarua-o-Porirua and Ruamāhanga WIPs, including current gaps. • That the Committee requests officers to assess the resourcing implications of fully implementing the Whaitua Implementation Programme recommendations for which Greater Wellington is responsible. • That the Committee requests officers to advise on the ongoing implications for Whaitua implementation of the Resource Management and Three Waters reform programmes, and the Local Government Review. • That the Committee requested that officers report to the Committee, identifying specific gaps in the current responses to whaitua implementation programme recommendations, including in relation to 	<p>Status</p> <p>Completed/form part of new work programme</p> <p>Comment</p> <p>These actions are superseded by the new approach which will assess each recommendation in detail, including identifying non-regulatory deliverables, and providing cost/resource estimates and prioritisation for those deliverables. These assessments will be subject to approval by local whaitua based governance groups.</p>

Attachment 1 to Report 21.511

Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings

Meeting date	Action	Status and comment
	<p>recommendations that sit with organisations other than Greater Wellington.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests that officers report back to the Committee with an update on WIP implementation improvements including governance arrangements. 	
17 June 2021	<p>Public Participation</p> <p>Noted:</p> <p>The Committee requested that officers investigate what modifications have been done in the Queen Elizabeth Park area, and where they sit in the Parks Network Plan for wetland restoration.</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Comment</p> <p>No physical modification works are currently underway.</p> <p>All wetland restoration work at present is focussed on research into the peat areas and ongoing hydrology monitoring. That will continue into 2022.</p> <p>This will all inform a wetland restoration plan for the wetland/peatland restoration This is consistent with actions A327 (part) A328, A329, A330, A331 contained within the PNP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A concept plan for the wetland/peatland area has been provided to the Parks Planner and GW Environmental Science, for review • Discussions continue on how to manage the gorse, including aerial spraying.
12 August 2021	<p>Public Participation</p> <p>Noted:</p> <p>The Committee requested that officers: engage with residents on their concerns and regularly provide updates to</p>	<p>Status:</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Comment:</p> <p>Meeting arranged with small group of residents for 8 October to progress issues.</p>

Attachment 1 to Report 21.511

Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings

Meeting date	Action	Status and comment
	residents on progress made on addressing these	
	Address the questions raised in the handout tabled by Ms Hill on half of the Mangaroa residents.	<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>Comment: The General Manager has been liaising with Mr Hill around his concerns. These conversations are currently ongoing.</p>
16 September 2021	<p>Public Participation</p> <p>Noted: With regards to the concerns raised by the Mangaroa residents, the Committee requested officers: engage with Mr Hill and visit his property to understand and provide advice on the consenting requirements for clearing drains</p>	<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>Comment: Email correspondence between Greater Wellington and Mr Hill looking to provide a pathway to addressing issues on the Hill's property.</p>
	Provide the Committee with an update at the next meeting addressing the Mangaroa residents' concerns.	<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>Comment: Update to be provided</p>
16 September 2021	<p>Whaitua Implementation update – Report 21.409</p> <p>Resolution: Requests that officers report back to the Committee with an update on WIP implementation improvements including governance arrangements.</p>	<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>Comment: A report was prepared for the Wairarapa Committee meeting 7 December regarding providing a local whaitua governance function however this item will now be presented at the next</p>

Attachment 1 to Report 21.511

Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings

Meeting date	Action	Status and comment
		<p>Wairarapa meeting in March 2022.</p> <p>Meetings have taken place and are continuing with Nigel Clarke at Porirua City Council re potential options.</p> <p>A Greater Wellington officials WIP implementation programme steering group has been formed which provides General Manager level oversight of Greater Wellington led deliverables and of the programme generally.</p> <p>A programme plan has been drafted which will formalise the programme approach. This includes differentiating governance responsibilities between local whitua governance and the Greater Wellington steering group</p>
	<p>Requests officers to prepare a report for the Wairarapa Committee setting out a potential whitua implementation governance role.</p>	<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>Comment: Reports being prepared.</p>
<p>21 October 2021</p>	<p>Environment / Catchment Update – Report 21.471</p> <p>Noted: The Committee requested progress updates on the consenting for the Porirua waste water treatment plant</p>	<p>Status: Completed</p> <p>Comment: This information is Included in the Environment/Catchment update for 2 December 2021 meeting under paragraph 48</p>
<p>21 October 2021</p>	<p>Environment / Catchment Update – Report 21.471</p>	<p>Status: Completed</p> <p>Comment: Eight community Taiao restoration projects in the</p>

Attachment 1 to Report 21.511

Action items from previous Environment Committee meetings

Meeting date	Action	Status and comment
	<p>Noted: The Committee requested to be advised of who receives funding from the Community Environment Fund</p>	<p>Te Awarua o Porirua Whaitua have received funding. See Paragraph 50 of the Environment/Catchment report for the 2 December 2021 meeting.</p>
<p>21 October 2021</p>	<p>Managing Regional Park Land in support of the Toitū Te Whenua Vision - Baring Head/Ōrua-Pouanui – Report 21.427</p> <p>Noted: The Committee requested an outline of the various plans related to parks management and further detail on how these plans interconnect.</p>	<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>Comment:</p> <p>The Manager, Parks will provide an update at the meeting of 2 December 2021.</p>
<p>21 October 2021</p>	<p>Regional Pest Management Plan Operational Plan for 2021/22 – Report 21.462</p> <p>Noted: The Committee requested that regular updates and photos of pest plants be put on Greater Wellington’s social media channels to help raise awareness.</p>	<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>Comment:</p> <p>The General Manager, Catchment Management will provide an update at the 2 December 2021 meeting.</p>
<p>21 October 2021</p>	<p>Whaitua Process Update – Oral report</p> <p>The Committee requested that the Te Whanganui-a-Tara Whaitua reports to Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, and Wellington City Council be provided to Committee members.</p>	<p>Status: Completed</p> <p>Comment:</p> <p>An email dated 25 November containing the links to the three city council papers receiving the Whaitua Te Whanganui-a-Tara Implementation Programme and Te Mahere Wai o Te Kāhui Taiao was emailed to GW Councillors.</p>

Environment Committee
2 December 2021
Report 21.523



For Information

ENVIRONMENT/CATCHMENT UPDATE

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To inform the Environment Committee (the Committee) of Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibilities.

Te horopaki

Context

Regional issues

2. During winter months of 2021 operational programmes across Greater Wellington Catchment and Environment Groups planted over 400,000 trees throughout the region. Roughly 75 percent of this planting was native trees including riparian enhancement, wetland restoration, hill country erosion, Parks planting, and river management. 25 percent exotic species planting was mainly in the hill country erosion programme and involved both willow/poplar space planting or afforestation of erosion prone land.
3. Greater Wellington's Whaitua Operational Implementation Steering Group has been established and has commenced meetings. The Steering Group provide Greater Wellington with programme management oversight of Whaitua Implementation Programmes (WIPs) that have been received and are in their implementation phase.
4. Local governance arrangements are being identified to oversee each WIP, commencing with Ruamāhanga and Te Awarua-o-Porirua and Ngāti Toa Statement.
5. Environment Court Hearings were scheduled to commence on 29 November, however this hearing time has been vacated as a result of agreements being reached through ongoing conferencing of experts. Draft consent order documentation has been circulated to all parties to the outstanding appeals, with a view to this being filed with the Court on 29 November. Once the Court issues all of the remaining consent orders then all appeals will have been resolved; without the need for a Court Hearing – a first for second generation regional plans in the Country.
6. The Environment Select Committee produced its report on the Natural and Built Environment Bill exposure draft. The report recommends that the Government proceed with the development of the Natural and Built Environments Bill. Overall, the select committee does not recommend substantive changes to the exposure draft of the Natural and Built Environments Bill. There are a number of areas where the select

committee suggests useful clarifications and recommends directions/ signals for the full Bill. The report is available on the Committee's website at the following link: http://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/reports/document/SCR_116599/inquiry-on-the-natural-and-built-environments-bill-parliamentary

7. Wetlands continue to feature prominently in the Consenting, Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement space. Environmental Regulation staff are involved in a number of investigations, prosecutions and other regulatory actions relating to wetlands across the Region. Within the last six weeks we have had two significant court hearings and we are expecting the conclusion of a prosecution case before Christmas. Officers will report in more detail once we receive judgements from the courts.
8. The date of Transmission Gully Road opening is still uncertain. We are continuing to work through the consenting and compliance tasks including retrospective consenting and approvals. The investigation, by an Environmental Regulation Officer, into non-compliance on site is ongoing.
9. An internal governance arrangement has been set up to oversee Greater Wellington's supporting role for the Mauri Tūhono ki Te Upoko o Te Ika (Regional Biodiversity Framework) project. Monica Fraser and Wayne O'Donnell are overseeing the current development stage of the project to support it remaining on track with its goals and milestones, and assist in managing risks and issues as they arise. They will also consider how the project will influence Greater Wellington's work as it shifts toward implementation next financial year and beyond.
10. Our boating safety campaign is in full swing. There have been two "No Excuses" on the water education and enforcement days with around 80 vessel spoken to. This resulted in only one verbal warning which was a great result.
11. The pre-summer online boating safety competition saw 418 responses, a record number. The new summer promotional material will be launched 1 December 2021.
12. A wallaby sighting by a pig hunter was followed up and extensive night and camera surveys confirmed presence of more than one dama wallabies in Kaitoke. Following a pre-feeding from the bait-stations, cyanide bait was applied resulting in four wallabies being killed on the spot. Wallabies post-mortem examinations established that animals were neutered indicating that they are most likely escapees from the local animal sanctuary that had a permit to keep wallabies. As the permit was issued by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) they are the lead agency in the pending investigation. MPI have agreed to cover the cost of the surveillance and control to date. To make this incursion more complicated, there was another (currently unconfirmed) sighting of a wallaby in Wairarapa near Featherston. Officers are following up.
13. The KNE and TA reserves pest management programmes are on schedule with the help of good weather, devoted staff and additional contractors.
14. Rabbits are still high in a number of sites around the region (as expected this time of the year) and staff are busy night shooting for TAs and private owners.
15. Recloaking Papatūānuku Restoration Plan – second workshop with Greater Wellington staff was held in November 2021 and Parks are working closely with Te Hunga

Whiriwhiri on partnering with mana whenua through this process as well as engaging with community groups.

16. The Toitū Te Whenua Steering Group continue to progress an operating model for Parks that will enable implementation of the plan. Work is also being done to develop a criteria for prioritising the plan's 395 actions and determine resourcing needs.
17. Parks have issued an RFQ for Master Planning in November for West Belmont/Hill Road and Wainuiomata, with work to be completed by end of June 2022. Further Master Planning will happen over the next two financial years across the network.
18. Greater Wellington continues to work with the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office to improve flood response, warning and awareness across the Region. Training on the new procedures has been progressing over the past month and will conclude in December 2021. We are exploring opportunities to more closely align with Wellington Water on the provision of flood warning and response.
19. Flood Protection is working with Greater Wellington's ICT Services to procure and embed a flood forecasting platform which will allow Greater Wellington duty officers to more effectively use current flood forecasting models, newly developed flood forecasting models, and Wellington Water Limited's 'Nowcasting' systems to provide more effective flood forecasts and warning. Procurement of specialist support is still progressing and we have commenced the detailed investigation on alternatives for our legacy phone tree systems in the Wairarapa.
20. Flood Protection has teamed up with Greater Wellington's Environmental Science team to deliver a regional programme of improvements to the hydrometric flow gauging network. This network is critical for the provision of flood warnings and for the development of hydraulic models. Work has commenced to upgrade the first sites identified in Waikanae and Masterton.

Whaitua-specific issues

Te Whanganui-a-Tara

21. The RiverLink application has been approved for direct referral to the Environment Court by Manager, Environmental Regulation. All outstanding information has been submitted by the applicant's team for RiverLink and the regulatory team are now preparing the officers reports, including the preparation of expert evidence by the regulatory specialists. These reports are anticipated to be released the week beginning the 22 November 2021.
22. The application for a suite of ancillary Resource Consents to authorise activities to facilitate the 'Shelly Bay Masterplan' (Masterplan) residential/commercial development at Shelly Bay is complete and all outstanding information has been now been submitted. The consenting team are now preparing the notification report (the assessment advising whether the application should be publicly notified or signed off under delegated authority). Due to the high level of public interest and contentious nature of the site, a legal review of the notification report will be undertaken, and the notification decision will be determined by an Independent RMA Commissioner. Given the public interest in the application all new information and reporting on Shelly Bay is posted online at the following link: <http://www.gw.govt.nz/shellybay/>.

23. The Whaitua Te Whanganui-a-Tara Committee has completed its work and presented two reports to Greater Wellington on 23 September 2021:
 - a 'Whaitua Implementation Programme' (WIP)
 - b 'Te Mahere Wai o te Kahui Taiao' (produced by Mana Whenua members of the Committee).
24. The WIP and Te Mahere Wai were received by Upper Hutt City Council on 20 October 2021 and Wellington City Council on 27 October 2021. Hutt City Council is due to receive the reports on 25 November 2021.
25. The two reports were launched at an event on 9 November 2021 at Te Papa, Wellington and are available on Greater Wellington's website.
26. Meetings were held in October and November of the Plan Change Working Group of the Environment Committee; the direction provided on issues and options arising from these meetings will be reported at the 9 December Council meeting.
27. Wellington City Council has released its draft District Plan for consultation, with submissions closing 14 December. A sub-group of Councillors has been established to provide input into a submission on the draft District Plan. The proposed District Plan is expected to be notified in May 2022, beginning the full formal public consultation, submissions and Hearing process.
28. We have received feedback from water users about boats using Oriental Bay. This was raised as part of the Navigation Safety Bylaws review and is a workshop topic in February.
29. A 13 month grazing licence for Baring Head went out to public consultation in October. Environmental Science prepared an AEE for the revised licence which included restrictions such as no cattle and a limit of 430 sheep. Council will make a decision on granting the licence in December. This will lead to prioritisation of restoration work for the park in 2023.
30. The Hem of Remutaka (Jobs for Nature) now has a Project Manager (Gary Sue) on board through Conservation Volunteers NZ. Work continues on recruiting the Team leader and kai mahi rangers.
31. Friends of Baring Head were success in a Lotteries Fund bid and have received \$263,000 for the lighthouse complex restoration. Work is underway with partner Naylor Love to determine the work programme and timing.
32. Consultation is starting with the neighbours of the Hutt and Kaitoke water catchment areas for the pending aerial 1080 possum control operation planned for May 2022.
33. Predator Free Wellington project: Miramar eradication is still battling with stubborn pockets of rat activity. The team is diligently servicing the priority activity areas at least weekly. Experts from ZIP and Wildlife Management International are closely involved with the programme. We are trialling all possible tools to eradicate these persistent rat strongholds including habitat removal, novel baits, bait-station, traps and even glue boards (application to allow use is with MPI).
34. Flood Protection is updating the flood hazard model for Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River. This is being carried out in line with Greater Wellington's flood hazard modelling standard

process and also to meet Hutt City and Upper Hutt City's District Plan change timeframes. We are continuing with modelling and have engaged a peer reviewer to review the modelling work being undertaken before the development of the mapping. This is as per our flood hazard modelling standard.

35. The Environmental and Recreational Management Plan and Operations Manual currently being finalised by Flood Protection and will be put on the Greater Wellington website. This sets out the framework within which all future recreational management of the river corridor will be carried out and provides detail to guide development and maintenance activities, e.g. conventions for signage, furniture types to be used, bollards etc.

Ruamāhanga

36. Land Management staff met with Executive leaders of Wairarapa iwi in late-November to discuss progress with the partnership through the 1 Billion Trees Programme funding to share knowledge and enhance how Mātauranga Māori can be incorporated into operational work. This partnership is an example of how the Te Wharaiki – Māori Outcomes Framework can be represented in our day to day work, and the benefits of doing so. So far this partnership has enriched Greater Wellington's ability to provide quality land management advice, and has built iwi capacity and capability in environment/catchment management work.
37. Preparations for the Aerial Electromagnetic Survey of the Ruamāhanga valley floor this summer are progressing. The aim is to survey the valley floor's hydrogeology to identify the presence of aquifer strata down to 200-300m - enhancing our understanding of ground and surface waterbody interactions. Contracts have been drawn up between GWRC and GNS Science and with SkyTEM. The main hurdle to the survey being flown is getting access to MIQ for the Australian survey technicians under their status as Critical Workers. With MPI's endorsement, we have recently applied for a Time Sensitive exemption so they can enter New Zealand when they're needed; we're now awaiting the outcome of that application. The survey is due to be flown in February and March when the combination of settled flying conditions and daylight hours is most suitable.
38. Implementation of the Wairarapa Water Resilience Strategy (WWRS) is now in the process of being planned. Among the matters being addressed at this stage are how it links with implementation of the Ruamāhanga WIP recommendations, and WWRS's governance structure and where that best fits. In addition, consideration is being given to how the implementation will be funded, a work programme/action priorities, and how the technical support will be resourced. These matters will be advanced further on 7 December at a Wairarapa Committee workshop.
39. We are still to receive a revised resource consent application for the Featherston Wastewater treatment Plant. We are continuing to work with the consultants for SWDC to try and get some traction on the new consent application to be lodged but remain concerned as a preferred option is yet to be selected and timeframes for re-lodgement (in order for a Hearing to be held within the revised timeframes) is running short.
40. Stormwater consenting - MDC has now lodged a draft application with us and SWDC are getting close to lodging a draft as well. We are still to hear from CDC in terms of when

their applications will be lodged. They have until the 31 December 2021 to get the 'stage 1' consents lodged with us.

41. The rook aerial control programme has been successfully completed for the year.
42. The hydrology for the Waipoua Urban Catchment Plan and Upper Ruamāhanga Rural Modelling has been peer reviewed in line with Greater Wellington's Flood Hazard Modelling Standard (FHMS) and hydraulic modelling is now progressing. Draft maps are on course to be delivered for the February 2022 to feed into the Wairarapa Combined District Plan review.
43. Willow pole planting is now complete in the Waiohine Scheme and asset condition rating is underway. Preparation has begun at the SH2 road bridge to construct rock groynes to prevent further erosion. Gravel has been extracted from the upstream beach to provide more water capacity and better align the river channel away from the erosion site. Infilling and willow planting has been completed at the recently constructed Kuratawhiti St rock groynes. The six-monthly walkover with the Waiohine Action Group was completed on 3rd November, and was well received by the group with positive feedback.
44. Submissions closed on the Waiohine River Plan in August 2021 and 180 submissions were received. Hearings were delayed by the second COVID lock-down but are now scheduled for the 29th and 30th of November at the Greytown Library.
45. The main focus of the Mangatāre River Plan has been to continue the flood hazard modelling. As such, the hydrology has been peer reviewed in line with GWRCs Flood Hazard Modelling Standard (FHMS) and hydraulic modelling is now progressing. Draft maps are on course to be delivered for the February 2022 to feed into the Wairarapa Combined District Plan review.
46. The Flood Protection Investigations team are conducting a technical investigation on the Tauherinikau which is assessing the stop bank condition and capacity. This investigation is currently in the modelling stage and will be complete by the end of this financial year. The team is also scoping and planning the Lower Valley Floodplain management plan project to align with the barrage gates consent and Waitua requirements. This project is expected to commence early in 2022.

Te Awarua-o-Porirua

47. Conversations have taken place with Porirua City Council to understand the status of the Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and Catchment Strategy and Action Plan and local governance arrangements for its implementation. This was requested by the Environment Committee at its 16 September 2021 meeting (Report 21.409). Understanding the status of these governance arrangements is necessary to identify whether they could be extended to include implementation of the Te Awarua-o-Porirua WIP and Ngāti Toa Statement. These conversations are continuing.
48. Some recent issues with sludge at Porirua Wastewater Treatment Plant has highlighted to Porirua City Council (PCC) and Wellington Water Limited (WWL) that they need to take a further look into the Plant's operation and performance. An independent review of the issues is taking place. During this time the resource consent process will be paused as there may be improvements from the review that may impact the consent

application. WWL has also committed to engage with the community in a transparent way in relation to the findings of the review, and will consult further should the review result in a change in the consent approach. A hearing is expected to occur in the first half of 2022.

49. Hearings on Porirua City Council's Proposed District Plan are underway. There are eight topic-based Hearing Streams established, which will run sequentially out to June 2022. Greater Wellington will likely be presenting at most if not all Hearing Streams. Hearing Stream 1, completed 29 September 2021, focussed on strategic objectives (especially how a District Plan should give effect to the NPS-FM). Hearing Stream 2, completed 5 November 2021, covered the natural environment and tangata whenua topics – focusing on significant natural areas, including how wetlands are covered in the Plan
50. Greater Wellington and Ngāti Toa Rangatira have allocated funding to eight community taiao restoration projects in Te Awarua o Porirua Whaitua through the Community Environment Fund this year. Collectively these groups will receive approximately \$83,000 over three years. This is the first year that Ngāti Toa Rangatira have been involved in every aspect of the application assessment process and the second year they have had equal representation with GW on the decision making panel.
51. Whitireia Park aerial spraying of environmental weed have been completed

Kāpiti Coast

52. Planning is underway for Kāpiti Coast Whaitua to begin in early 2022. A session with Kāpiti Coast district Council is expected to take place on 2 December.
53. Pre application discussions are ongoing for Paraparaumu Wastewater Treatment Plant. The applicant has submitted a draft Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) for the renewal of the discharges from the Paraparaumu WWTP (to land, air and freshwater) to GW to comment on. This consent application is due to be lodged the end of December 2021. Officers, the applicant (KCDC) and Te Atiawa Ki Whakarongotai are discussing the content of the application and upcoming consent process.
54. Wellington Water Limited (WWL) has presented their approach to us on preparing stormwater management strategies leading up to the stage 2 consent process. KCDC has had several Hui with iwi and GW officers to discuss the findings of stormwater monitoring and priorities going forward leading up to the stage 2 consent process. Pre-application discussion is ongoing.
55. A 3-year grazing licence for 208ha in QEP went out to public consultation in August-September and the recommended action will be reported to Council on 9 December 2021.
56. Parks have had to defer two large capital works projects at QEP. They are the Coastal Retreat and McKays Entranceway, due to resourcing challenges.
57. Flood Protection and Waka Kotahi discussions have recommenced about maintenance responsibilities for Peka Peka to Otaki bridges and other assets in the river corridors that Greater Wellington manages and maintains.
58. Chrystalls Stopbank, which is a significant part of Greater Wellington owned infrastructure that protects the Ōtaki township from flood events, has been upgraded (made higher and wider) as part of the Peka Peka to Ōtaki Expressway Project.

- 59. Chrystalls Bend stopbank works were completed in 2000 and the extension of this stop bank in 2008. These works were carried out to provide Ōtaki township with an annual exceedance probability of 1% design standard (that is, flood events with a 1 in 100 chance of occurring in any given year) level of flood security, excluding climate change. The intention was that the stopbanks would be further upgraded in the future as climate change impacted flood levels, and provision for land to accommodate a future upgraded stopbank footprint was made at the time.
- 60. The upgrade, completed over the last 18 months, allows for increasing river flood flows due to a warming climate, up to the year 2130. By 2130 Greater Wellington expects the stopbank upstream of the new expressway will still contain floods with an annual exceedance probability of 1%.

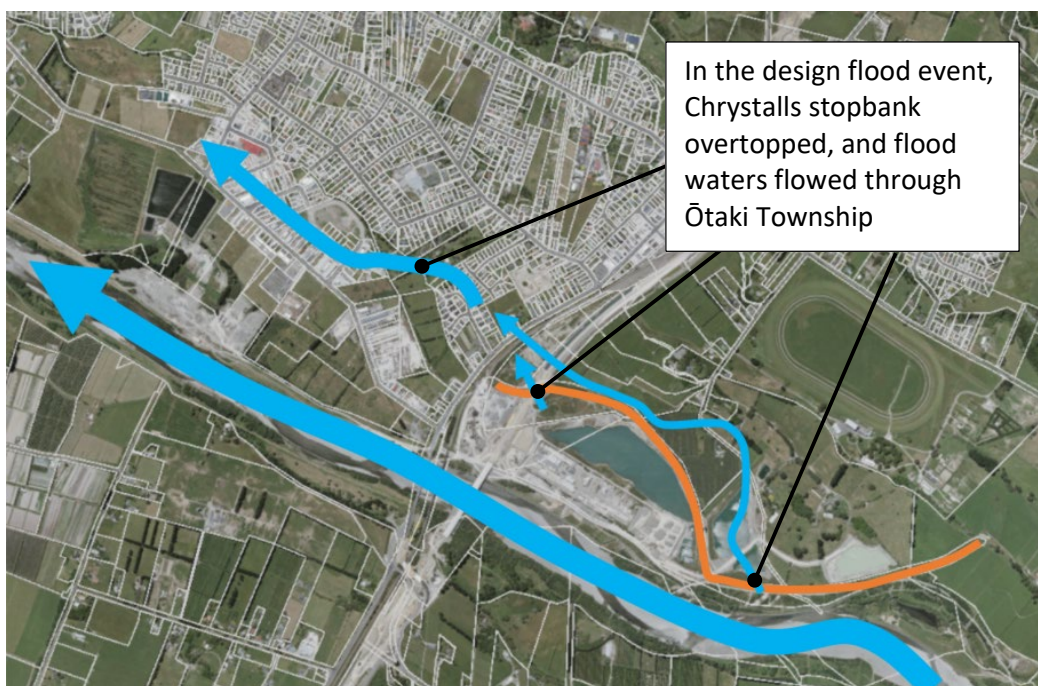


Figure 1: Chrystalls stopbank, design flood event flood flow paths before upgrade

- 61. Figure 1 shows the locations of the stopbank that have been upgraded, and diagrammatic flood flows paths in the design flood event, now that the Peka Peka to Ōtaki expressway and associated stopbank upgrade have occurred.

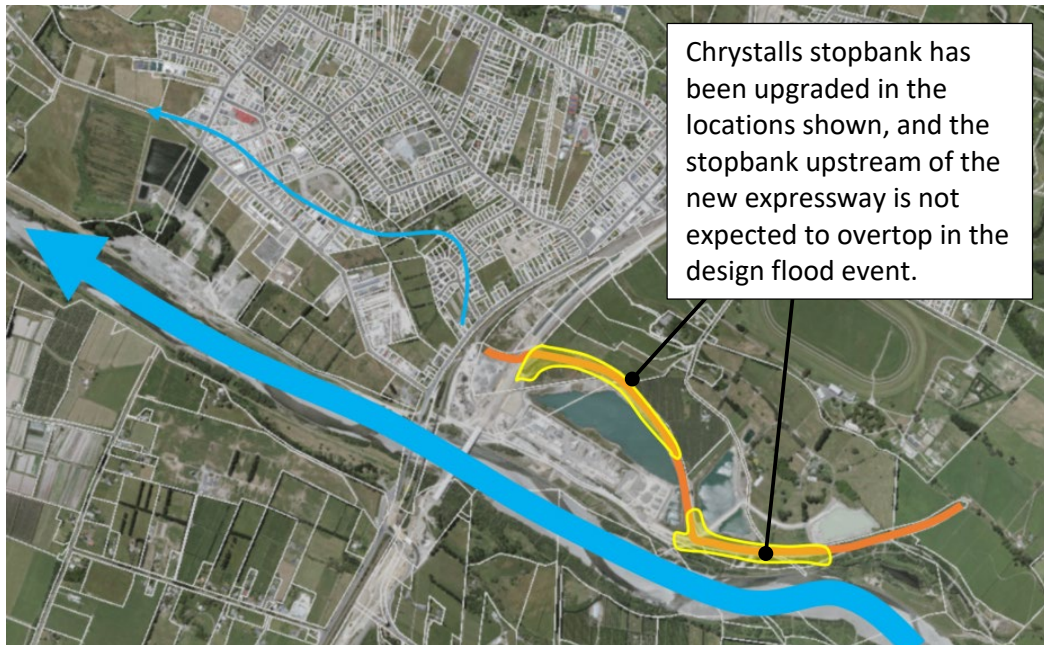


Figure 2: Chrystalls stopbank, design flood event flood flow paths after upgrade

Wairarapa Coast and Eastern Hills

- 62. A research programme is underway to support the establishment of the Wairarapa Coast and Eastern Hills Whaitua in 2023.
- 63. Land Management staff continue to support the production of a number of community-led catchment plans. This planning mechanism is expected to build significant momentum towards delivering targeted catchment actions guided by community values and long-term vision. The maturity of community groups coming together in this way is also expected to be beneficial in the Eastern Wairarapa Whaitua process.
- 64. The Environmental Protection Team concluded a prosecution of an individual and company who have been illegally receiving waste tyres and storing/dumping them at his Castlepoint Property. This case had been ongoing for over 10 years. The District Court imposed fined of \$50k and suggested that an application for removal of the tyres to the Environment Court would be appropriate.

**Ngā kaiwaitohu
Signatories**

Approvers	Al Cross, General Manager, Environment Management Wayne O’Donnell, General Manager, Catchment Management
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<p>He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations</p>
<p><i>Fit with Council's roles or with Committee's terms of reference</i></p> <p>The Environment Committee has responsibility to consider all matters across the development and implementation work programmes of Greater Wellington's Catchment Management and Environment Management Groups.</p>
<p><i>Implications for Māori</i></p> <p>Greater Wellington is required to manage land and water within the statutory requirements of a range of legislation, which requires giving effect to Te Mana o Te Wai, and consideration of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the development and implementation of the Council's strategies, plans, programmes and initiatives.</p> <p>Implementation with mana whenua partners is guided by Te Whāriki – the new Māori Outcomes Framework as part of the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan.</p>
<p><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></p> <p>Development and implementation of related work programmes falls under the core activities of the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan.</p>
<p><i>Internal consultation</i></p> <p>Internal consultation was limited to officers of Greater Wellington's Catchment Management and Environment Management Groups.</p>
<p><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></p> <p>This report covers the full breadth of work programmes, and equally a broad range of environmental, reputational, legal, financial, and HSW risks and implications are associated.</p>

Environment Committee
21 October 2021
Report 21.568



For Information

CROWN FUNDED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES UPDATE – DECEMBER 2021

Te take mō te pūrongo

Purpose

1. To update the Environment Committee (the Committee) on the Crown funded COVID-19 recovery projects.

Te horopaki

Context

2. The Government announced infrastructure investment funding to create jobs and progress COVID recovery. Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) secured funding for regional projects, as outlined in [Attachment 1](#) – Crown funded COVID recovery projects – progress update presentation December 2021.

Ngā tūāoma e whai ake nei

Next steps

3. The General Manager Catchment Management will speak to [Attachment 1](#) at the Committee's meeting on 2 December 2021.

Ngā āpitihanga

Attachment

Number	Title
1	Crown funded COVID recovery projects – progress update December 2021

Ngā kaiwaitohu

Signatory

Writer	Wayne O'Donnell – General Manager Catchment Management
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<p>He whakarāpopoto i ngā huritaonga Summary of considerations</p>
<p><i>Fit with Council’s roles or with Committee’s terms of reference</i></p> <p>It is appropriate for the Committee to be informed of the progress of the Crown funded COVID-19 recovery projects as the projects in the Wellington Region relate to Council’s environmental strategies, plans, programmes and initiatives, which address environmental issues in the Region.</p>
<p><i>Implications for Māori</i></p> <p>Implications for Māori are advised to the extent described in Attachment 1.</p>
<p><i>Contribution to Annual Plan / Long Term Plan / Other key strategies and policies</i></p> <p>The update contributes to the delivery of the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project, Hutt River and Ruamāhanga River flood protection strategies, Predator Free Wellington, and 1 Billion Trees Partnership Project.</p>
<p><i>Internal consultation</i></p> <p>All Crown Funded projects are reported to the Greater Wellington Crown Funded Project Board, comprising representatives from Catchment, Environment and Corporate Services.</p>
<p><i>Risks and impacts - legal / health and safety etc.</i></p> <p>There are no known risks or impacts.</p>

Crown Funded Covid Recovery Projects - Progress Update

The Projects:

Attachment 1 to report 21.568

FUND	FUNDER	PROJECT	TOTAL VALUE	GW CONTRIBUTION	JOBS CREATED	STATUS		
						ON TRACK / ACHIEVED	DELAYED / AT RISK	OFF TRACK / NOT ACHIEVED
MfE	J4N	Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project Expansion	\$5M	\$1.5	2 FTE + staff support & DOC resources			
PDU	Shovel Ready	Climate Resilience Programme – Erosion Projects	\$19.6M	\$8.8M	50 FTE			
PDU	Shovel Ready	Climate Resilience Programme – Major Projects						
MfE	J4N	Ruamahanga River buffer riparian planting	\$2M	\$1.3M	1 FTE			
PFW	PF2050 Ltd	Predator Free Wellington	\$7M	\$250K	31 FTE Up to 15 contractors			
1BT	MPI	1 Billion Trees – Hill Country Erosion	\$15M	\$7.4 (GW & landowner)	6 FTE (100% MPI funded)			
1BT	MPI	1 Billion Trees Partnership Grant – Riparian/Parks/Biodiversity programme increase	\$4.5M	\$3.25M (GW & landowner)	1 FTE (100% MPI funded)			

MfE – Ministry for the Environment
 J4N – Jobs for Nature
 PDU – Provincial Development Unit
 MPI – Ministry of Primary Industries



J4N Wairarapa Moana Wetland Enhancement

MfE have approved the Year 1 annual report and budgets.

The draft Year 2 work plan is with MfE for their approval.

Contracts are in place with Kahu Environmental and Henley Hutchings consultancies to develop Plans to guide programme delivery to 2025. Planning work is underway.

Delivery of Year 2 work is on track with an additional \$408,000 rolled over from Year 1. This work includes pest animal control, facilities maintenance and community engagement.

Variation of the Deed of Funding to be negotiated with MfE

(a variation is required to roll-over Year 1 budgets into Year 2, to incorporate the Project Lead salary for Year 2-5 and adjust annual budgets).



Climate Resilience (previously Shovel Ready)

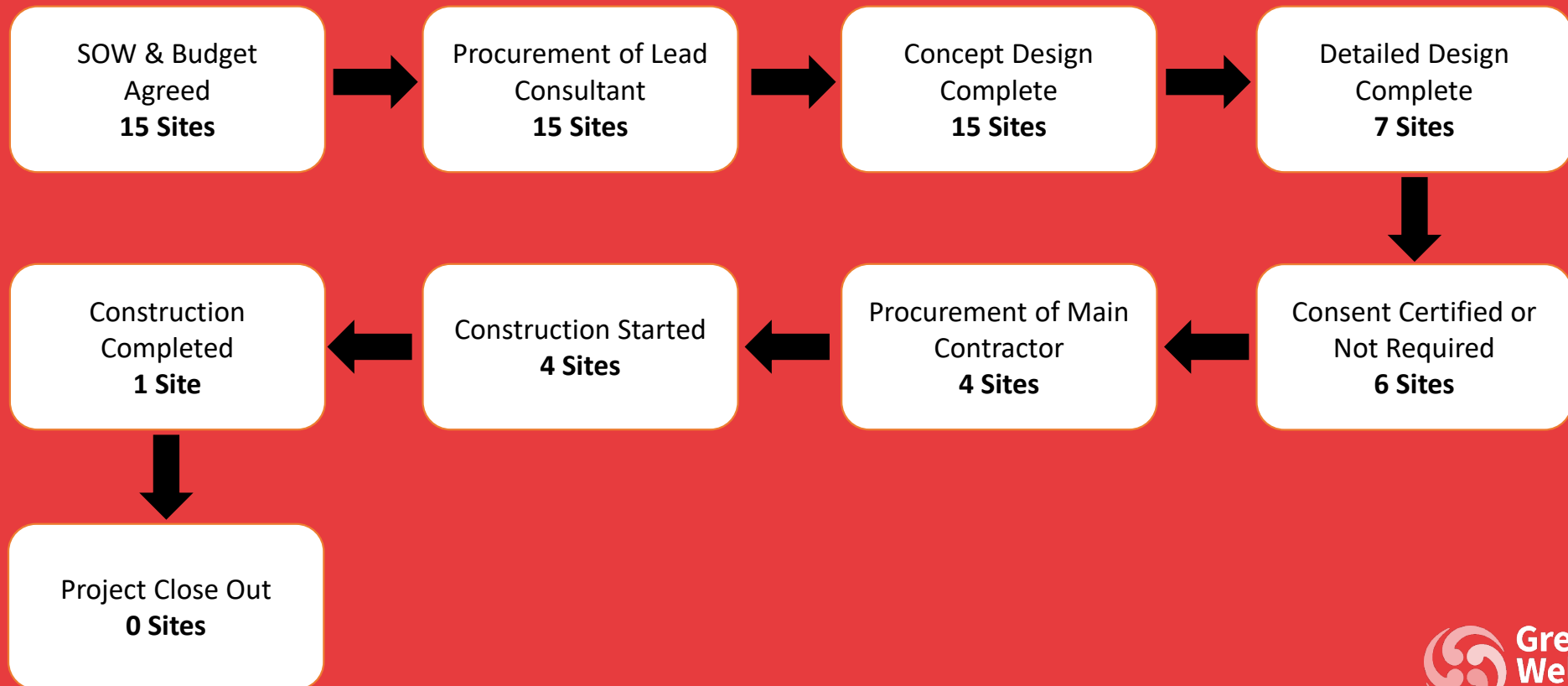
Two projects over 15 sites (work has begun on 4 sites)

Detailed design, consenting, and construction processing as scheduled

Sustainable procurement process:

- Initiative for councils to regularly engage with the Department of Corrections for the procurement of plants
 - *Growing in scope - wide appeal for both councils and iwi nationally*
 - *Engagement with councils, iwi, and Corrections has begun – preparing for Ministerial engagement*
- Initiative to strengthen iwi-Corrections relationships, facilitation support provided by GWRC program team
- Supporting growth of Māori businesses
 - *Mills Albert - local, Māori owned contractor procured for works at multiple sites*
- Wetland restoration project
- Specified program funding for professional development, life skills, youth career training, etc.

Resilient River Communities Programme Overview – Oct. 2021



J4N Ruamahanga River Riparian Planting

- Planting for winter 2021 completed.
- Finalising last planting sites for winter 2022.
- Discussions with nurseries for winter planting 2022 completed and orders placed for 64,000 plants.
- Pest plant activities starting December 2021 and pest animal starting January 2022.
- Maintenance activities of winter 2021 planting sites have started.

Predator Free Wellington

- Rats from the majority of urban areas are now cleared. Populations still persist in difficult high value rat habitat. External support from ZIP are assisting in developing a new strategy on how to change things up in these areas.
- Recruitment completed for new Field Supervisor, Community Outreach Officer, Community Outreach Officer (secondment) and two new Field Operators. New position to be filled to backfill for Field Operator on secondment.
- Renovations underway on Wilton PFW site.
- Applications underway to MPI for Glue Board usage and hand broadcast of brodifacoum bait.
- October we began recording possible vs confident rat identification. Only 33% were confident, this gives us a better opportunity to scrutinize data.
- Number of juveniles caught are declining which is what we need to see.
- Rat detector dog has been through and has indicated that the majority of the area checked is clear of rats. Some indications but not strong and any strong areas were where we thought they were.
- Trial bait stations have been deployed and cameras placed for observation.
- More cameras deployed in prototype zone which are trained on existing bait stations and new style stations to see interaction rats have with them.
- Community outreach operations have increased and a community led piece of work to develop a buffer/barrier into the Phase 2 zone is underway.

1 Billion Trees

- **The Milestone 3 Report was submitted to Te Uru Rākau last month**
- **Planning for 2022 plantings are well underway with an abundance of projects on the waitlist, indicating a low risk of having in insufficient projects that qualify for this fund**
- **Physical restoration works over the next six months will focus on completing post-planting maintenance activities, monitoring fencing progress and preparing the sites for planting**