



caring about you & your environment

Report 02.416

28 June 2002

File: R/01/01/16

ks-#118000

Report to the Landcare Committee
from Dr Philippa Crisp, Landcare Advisor – Environmental Stewardship

Environmental Asset Management Plan Performance Indicator

1. Purpose

To report to the Committee on progress on the Environmental Asset Management Plan (EAMP) and management of the environmental assets for the Council's parks and forests during the 2001/02 financial year.

2. What is Environmental Asset Management?

The aim of environmental asset management is to look after and restore (if that is possible) the indigenous flora and fauna (native ecosystems) within the Council's parks and forests. We survey and monitor the condition of the forest (forest health monitoring) as well as the location and spread of pest animals (possums, goats, deer, pigs, etc.) and plant pests (weeds). We also develop and implement pest control programmes to maintain forest health and to ensure pest plants and animals are maintained to standards specified in the Regional Pest Management Strategy or Water Group Contract specifications.

3. Annual Plan Performance Indicator

The 2001/02 Annual Plan contains the following Performance Indicator:

Environmental assets within the Regional Parks, Forests, and Water Collection Areas will be monitored, protected and enhanced, within a budget of \$456,000 in accordance with: (1) the Regional Parks and Forests Asset Management Plan service levels; (2) the Regional Pest Management Strategy; (3) nationally recognised protocols for forest health monitoring. All to be reported to the Landcare Committee following the end of the financial year.

The non-financial aspects of the performance indicator have been achieved. The financial aspects of the programme will be confirmed once the final year end position is known.

4. **Process During 2001/02**

Our Environmental Asset Management Plan is constantly evolving. During 2001/02 the EAMP has been developed further using the results of previous monitoring programmes. The pest animal control programme reflected the highest priority needs that had been identified through this monitoring work. Pest plant control was prioritised using the weed mapping data that was obtained in 2000/01. The monitoring programme was reassessed and improved to ensure that the data collected would provide useful information for future work.

We also undertook the monitoring work (including biodiversity surveys) which was subsequently audited by Landcare Research (e.g. permanent plot vegetation monitoring data). The biodiversity surveys completed this year have provided valuable information about the presence and management of rare species on Council land.

5. **Key Aspects of the Work Programme Achieved**

The following is a summary of the key aspects of the work programme achieved during the year.

Monitoring

- A new exclosure plot and associated control plots were set up and measured in East Harbour Regional Park.
- Flowering and fruiting (phenology) monitoring of plant species was established across all parks and forests, using both Rangers and volunteers.
- Rata digital photography was completed in Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchment and Akatarawa Forest.
- Hinau fruitfall plots were established and/or measured in Hutt and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchments and Akatarawa Forest.
- Tawa fruitfall plots were established and/or measured in Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchment, Akatarawa Forest and Kaitoke Regional Park.
- Permanent vegetation plots were re-measured in the Hutt Water Collection Area
- Pellet lines were re-measured in the Hutt Water Collection Area.
- Ungulate (deer and goats) browse plots were installed in Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchment.
- Bird transect surveys were conducted in Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchment and Kaitoke Regional Park.
- Bird distance sampling of whiteheads, bellbirds and tomtits were undertaken in Akatarawa Forest.
- Post-operational possum monitoring was completed in southern half of Akatarawa Forest (2.5 percent Residual Trap Catch (RTC)).
- Pre-operational possum monitoring was completed in Dry Creek (29.6 percent RTC).

- Fish surveys were completed in Pakuratahi, Queen Elizabeth Park and East Harbour Regional Park..
- A botanical survey of Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchment was conducted.

Pest Animal Control

- A 1080 operation and post-operation monitoring was conducted in Akatarawa West (possum numbers reduced from a pre-operational residual trap catch rate (RTC) of 20.3 percent to a post-operation RTC of 2.3 per cent).
- A large vertebrate control operation and Judas goat programme was conducted in the in Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchment (102 goats, 10 deer and 19 pigs).
- A recreational hunting ballot (11 goats, 9 deer and 2 pigs) in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchment was completed.
- Large vertebrate control operations in the Pakuratahi Forest, Belmont Regional Park and Battle Hill Farm Forest Park were conducted.

Pest Plant Operations

The pest plants on Council land requiring the most urgent control were identified from weed mapping undertaken in 2000/01 (including species identified in the Regional Pest Management Strategy). These included:

- Italian buckthorn, boneseed, boxthorn and blackberry at Queen Elizabeth Park.
- *Tradescantia*, *Selaginella* and blackberry at Battle Hill (bush remnant).
- Old man's beard and Japanese honeysuckle in Akatarawa Forest.
- Pine trees, *Montbretia*, *Watsonia* and garden plants in Wainuiomata/Orongorongo WCA.
- Old man's beard and a garden waste dump site in Belmont Regional Park.

Fire Protection

All our fire fighting commitments were met. Thankfully due to the very wet fire seasons, no fires were attended. The training levels of the fire-fighting staff were maintained throughout the season.

6. Where to From Here?

During the 2002/03 year, we will further refine the EAMP by:

- Using the pest plant control plans to prioritise pest plant control operations within funding constraints.
- Continuing to aim for an integrated program of pest control in high ecological value areas on Council land.
- Extending professional goat control to other areas of Council land.
- Increasing the use of new technology by increasing the use of Judas goats.

- Further improving the monitoring program and increase the involvement of volunteers where possible.
- Conducting further survey work to increase knowledge about biodiversity on Council land.
- Developing the EAMP using the principles of sustainable management.

7. **Recommendations**

That the Committee:

- (1) **Receive** the report.
- (2) **Note** the contents of the report.

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission:

DR PHILIPPA CRISP
Landcare Advisor – Environmental Stewardship

MURRAY WAITITI
Manager, Parks and Forests

ROB FORLONG
Divisional Manager, Landcare