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Committee Landcare  
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## Community enhancement projects performance indicator

### 1. Purpose

To report to the Committee on the 2006/07 environmental enhancement projects in order to meet the performance indicator requirements of the Annual Plan.

### 2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### 3. Annual Plan performance indicator

The 2006/07 Annual Plan contains the following performance indicator:

*The annual community enhancement projects will be completed within a budget of \$120,000. A progress report will be approved by Council.*

This performance indicator was **achieved** at a cost of \$108,600.

### 4. Community enhancement projects

Nine environmental enhancement projects were included with this performance indicator. A brief summary of the work that was carried out on these projects this year is set out below.

#### 4.1 Te Marua Bush restoration

Members of the *Wellington Botanical Society (Botsoc)* have cared for the bush remnant at Te Marua since the early 1990s. They have carried out extensive weed control work and plantings in the remnant over the years. *Botsoc* have

continued to clear pest plants and plant seedlings that have been grown by the Upper Hutt Branch of *Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society (Forest and Bird)*. The seed was eco-sourced from Te Marua bush. Greater Wellington funds have been used this year for more professional pest plant control work, fencing and plants. The fencing work was to seal off the remnant on the western side, while the plants were purchased from *Forest and Bird*, who grow seedlings for the area. Last year, Transit transferred unused land to the south of the remnant to the Council. *Botsoc* will use the plants to continue planting up this extension to Te Marua Bush.

#### **4.2 Korokoro Bush goat control**

The Judas goat control programme has been continued and goat numbers have now been maintained at low levels for six years. Funds were used this year to continue to keep the goat numbers down. Thirty-three goats were culled this year. *Wellington City Council* coordinated with Greater Wellington this year to ensure that an integrated attack could be made on the goats. This work, combined with the ongoing possum control now in place means forest health continues to improve. Bird monitoring established in the valley in 2004 has shown a good improvement in bird numbers, including bellbirds and whiteheads.

#### **4.3 Mainland island restoration operation (MIRO)**

The *MIRO* group based at East Harbour Regional Park have worked on several projects with officers during the past six years.. *MIRO* have continued to maintain these low possum numbers in the Northern block by servicing a trap network in the 1,500ha forest. Over thirty volunteers spend around 2,000 volunteer hours per year tramping into the forest, clearing trap and refilling bait stations near the traps. These baits are to keep rats from eating the possum trap lures.

Their hard work has been successful, as a recent monitor showed possums to be at very low levels in the area (2%RTC). Volunteers are also actively involved in the rodent/mustelid monitoring program which involves a week of field work every three months. The committee has made some progress in their aims for East Harbour Regional Park and have been developing a robin release plan for the mainland island area within the park. They are also keen to initiate a restoration planting program in the Lakes Block and to this end, have been growing plants in a nursery in Eastbourne. A restoration plan developed for the area through the environmental programme has proposed six planting sites within the Lakes Block. *MIRO* hopes to use some of its nursery stock to plant up one of these sites this winter. They have used this year's funds to purchase fencing materials for the restoration site, as there will be a need to protect the planting from hares and rabbits, as well as any other animals that may stray into the block.

#### **4.4 Pakuratahi River riparian planting**

Over the past five years, the emphasis has been on restoring the top of the catchment at the former Summit rail yards on the Rimutaka Rail Trail,

removing weed species in the riparian zones and carrying out developments at specific nodes as outlined in the Restoration Plan. 1200 revegetation plants, were planted in gaps in existing plantings. Some maintenance work removing weed species was carried out by prison inmates but it was significantly less than in some years due to a shortage of prison staff.

A small Totara grove established at the Summit is being expanded and this will continue over the next few years reintroducing some of the other larger growing species including rimu and kahikatea, in addition to totara, amongst the smaller colonising species. These are currently being grown at a local nursery.

#### **4.5 Queen Elizabeth Park remnant forest restoration**

Members of *Kapi-Mana Forest and Bird* and *Kapiti Environment Association (KEA)* have been actively involved in the restoration of this remnant for over a decade. While it is a modest 1.2 h in size, it is the only remnant of this type in the lower part of the Kapiti Coast and it is proving to be a valuable seed source to grow plants in the Park nursery. Friends of the Park volunteers have regular potting and weeding sessions in the nursery and the plants are being used to expand the edges of the remnant and for restoration work in the surrounding wetlands. At this year's Arbor Day 130 school children along with the American Ambassador William McCormick, Jack Rikihana representing *Te Ahiawa Ki Whakarongotai* and Friends of the Park planted 900 plants in the area.

Monitoring of bird numbers began in 2001 and the data shows there are now more birds in the forest remnant and surrounding wetlands. The continuing concerted pest control programme carried out by staff should ensure that an increase in bird numbers continues.

#### **4.6 Queen Elizabeth Park wetland restoration**

Work continues with the ongoing restoration of the 16 hectares of wetland areas near the MacKays entry area. Most of the work has been carried out by numerous corporate groups, along with staff, planting and weeding throughout the year. With the completion of most of the surrounding work associated with the construction of the new SH1 MacKays over bridge, this will allow the wetland systems to settle down and consolidate. The new 2km wetland walk, which includes a short, hard-surfaced, wheelchair accessible section, is proving popular and it will continue to improve as the plants grow and create a better habitat for birdlife. A new interpretation trail describing the local geology which includes why the wetlands originally formed in the area is currently being developed and will begin at the Ranger's office

##### **4.6.1 Queen Elizabeth Park foredune restoration**

The major focus of the programme this past year was continuing with planting of spinifex on the foredune between the Whareroa stream outlet and the Raumati South entrance. Some encouraging results have been achieved which

indicate, that with ongoing active support from the community, it should be possible to reduce the current erosion at that end of the Park. The issue at the Paekakariki is more problematic with significant erosion following spring storms. Parks staff have carried out ongoing maintenance on several areas including reforming a section of the very popular coastal track in a more consolidated manner to allow service vehicles access and wind blown erosion at the edges.

A detailed pest plant control plan was produced in 2003. Excellent results have been achieved with the elimination of major infestations of boneseed, boxthorn and Italian buckthorn which are all serious weeds. However, this work still needs to continue to control new seedlings as they emerge along several other problem weeds and to replant with suitable native species.

#### **4.7 Battle Hill wetland restoration**

Construction of several ponds was completed five years ago and the area has now been extensively planted and is starting to get an established feel about it. The planting has continued into a large triangle block that was retired above the ponds. This was carried out initially by a school group and then URS, an environmental consultancy who took the opportunity to get their hands dirty doing some practical on the ground work. A successful community "Creating Habitat Day" was then held and this was a successful event involving 40 people from around the district. These types of plantings are always good opportunities to discuss practical environmental issues and the value of the biodiversity programme.

The planting of Swampy Gully, which began 4 years four years ago, is now really starting to show with some cabbage trees 2 metres in height. This was the site for Arbor Day again this year and 140 children from local schools along with teachers and parents, planted 1,000 plants.

Some poplar pole planting in the adjoining grazed gullies is continuing each year and a few Totara in stock-proof protectors are also now being introduced. Other corporate organisations are being encouraged and are getting involved in this project doing releasing work as well as planting.

#### **4.8 Cannons Creek Valley bush restoration – Belmont Regional Park**

With the purchase of Waitangirua Farm by Council and Government, this has provided more certainty for this project which involves the restoring of 100ha area of Cannons Creek Valley. The *Friends of Maara Roa* are a very focussed committed group doing excellent work in line with the restoration plan recommendations prepared jointly with GWRC in 2001. Currently, planting and maintenance is being carried out in earnest every second Saturday morning during June, July and August. The group have focussed their planting on a number of key areas developing "green corridors" where they plant fire resistant species in an effort to prevent a major fire, as occurred 4 years ago. The Council contribution was partly used to purchase 2,500 plants, which has been supplemented by another 2000 grown by the Friends. Hare nets were

also purchased to protect planted seedlings from browse damage. The Friends continue to maintain bait stations for pest control. They are currently developing an interpretative walk through one of the covenants and they again ran a series of walks during the summer as part of the Regional Outdoors Programme.

#### **4.9 Whareroa Stream Restoration Programme**

Although not included in the original budget, this project was provided with funding by Council over the past three years following a presentation by the Chairperson of the *Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park*, Dr John Lancashire. This funding has been used to fence both sides the entire Whareroa Stream that flows through the Park. Excavation has been carried out to break the edges of what is essentially a drainage ditch to allow it to again become a more “naturalised” stream. A new walking circuit is now evolving through the Park alongside the stream which makes an additional pleasant off road route which will be gradually improved over time as the plant material grows.

Three planting events are held each winter as well as plant weeding days. In the past year 1500 Honda Trees were planted on a sunny Saturday morning attended by 50 people from Kapiti Honda dealers and Friends of the Park. This will also be repeated in the 2007/08.

### **5. Communications**

These projects provide excellent public relations opportunities. All of them have been publicised in the local and daily newspapers, and in *Elements*. We are continuing to work with Corporate Communications to ensure ongoing publicity of these projects.

### **6. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

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

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