

Report 11.358
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Committee Council
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Report on the Environment Wellbeing Committee meeting 12 July 2011

1. Purpose

To inform the Council about the meeting of the Environment Wellbeing Committee that took place on 12 July 2011.

2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

3. Report

3.1 Farm Environment awards 2002- 2011

The Farm Environment awards (the Awards) have been running since 2002 with 2011 being the first year in which a national winner was identified. The Awards present a good opportunity to promote sustainable land management across the region. The Committee agreed that it was important for officers to explore ways to encourage more people to enter the Awards and that one way this could be achieved was by providing incentives to entrants and winners.

3.2 Bio-control opportunities in the Wellington

Bio-control is an important tool used by Greater Wellington as part of integrated pest management. The Biosecurity Department is part of the National Bio-control Collective which works together to identify collective priorities on bio-control issues. Bio-control is to be discussed as part of Greater Wellington's Long Term Plan 2012 – 22 workshop process.

The Committee discussed Greater Wellington's bio-control operations and risk management. Officers advised the Committee that it often takes years until an agent is approved for release into the environment and that risk assessment is tasked to the Environmental Protection Agency (formally the Environment Risk Management Agency) and Landcare Research. Bio-control risks need to be weighed against the risks of using other pest control methods such as chemical sprays.

The Committee discussed the possibility of private citizen engagement in the Bio-control process. Officer's noted that this would be addressed in the upcoming Pest Bio-control workshop which all Councillors are invited to attend.

3.3 Regional possum predator control programme review

The Committee considered the proposed increase in 'Tb free' area in the Region and the potential funding impact this would have on GW should the Regional Possum Predator Programme be expanded to cover these areas at a faster rate.

The Committee agreed that rate payers need to know what the purpose of the programme is as an expanded programme will impact on rates. The possum predator control programme provides a range of local and regional benefits. Officers need to consider how the future programme should be funded if there are multiple benefits. More engagement, particularly from the farming community, is to be encouraged if the future programme is to expand.

The Committee agreed to consider expanding the Possum Predator Control Programme during the preparation of the 2012-22 Long Term Plan.

3.4 Wairarapa Key Native Ecosystem Management – operational reports for 2009/10

The Committee noted the achievements of the Wairarapa Key Native Ecosystem Management programme in the area of predator control. The Biosecurity Department is working with the Biodiversity department to help review the future direction and content of the programme.

3.5 General Manager's report

The Committee was updated on activities undertaken by Catchment Management relating to the Committee's areas of responsibility. Recent activities include participation in a rabbit training needs workshop and a rook control workshop, pest monitoring and management, developing a biosecurity database with the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, contributing to research projects and participating in working groups on the National Environment Standard for Plantation Forestry.

4. Unconfirmed minutes

The unconfirmed minutes of the Committee meeting are in **Attachment 1**.

5. Recommendations

That the Council:

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

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Wayne O'Donnell
General manager, Catchment
Management

Barbara Donaldson
Chair