



caring about you & your environment

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Report to the Landcare Committee
from Rob Forlong, Divisional Manager, Landcare

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress of the Landcare Division since the Committee's last meeting.

2. Managers' Reports

The Departmental Managers' Reports are attached.

3. Otaki Mouth Project

A couple of weeks ago, together with Councillors Turver and Werry, I was fortunate enough to attend the opening of the Otaki River mouth project. The project arises from the environmental programme associated with the Otaki Floodplain Management Plan. It involves managing the haphazard creation of tracks, putting in place infrastructure such as carparking, as well as a large amount of planting and weed control.

After the formal opening we were set loose planting flaxes, cabbage trees and toe toe.. In typical Landcare fashion the holes were pre-dug so the planting proceeded at great pace.

What has impressed me most about the project is the high level of support for it in the community. The project is a co-operative effort between the Ngati Raukawa, Friends of the Otaki River (including the Otaki Fishing Club who provided a sausage sizzle for the opening), KCDC, DOC, Fish and Game NZ and WRC.

The Flood Protection team of Trecia Smith, Graeme Campbell, Garry Baker, Graham Winterburn and Kevin Whitburn did a great job organising the opening.

4. Landcare gets New Zealand's first two EnviroMark® Gold Awards

Both Parks and Forests and Flood Protection have qualified for "Gold" Awards under the EnviroMark® scheme for their respective environmental management systems (EMS). The EnviroMark® System is managed by Landcare Research Limited and we are the first organisation in New Zealand to achieve Gold Standard.

Councillors will recall that last year Parks and Forests became the first organisation in the nation to achieve bronze and silver certification. The Parks and Forests EMS has already resulted in some significant improvements to the way we work. For example:

- Recycling stations are now in place in Kaitoke Regional Park and the Upper Hutt Depot.
- The maintenance teams have made improvements to their construction techniques so that almost all waste is removed from building sites.
- Increased use of compost has reduced spraying slightly.
- We now have online access to information about environmentally friendly construction techniques.

Our environmental management systems are important as they ensure that the Landcare Division actively promotes and implements the WRC's corporate environmental policy. External verification by EnviroMark® shows that the Landcare Division is operating in a way that contributes towards the Council's ultimate goal of a sustainable region.

As part of implementing its EMS, the Flood Protection Department engaged Good Earth Matters Consulting Limited (GEM) to complete an Audit of the Department's Environmental Code of Practice (ECOP). The conclusions were very positive. The report noted that:

*Unusually for this type of review, GEM was not able to identify any current practices which could be deemed unacceptable or unsatisfactory to river users, and
...the WRC Flood Protection Group has set a benchmark for flood protection activities in New Zealand through its development and application of the ECOP.*

It was also very pleasing to see that Fish and Game NZ and the Department of Conservation were interviewed as part of the audit and were very complimentary about the way that Flood Protection carries out its work.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

Report prepared by:

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