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Report to Landcare Committee
from Victoria Owen, Landcare Planner – Policy, Parks and Forests

Draft Regional Parks Network Management Plan

1. Purpose

To request the Committee to recommend that the Council adopt the draft Regional Parks Network Management Plan for the purposes of consultation.

2. Background

In November 2001, the Committee agreed to a process for reviewing the Regional Park Management Plan. This process included the development of:

- an overarching Network Management Plan addressing the common management issues across the five Regional Parks.
- specific management plans addressing issues particular to each Regional Park

Since that time we have worked with the public, Tangata Whenua, relevant local authorities, the Department of Conservation and Councillors, to develop the draft. Relevant Council staff have also participated in the process.

Following an initial round of public submissions, staff worked closely with focus groups and Tangata Whenua prior to bringing a working draft document to Councillors in May. At that point the Council was beginning to firm up some of its ideas on how a sustainable region might be brought about so you asked us to report back on how the parks management plans could be refocused towards contributing to a sustainable region.

Reports 02.526 and 02.519 to the August Landcare Committee concluded that it was possible to adjust our management plan to bring them more into line with the WRC's broader goals, while maintaining the purpose and integrity of the Regional Parks.

The draft network plan was subsequently reworked and provided to Councillors and iwi. Councillors were able to discuss the draft and Tangata Whenua feedback plan in a workshop on 25 October 2002

The input provided by Councillors and Tangata Whenua is incorporated into the draft plan (**Attachment 1**).

3. What Does the Plan Propose?

This network plan sets out the future direction for management of Regional Parks in the Wellington Region. It provides a framework for addressing issues common to all Regional Parks, and managing them in a comprehensive and consistent way.

The plan proposes a vision for the Regional Parks as follows:

To enhance quality of life in the Wellington region by providing Regional Parks where:

- *Tangata Whenua rights and interests are respected.*
- *The community is actively involved and connected.*
- *Our environment and cultural heritage is protected for current and future generations.*
- *People can fully and actively use, enjoy, and learn from these lands in a sustainable manner.*

The plan translates this vision into a set of objectives and policies – which together focus on providing for community, recreational and commercial opportunities and use of the Parks, whilst maintaining their key environmental and cultural heritage values.

4. Are Any Key Issues Outstanding?

Most of the issues raised through feedback on the draft have been addressed through re-drafting, however some comments do need to be brought to the attention of Councillors.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) raised concerns that an increasing emphasis by the Council on conservation and heritage in Regional Parks may align the opportunities and constraints with those of DOC, possibly to the detriment of a complete range of visitor opportunities within the region on publicly owned land. We have made amendments to the plan, and discussed matters with the Department, which we trust will address their concerns adequately.

We consider that we have addressed all issues raised by Iwi in relation to the draft where possible. However, some issues raised were beyond the scope of the plan, specifically those relating to governance. Governance is an issue, which the Council as a whole is addressing with Tangata Whenua.

5. What Happens Next?

Following consideration of the plan by this Committee, the plan will be forwarded to the full Council Committee for approval. We will also provide a report to Ara Tahi attaching the draft plan and advising of changes made and responses to iwi comments. Once the Council has approved the draft, the plan will then be publicly notified (in late December and again in late January) and submissions called for. The minimum period for submissions will be until mid March. Once the Network Plan has been approved and released for public comment, work will commence on the park specific plans.

6. **Communication**

The approved plan will be publicly notified and submissions called for. Associated media releases will also be developed. An article for the December *Elements* magazine is currently being drafted.

7. **Recommendations**

That the Committee recommend to the Wellington Regional Council that it:

- (1) **Approve** the draft *Regional Parks Network Management Plan* for the purposes of obtaining public submissions pursuant to Section 6, 19(G) of the Local Government Act 1974, subject to any minor technical amendments which may be authorised by the Committee Chairperson.
- (2) **Authorise** officers to release the draft plan for public consultation.

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission:

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Attachment 1: Draft Regional Parks Network Management Plan