

Report 03.462
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Committee Landcare
Author Ross Jackson, Advisor Community Projects

Environmental education and environmental enhancement projects

1. Purpose

To report to the Committee on the 2002/03 environmental education and enhancement projects in order to meet the performance indicator requirements of the annual plan.

2. Annual plan performance indicator

The 2002/03 Annual Plan contains the following performance indicator:

The annual environmental education and environmental enhancement projects as agreed with the Divisional Manager, Landcare, will be completed, within a budget of \$237,000 and reported to the Landcare Committee following the end of the financial year.

The performance indicator was **substantially achieved** at a cost of \$236,000.

3. Environmental education projects

Officers worked with the Environmental Education Co-ordinators (Environment Division) during the year to develop infrastructure needed in the parks and forests for the Environmental Education Programme. This included:

- two small bridge structures at Stratton Street for environmental trail walks, and a 38 metre span truss bridge at Kaitoke Regional Park to link campground areas to the Pakuratahi Forks. A small structure was also built at Battle Hill to provide safe access along the Bush Reserve Loop track.
- a water treatment system for Stratton Street Education Centre. Lighting and kitchen facilities were also improved at Battle Hill Woolshed Centre.
- fencing at Stratton Street for a re-vegetation site that students can plant in as part of the 'Take Action' programme.
- a boardwalk structure at Stratton Street which was not completed on time due to design delays. This will be completed in the next financial year.

4. Environmental enhancement projects

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

Te Marua Bush restoration

Members of the Wellington Botanical Society (Botsoc) have carried out extensive weed control work and planting based on the weed maps prepared by Philippa Crisp. In addition, some members of Botsoc and the Upper Hutt Branch of Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society (Forest and Bird) have collected seedlings and assisted in the transplanting of some Swamp Maire from the State Highway 2 road deviation and relocated them in a bush remnant alongside the Stuart Macaskill Lakes. They have also provided advice to the roading contractor, when requested, on remnants being impacted by the road works.

Korokoro Bush goat control

Professional hunters were used to track Judas goats and cull any goats that the Judas goats had met up with. Forty-five goats were culled this year (121 goats last year). The under-story is continuing to show positive signs of recovery after the sustained hunting pressure of the last three years.

Mainland island restoration operation (MIRO)

The MIRO group based at East Harbour Regional Park have worked on several projects with officers during the past three years. Activities that have taken place this year are:

- an enclosure plot has been erected and measured
- rat traps have been purchased
- a fish survey completed
- council staff work with MIRO on an ongoing basis, advising on monitoring being conducted by MIRO
- we have also assisted with the analysis of fruitfall plot data and the interpretation of flowering and fruiting recordings
- an expert ecologist (Philip Simpson) was invited to visit the ratas at East Harbour and to advise on the ecology of these trees
- an interpretation sign will be placed in Williams Park in conjunction with Hutt City.

Pakuratahi River riparian planting and Ladle Bend wetland

Over the past year, the emphasis has been on restoring the top of the catchment at the former summit rail yards of the Rimutaka Incline, and removing weed species. Planting of a riparian zone by the streams at the summit took place at an Arbor Day event and has been continued over the past few months.

Queen Elizabeth Park remnant forest restoration

Monitoring of bird numbers was begun this year. The perimeter fence has also been extended outwards and there have been two community plantings carried out beyond the remnant. The plantings will eventually link up with the surrounding wetland areas.

Queen Elizabeth Park wetland restoration

The main focus of our work this year has been on planning the new entrance and the detailed design of a 2 hectare wetland adjacent to the Marines Memorial. This wetland contract was let in June 2003 and work began in July 2003. A problem that impacted on the project was the discovery of buried ordnance from the former marine camp.

Ongoing planting in the existing ephemeral wetlands has taken place during the winter including a recent Arbor Day celebration attended by Aka Arthur representing Ngati Toa, Chairperson Margaret Shields and Kapiti Coast District Council Mayor Alan Milne.

Queen Elizabeth Park foredune restoration

During the past year there were four organised walks in the dunes looking at aspects of history, geology, plants and ecology. Detailed plant and weed surveys have been carried out and work continues on the control of the most serious weeds. A blackberry control trial was implemented and also a spinifex trial on the foredunes. Very active support from the community made a big impact on three planting days.

Staff constructed several sand ladders and erected protective fences at five access points onto the beach. This is to try and reduce the erosion that is induced by people making numerous tracks through the foredunes.

Battle Hill wetland restoration

Construction of several ponds were completed last year. This year one kilometre of fencing was completed. This has allowed a large portion of Swampy Gully to be retired. A thousand plants have now been planted in the vicinity of the ponds including 350 at a successful Arbor Day this year with local schools. Extensive planting will continue to take place at Battle Hill over the next five years. Technical assistance has been provided by members of Wetland Care Inc., a voluntary organisation who specialise in wetland restoration. They have also provided advice on Queen Elizabeth Park.

Cannons Creek Valley bush restoration – Belmont Regional Park

A restoration plan was jointly prepared in 2001 and planting is currently being carried out in earnest every second Saturday morning during June and July. The council contribution was used to purchase plants, which has been augmented by plants grown by Friends of Maara Roa.

Tragically, earlier this year a major fire destroyed most of the 3–4,000 plants the group had planted over the past two winters. However, the group has remained very positive and has embarked on a planting programme with an emphasis on creating ‘green firebreaks.’ An additional \$5,000 was spent on the project by Council to clear a lot of the burnt gorse to allow planting to take place.

Council staff in conjunction with the Friends have carried out some specific weed control, track construction and possum control. In addition, Parks staff constructed a new footbridge over Cannons Creek which will allow a good loop track to be connected. The Friends organised an Arbor Day planting with local schools on the Porirua City Council owned portion of Belmont Regional Park.

5. **Communication**

These projects provide excellent public relations opportunities. A number have already been publicised in the local and daily newspapers, and in *Elements*. We are working with Corporate Communications to ensure continued publicity of these projects.

6. **Recommendations**

That the Committee:

1. *receive the report.*
2. *note the contents of the report.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Ross Jackson
Advisor Community Projects

Murray Waititi
Manager, Parks and Forests

Rob Forlong
Divisional Manager, Landcare