



Report **05.3**
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Committee **Landcare**
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Parks and Forests Hearing Subcommittee

1. Purpose

To :

- establish a subcommittee to hear submissions on parks and forests management plans; and
- adopt a Terms of Reference for a Parks and Forests Hearing Subcommittee.

2. Significance

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

3. Background

Management plans are required for each regional park (section 619, Local Government Act 1974). Lands within the Belmont, Queen Elizabeth and East Harbour Regional Parks also require management plans under the Reserves Act 1977. The review provisions and processes are similar under both Acts and are undertaken concurrently. The Forest Lands Plan: Future Water Collection Areas, although a non statutory plan, is using a similar review process.

The *Regional Parks Network Management Plan* was adopted in 2003, and provides a clear policy framework for park management and strategic issues (report 03.488). The review of individual park management plans began in 2003 and all plans should be completed by June 2007 (report 04.136).

There are two opportunities for the public to make submissions in the review process. Initially, submissions are called for on the park and the existing management plan. These are then considered by Council and a draft management plan prepared. Submissions are then sought on that draft plan and submitters may be heard in support of their submission at this point. To ensure a timely and efficient hearing process is followed, the Committee instructed officers to prepare a Terms of Reference for a subcommittee to hear submissions on the draft management plans (report 04.632).

4. Parks and Forests Hearing Committee

A draft Terms of Reference for the subcommittee can be found in Attachment 1. The Subcommittee requires a quorum of two regional councillors. As requested, all members of the Landcare Committee are able to become members of the Subcommittee. In addition, members of the Subcommittee can nominate other members, for instance Iwi representatives, Department of Conservation, as well as officials or elected representatives from Territorial Authorities, for a term as and if required.

5. Hearings

5.1 Forests Lands Plan: Future Water Collection Areas

Fifty one submissions have been received on the draft plan. Officers estimate that between five and ten submitters wish to be heard, including the Department of Conservation, Fish and Game NZ, Rimutaka Incline Railway Heritage Trust, motorised recreation supporters and the Wellington Botanical Society. A letter will be sent to all submitters offering them the opportunity to be heard in support of their submission.

Copies of the draft plan are available from Trecia Smith. The management plan review and process will be outlined briefly at the workshop scheduled for 16 February. Copies of the submissions and an accompanying analysis will be provided to the hearing subcommittee at least one week prior to the hearing. Please direct any queries to Trecia.

If the Committee is satisfied with this approach, a hearing could be held on 16 March 2005. A workshop has been scheduled for that morning and this could be used for the hearing.

5.2 Queen Elizabeth Park

Over three hundred submissions have been received in the first round of consultation. A draft plan is being prepared and should be released for public consultation around April/May of this year. It is anticipated that the high level of interest shown in the park management plan will continue, with people wishing to be heard in support of their submissions. A hearing date in July 2005 is possible but this will be confirmed closer to the time.

5.3 Belmont Regional Park

The Hutt City Council land management agreement with GWRC has been formalised. However, the land arrangements with the Department of Conservation, including transferring conservation covenants and control and management of the Takapu Block, have still to be finalised. These arrangements should be concluded by the end of the financial year, at which time the draft management plan can be released for consultation. The status of Waitangirua farm may also have a bearing on the plan review process. Officers anticipate a hearing date later in 2005.

5.4 East Harbour Regional Park

The review of the East Harbour Management Plan is due to begin in April this year. Officers anticipate a hearing date at the end of this calendar year.

6. Communication

No further communication is proposed at this time. The primary opportunities for communication will be through each management plan review process and will include public notices, newsletters and press releases.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *receive and note the contents of the report.*
2. *establish a subcommittee to hear submissions on Parks and Forests management plans.*
3. *adopt the Terms of Reference contained within this report for the subcommittee.*
4. *endorse the hearing date 16 March 2005 to hear submissions on the Forest lands Plan: Future Water Collection Areas*

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Attachment 1: Proposed Terms of Reference