



Report **06.248**
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Committee **Landcare**
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Battle Hill Farm Forest Management Plan review update

1. Purpose

To request the Committee to consider submissions on the Battle Hill Farm Forest Park management plan review and seek approval to begin writing the draft plan.

2. Significance of the decision

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

3. Background

The review of the Battle Hill Farm Forest Park (BHFFP) management plan began in February 2006 with an initial consultation phase calling for public comment from stakeholders, Iwi and the wider community. This phase concluded on 28 April 2006 and is in keeping with the Council approved process for the review of the management plans.

4. Progress to date

Phase one of the review – ‘pre-consultation’ – is complete. The purpose of Phase one was to identify the key issues involved and the viewpoints of various stakeholders. This has involved:

- undertaking initial discussions with relevant statutory agencies and Iwi
- notifying our intention to review and calling for public submissions (28 submissions received)
- developing a newsletter to inform the community about the review
- press releases advertising the review of the management plan, the process being undertaken and how the public can be involved

- placing newsletters, plans and submission forms at the park, and at Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) offices and on the GWRC website
- holding a public meeting
- summarising submissions for discussion at the BHFFP management plan review workshop on 31 May 2006

4.1 Submissions

Landcare Committee members received a copy of all written submissions on Monday 29 May. Additional copies are available on request; please contact Fiona Shaw on 381 7784.

4.2 Public meeting

A public meeting was held on 4 April 2006. A copy of all suggestions and ideas gathered at the public meeting is attached to this report for the Committee's consideration (see **Attachment 1**).

5. Key issues

Key issues arising from feedback to date include:

- 1) Continued and/or increased protection of the park's existing values (cultural, heritage, open space and natural character)
- 2) The impact on the park from proposed logging of the forestry block adjacent to BHFFP and Transmission Gully
- 3) The necessity to protect Transit's interest in Transmission Gully
- 4) Support for the protection and interpretation of cultural and archaeological sites
- 5) Ideas on track locations and levels of maintenance
- 6) Differing views on mountain bike access
- 7) Further investment in capital assets such as visitor centres, café's and playgrounds
- 8) Future use of the airstrip and availability to surrounding landowners.

A summary of the feedback to date is attached to this report (see **Attachment 2**).

6. Councillor's workshop

The BHFFP management plan review workshop was held on the 31st May to discuss some of the issues surrounding the park.

7. Key issues for discussion

When considering the future management of BHFFP, the greatest impacts to the integrity of the park and the quality of the experiences to be had there comes from the activities being carried out around the park rather than its direct management.

These impacts include the possibility of the construction of Transmission Gully, and any measures required to mitigate them, the impacts of the future logging of the forestry block on the visual and ecological integrity of the park and the wider catchment, the impacts of future subdivisions around BHFFP, and the impact of Puketiro Windfarm and how this will affect the operational management of the park.

Other issues that arose affecting the park directly includes its current “fee simple” status and whether the park should be reserved under the Reserves Act 1977 to offer it a level of protection beyond its current holding, the reservation of the small bush block as Recreation Reserve, increasing access for 4WD activities into the Puketiro Forest, and managing potential user conflicts on tracks around the park and in the plantation forest.

These issues were discussed at length at the Councillor workshop and will be incorporated into the new management plan as appropriate. More detailed explanation of the policies developed will accompany the draft plan for Council’s consideration, before the plan is released for a second round of consultation.

8. Review of the current plan

The current management plan, whilst being some 14 years old, covers many of the current issues facing the park. As with the previous park management plan, many of the policies, aims and objectives remain pertinent today. Therefore the majority of policies will need only minor amendments. However, the formatting of the plan will be updated to reflect the Council’s new direction for management planning under the Regional Park Network Management Plan framework.

9. Proposed structure of the plan

The Network plan sets the framework for all park specific management plans. The BHFFP management plan will therefore be consistent with the structure, objectives and policies of the Network Plan.

As with other park specific plans, the BHFFP management plan will include more detailed maps, management actions (methods) and expected results. This will assist in ensuring that the objectives, policies and methods are aligned and that management actions contribute to park objectives. It will also enable the plans to be effectively monitored.

10. Where to from here?

We will begin drafting a plan incorporating feedback and discussion gathered to date. Once the plan has been prepared, a report detailing changes to the current plan, particularly highlighting those changes which are significantly different from the existing plan, will be put to Council for approval before the draft plan is released for a second phase of consultation.

11. Communication

Communication with stakeholders is ongoing. Once we have received guidance from the Committee, we will incorporate that information into our consultation with stakeholders.

12. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Considers the submissions received.***
4. ***Notes the key issues arising from the pre-consultation phase.***
5. ***Instructs officers to prepare a draft Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Management Plan.***

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

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Attachment 1: Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Management Plan review – public meeting 4 April 2006.

Attachment 2: Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Management Plan review – summary of submissions.