



Report 08.126
Date 29 February 2008
File ENV/12/07/12

Committee Regional Sustainability Committee
Author Tim Porteous, Biodiversity Co-ordinator

Biodiversity six-monthly report

1. Purpose

To present to the Committee the biodiversity six-monthly report to 31 December 2007. This report follows as **Attachment 1**.

2. Background

Biodiversity is a core function of Greater Wellington reflecting our responsibilities under the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Biosecurity Act 1993. Although delivered by a number of departments, and frequently by cross-departmental groups, the Council's biodiversity activities are treated as components of one programme.

In 2001 the Biodiversity Co-ordinating Group (BCG) was established to facilitate the co-ordination of projects and programmes. In 2006/07 the group started reporting the aggregated biodiversity activities of Council to the Executive Management Team in the same format as quarterly divisional reports. Reporting to the Council commenced in 2007, and six monthly reports are presented to the Sustainability Committee

It should be noted that a comprehensive review of Greater Wellington's biodiversity strategy and programmes will be presented at the April meeting of the Committee.

3. Comment

The Council's biodiversity programmes operate on Greater Wellington-owned land, some territorial authority land and private land.

It is widely recognised that if the overall objective of the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy of "turning the tide" of biodiversity loss, greater engagement with private landowners is needed.

The review highlights that Greater Wellington already successful with a number of its private land programmes. For example:

- 115 landowners are part of the Wetlands Incentive programme to protect and improve the condition of wetlands on their land.
- 45 landowners are restoring riparian margins of streams on their property as part of the *Streams Alive* programme.
- Each year on average 15 landowners are assisted to enter into perpetual QEII National Trust covenants protecting 150–200 hectares of lowland forest or wetlands.

The above programmes all involve the use of financial incentives. As the review notes, the Council is involved in a national research project to develop policy to encourage private landowners to protect and enhance biodiversity without incentives. The project is funded by central government and recognises that programmes reliant on financial incentives will always be subject to budgetary constraints and, therefore, limited in their extent. Greater Wellington's case study is based in the Ohariu Valley and is intended to promote streamside management, such as fencing to exclude stock and riparian planting, to enhance aquatic biodiversity. "Before" and "after" surveys of the valley's residents will indicate if the project has been successful.

4. Communication

Success stories resulting from the Council's biodiversity programmes are regularly communicated through Council publications and press releases.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report; and***
2. ***Notes the content.***

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Tim Porteous
Biodiversity Co-ordinator

Nicola Shorten
Manager, Resource Policy

Nigel Corry
Divisional Manager,
Environment Management
Division

Attachment 1: Biodiversity six month review to 31 December 2007