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Committee Parks, Forests and Utilities  
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## Regional Outdoors Programme 2008

### 1. Purpose

To report on the 2008 Regional Outdoors Programme.

### 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 2008 Regional Outdoors Programme was the eighth in the series of annual summer event programmes. This year's programme started on 29 December 2007 with the Anything Vintage Festival and concluded with the second Farm to Coast walk on the 19 April 2008. The programme was extended because of the popularity of events such as Lighthouse and Lakes, and the Farm to Coast tramp, which were repeated. During the programme we officially launched the Battle Hill History Trail and the Lakes Block circuit, which was part of the second Lighthouse and Lakes walk.

By repeating the two events a total of 57 events were run over the course of the programme. Forty-eight were organised by Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) and nine by outside providers and by volunteer groups, with GWRC input if required.

Weather at the tail end of the programme affected a handful of events, which resulted in postponement dates and a drop in numbers turning up on the day. The second Farm to Coast walk was cancelled because of adverse weather conditions.

### 4. Objectives

The Regional Outdoors Programme contributes to two LTCCP success factors:

- More people visiting the regional parks
- More people taking positive action for a sustainable region

#### **4.1 More people visiting the regional parks**

The success of the programme stems from the variety of free/low cost events that are interesting and diverse in their content. Through the Regional Outdoors Programme we are able to:

- Remove barriers to people utilising parks for the first time – such as not knowing where to go or having no one to go with.
- Create a positive and memorable experience for the community.
- Provide an opportunity for rangers and other GWRC staff to interact with the public, enhancing the participants' experience.
- Promote the opportunities for people to come back to utilise the parks facilities, including picnic areas and walking tracks, etc.
- Work with local iwi to promote the cultural aspects of the parks where appropriate.
- Increase the profile of GWRC within the Wellington Region.

#### **4.2 More people taking positive action for a sustainable region**

##### **4.2.1 Volunteers**

The programme provides an opportunity to work with our volunteer and community network associated with different parks, and to gain their input into the programme. It creates a platform to promote volunteers' causes and their links with the parks network, whether environmental or social. Through the programme we have worked with the following groups and individuals:

- Friends of Maara Roa – four guided walks on the Porirua side of Belmont Regional Park
- Friends of Belmont Regional Park – members led the Old Coach Road History Trail, Creek to Peak and the group supported the Explore Belmont series.
- Te Rau O Te Rangi (Kapiti Weaving Collective) – harakeke, flax weaving on the coast
- Wellington Botanical Society, Robyn Smith – prior to becoming a GWRC staff member, Robyn volunteered to lead Plant Life of the Park
- Gail Abel and MIRO – Giant Rata Journey
- Ray Smith and Eastbourne Forest Rangers – Butterfly Creek Heritage Trail

- Tony Edwards – Landforms of the Park
- George Gibbs and Helen Beaglehole – Lighthouse and Lakes
- Graeme Jupp and the Featherston Fell Museum – Rimutaka Rail Trail
- Hutt Valley Gliding Club – Hutt Valley Gliding Club Open weekend
- Hutt Valley Fly Fishing Club – Beginners Guide to Fly-fishing
- New Zealand Mountain Safety – Go Bush! Mountain Safety

GWRC staff members were given the opportunity to volunteer at events. Members from Water Supply, Communications, IT, Transport and Support Services supported the events throughout the programme. The initiative enabled staff members who are not regularly involved with parks to gain further understanding, as well as a chance to interact with the public and promote different areas of Greater Wellington.

We would like to record our thanks to all the people who assisted with this years' programme.

#### 4.2.2 Territorial authorities

One of the outcomes of the Wellington Regional Strategy is to provide a quality lifestyle. The population of the Wellington Region is fortunate that each territorial authority has an extensive, diverse and low cost summer programme. By establishing positive and ongoing relationships with other territorial authorities, we are able to cross promote and work on joint projects, as well as ensure events are spread out through out the summer period.

We have worked on the following events with other territorial authorities and partners:

- “Kev the Wandering Kiwi” - in co-ordination with Upper Hutt and Hutt City Councils. Kev the Wandering Kiwi was held every Thursday in January and targeted families with young children. This was the first year that Hutt and Upper City Councils had a joint summer events programme brochure, which was delivered to every house in the Hutt Valley. The parks used were Tunnel Gully Recreation Area, Wainuiomata Recreation Area, Kaitoke Regional Park and Belmont Regional Park. A total of 815 children and parents attended Kev the Wandering Kiwi events in January.
- “Paws in the Park” - a joint initiative with the Upper Hutt City Council promotions team targeting people and their dogs.
- Lion Foundation Buggy Walks - an ongoing joint promotion with Sport Wellington Regional Sports Trust aimed at parents and caregivers with babies. The summer series (November to April) focuses on the regional parks, whereas the winter series is more urban based.

Over 2008 we will continue to nurture relationships with territorial authorities and look for opportunities to create positive and sustainable events.

## 5. Promotion

The programme has a budget of \$20,000, which is applied to advertising, other promotional materials and event supplies. The budget excludes the cost of GWRC staff time. Any charge to participants covers direct costs such as transport and portaloos.

Promotion for 2008 included

- A four page lift out in *Elements*, distributed in December to all households in the Wellington Region.
- A direct mail out to approximately 1,319 people and hand delivery of bundles to organisations such as libraries and information centres on our database.
- Radio advertising through the Radio Network.
- Listings on the GWRC website.
- Public notices were placed in *The Wellingtonian*, *Kapiti Observer*, *Kapi-Mana News*, *The Hutt News* and the *Upper Hutt Leader* at the beginning of January. Public notices were also placed at the end of February for March events.
- Territorial authorities promoted GWRC events specific to their area within their summer programme.

Promotion was targeted for December and January, a period which proves to be effective. Media releases were sent out closer to the time of an event if it was not quite booked up or if it is a “just turn up” type event.

Total expenditure for the programme was \$30,603, with participant revenue at \$13,222. The 2008 programme ran \$2,618 under budget.

## 6. Attendance

Records show that 14,105 people took part in the Regional Outdoors Programme for 2008. **Attachment 1** shows the full breakdown of numbers at GWRC events.

Key result areas	2008	2007
Total number of events in the Regional Outdoors Programme	57	49
Events run by GWRC	48	41
Events run by other agencies	3	4
Events run by volunteer groups with GWRC support if required	6	4
Participants at GWRC events	4,724	3,881
Average participation at GWRC events	98	95

Events organised by outside providers totalled 9,272 attendees - “Anything Vintage Festival” (7,500) (with GWRC involvement), “Karapoti Classic” (1,300) and the “Mt Lowry Challenge” (338), and the Big Coast (134).

We will continue to promote these events run on our parks if deemed appropriate for the 2009 programme.

## 6.1 New events

The following events were new to the 2008 programme

- Explore Belmont series - A four week series focused on four entrances to Belmont Regional Park. The aim was to highlight the diversity of what Belmont has to offer. The walks were for a couple of hours, aimed at families and those people interested in spending a few hours recreating compared with a whole day. They were all “just turn up” events, except for one.
- Battle Hill History launch - Because of the new interpretation panels being installed along the Summit Loop walk, an official opening was combined with a guided walk. The morning included a presentation based on events leading up to the confrontation at Battle Hill between Ngati Toa and Government troops. There was a blessing from Ngati Toa before a guided walk along the trail. Fifty members of the public joined us on the day, including members of Ngati Toa. Community newspapers picked up the post-event media release, giving the historical trail additional coverage.
- Hutt Valley Gliding Club open weekend - Sessions were run as their standard “have a go” session. This event was very popular and the club was pleased with the increased promotion that came with being part of the Regional Outdoors Programme. The club took people up at other weekends because of the over-run of keen participants.
- Beginners Guide to Fly Fishing - An introductory course for people new to fly fishing run by members of the Hutt Valley Angling Club. A separate afternoon session was added to each day because of public interest. The club experienced excellent exposure through the community newspapers and managed to pick up extra members. A lunch time barbecue was provided by the Hutt River Trail Ranger.
- Twitching on the Coast – Nikka La Monica, Queen Elizabeth Park Ranger and keen “twitcher”, led a guided walk to look at bird life in the park. Nikki is keen to make this a regular event.
- Farm to Coast - A full day tramp, starting at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, which heads up the Puketiro loop into the native bush of Mt Wainui. From here we dropped down into Whareroa Farm via private land and then into Queen Elizabeth Park. Because of interest a second day was organised and fully booked out.

## 6.2 Reintroduced events

Because of time constraints for planning, occasionally some events miss out. This year we were able to bring back:

- Harakeke – Flax weaving on the Coast - An introductory weaving evening at Queen Elizabeth Park run by Te Rau O Te Rangi (Kapiti Weaving Collective) followed by a sausage sizzle.
- Adopt a Pony – Stables in the Park based at Queen Elizabeth Park ran sessions throughout the day aimed at beginner horse riders.

## 6.3 Old favourites

We have run a number of events that are repeats from previous years. They continue to be well attended and often book out in a short space of time. These include the Rimutaka Rail Trail, Lighthouse and Lakes, 4WD sunset tours and the Battle Hill Heli tramps.

Lighthouse and Lakes was so popular that we added a second date, which was also booked out. We combined the second event with an official opening of the Lakes Block circuit. A new boardwalk was installed at the head of Lake Kohangatera, which makes it possible to walk around the two lakes and offers exceptional views up the Gollans Valley and over the south coast.

## 7. Feedback

The opportunity for participants to provide feedback is very important to the running of a successful programme. Feedback from 2008 has been extremely positive and a good opportunity for the rangers' and volunteers' work to be acknowledged. We have received additional feedback through telephone calls, emails and letters.

We have received no negative feedback, although there have been comments on what could be improved on, such as accuracy of times, promotion of fitness levels and the ability to hear speakers. Where attendance was low, we will review event content and decide whether the event has run its course.

**Attachment 2** provides examples of some of the feedback received for 2008.

## 8. Sponsorship

The programme received sponsorship from:

- Dwights Outdoors sponsored 26 events within the programme. At each of these sponsored events, 20 percent off vouchers were available for participants, redeemable at one of four stores in the Wellington Region. Each participant was eligible to win a Karrimor day pack. Dwights supplied a full sized tramping pack as a spot prize for the Go Bush Mountain Safety course, as well as a dome tent as a spot prize at the conclusion of the Explore Belmont series. The tent was won by a father and his two children. Spot prizes were drawn at the conclusion of the

event by one of three ways, either by use of a written quiz, verbal quiz or by a draw with the feedback forms. All these three methods worked well.

Dwights contributed half of the cost for two ezy up tents which included the GWRC and Dwights' logo. These ezy ups are used for Eastern Sector events, replacing the older and heavier models.

- Caffè L'Affare provided complimentary coffee for the Lion Foundation Buggy walk series and was approached about doing the same for the Kev the Wandering Kiwi walks in January. This proved successful, with many participants enjoying a cup of coffee in the parks during January.
- Radio Network – Kapiti Coast. Radio Network provided free advertising on the Kapiti Coast for the Lion Foundation Buggy walk at Queen Elizabeth Park in February, including a radio interview on the day. *New Idea* magazines were also provided as giveaways to attendees. Radio Network is keen to support future events on the Kapiti Coast.
- The Cancer Society of Wellington supplied four tubs of sunscreen to be used at events. We promoted the Sunsmart message through promotional material where appropriate. The Kapiti branch of Cancer Society provided gear, including sun shades free of charge for the February Lion Foundation Buggy Walk.

## **9. Regional Outdoors Programme 2009**

A review is currently under way of the 2008 programme. It is important to look at what went well, what could be improved and new ideas for 2009.

We will continue to work with our partners and hold events which complement the work of GWRC and the regional parks. It is important to have a spread across the parks and to ensure that we continue to provide events that cater to a wide audience and are cost effective.

We will continue to strengthen relationships with volunteer groups and partners in the territorial authorities, and to get their input into the programme.

The Regional Outdoors Programme brochure will be redesigned in order to fit with the new *Our Region* magazine.

## **10. Communications**

A media release has been completed outlining key results and number of people attending during the Regional Outdoors Programme, as well as recognising the volunteers involved.

## **11. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

- (1) **Receives the report.**

(2) *Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

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#### **Attachments**

- 1: Table of attendance numbers**
- 2: Table of event feedback**