



Report 10.92
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Committee Regional Sustainability
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Reserving of Battle Hill native bush remnant

1. Purpose

To recommend that Battle Hill native bush remnant be declared a scenic reserve.

2. Significance of the decision

Section 14 of the *Reserves Act 1977* sets out the decision making process for declaring land as a reserve. This process is set out in section 4 of this report.

3. Background

The bush remnant is part of Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, which is owned fee simple by GWRC but was acquired as a regional park under the *Local Government Act 1974*. It is around 33 hectares in size and is largely covered in native bush. It contains vegetation that is representative of forest that was once common in the area. The lower slopes are dominated by either tawa or titoki, while almost pure kohekohe forest takes precedence on the upper slopes. Kahikatea and pukatea are found in the swampy areas of the remnant, with occasional rimu, totara, nikau, matai and miro occurring throughout.

The Region's only self-sustaining population and the southern limit of the rare plant *Rhabdothamnus solandri* (New Zealand gloxinia) is found in the remnant. This shrub is thought to be pollinated only by honeyeaters, such as stitchbird, bellbird and tui. Luckily two of these bird species still use this remnant as habitat. In total, 15 native bird species have been recorded in the forest, including threatened species, such as New Zealand falcon and kereru. It is a valuable piece of indigenous forest ecologically, as it acts as a corridor for native flora and fauna and adjoins a private bush block of similar composition (Collyns QEII National Trust Covenant).

It was agreed by Council during the review of the *Battle Hill Farm Forest Management Plan* that Battle Hill native bush remnant should be reserved as a scenic reserve. The new plan has now been adopted and this action identified in Policy 1.12.

4. The process for reserving an area under the *Reserves Act 1977*

The process of reserving the remnant under the *Reserves Act 1977* (section 14) is detailed below

The first step is to call for objections to reserving the area or to the reserve classification. Once those objections are received, Council considers them and decides whether or not to declare the area a scenic reserve. If it is resolved to do so, the resolution plus any objections are passed to the Commissioner (Department of Conservation representative for the Minister of Conservation). If the Commissioner agrees to the proposal by not sustaining any objections, the Council proceeds with the gazettal by publishing a gazette notice.

We are now at the stage where Council is to consider any objections and to make a decision on the reserve status. Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) called for objections to reserving the remnant as a scenic reserve from 17 November to 18 December 2009. An advertisement was placed in *The Dominion Post* and *Kapi-Mana News*, while information was also placed on the website. Only one response was received (see Attachment 1) and this submission supported the proposal.

5. Reserve classification

A Scenic Reserve 1a classification has been proposed. Under section 19a of the *Reserves Act 1977*, this classification is:

for the purpose of protecting and preserving in perpetuity for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, enjoyment, and use of the public, suitable areas possessing such qualities of scenic interest, beauty or natural features or landscape that their protection and preservation are desirable in the public interest.

Recreational activities may take place in scenic reserves but the primary purpose of the area is for the protection of the ecological values. Recreational uses tend to be passive, such as walking and nature watching, but events or uses that do not impact on the native flora and fauna may be allowed in such areas.

6. Next steps

Only full Council can resolve to declare land as a reserve. If the Committee recommends to Council to go ahead with the reserving, the decision to declare the Battle Hill native bush remnant a scenic reserve will be considered at the next Council meeting on 30 March. If this resolution is passed, officers will follow the process outlined in section 4 of this report.

7. Communications

A formal reply will be sent to the single submitter soon after Council has made its recommendation.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives*** the report.
2. ***Notes*** the content of the report.
3. ***Notes*** the content of the submission received on the proposal.
4. ***Recommends*** to Council that the ***Battle Hill*** native bush remnant of approximately 33 hectares be reserved as a scenic reserve.

Report prepared by:

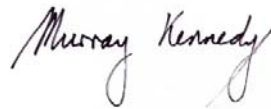
Philippa Crisp
Principal Advisor, Planning and
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Report approved by:



Murray Waititi
Manager, Parks

Report approved by:



Murray Kennedy
General Manager, Utilities and Services

Attachments

- 1 Submission by Michael Taylor
- 2 Map of the Battle Hill native bush remnant