

Report 11.596
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Committee Environmental Wellbeing Committee
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Report on Environmental Wellbeing Committee meeting of 22 November 2011

1. Purpose

To inform the Council about the meeting of the Environmental Wellbeing Committee that took place on 22 November 2011.

2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

3. Reports

3.1 Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022: Operational Plan Report 2010/11

The RPMS continues to be implemented effectively, and the Committee noted the success of the pest management programmes.

The Committee discussed the cost to manage magpies in the Wellington region, and questioned their inclusion in the strategy as impacting on human health. Officers explained that magpies can be very aggressive and attempt to drive off animals and humans, especially during the breeding season. Small children in particular can be subjected to intimidating and hazardous attacks. Where magpies are persistently attacking pedestrians and cyclists in public areas, Greater Wellington will consider shooting them. The Committee agreed that the Operational Plan Report needs to include this information.

Greater Wellington supplies magpie traps to the public to use in suitable areas where landowners want to control magpies. The Committee asked officers to consider introducing a charge to use the traps.

Officers will also consider whether there is an opportunity to educate people to be aware of magpies during the breeding season.

In December 2011, the cover story of the Our Region magazine will highlight the success of the possum control programmes in the region.

3.2 Biological control – opportunities for community involvement

The Committee agreed that the long-term success of biological control practices can be improved with community engagement and participation. Officers will consider using volunteer groups to aid in the future spread of biocontrol agents.

A series of presentations about the potential benefits of dung beetle releases for livestock owners and the environment have been held around the region. However, a small number of people (33) attended the presentations with five people requesting additional information. The Committee encouraged staff to continue efforts to educate people about the benefits of dung beetles and agreed that more publicity and advanced notice could improve the up-take.

As part of aligning the Biodiversity Department to the new Biodiversity Strategy, a review of all existing programmes within the department is underway. Officers will consider whether the Enviroschools programme could be a conduit for rearing and distribution of dung beetles.

The Committee noted that biological control issues will be considered in developing the Regional Plan when policy options for natural resource management are discussed.

3.3 Quarterly review for the period ending 30 September 2011

The Committee asked officers to consider whether the Wellington Harbour Safety Management System needs to be reviewed in light of the ramifications of the Rena grounding, but acknowledged that Maritime New Zealand will be reviewing it and those of other Councils and will probably review the risk management nationally before approving the systems.

Officers will ensure that Iwi are invited to be a part of the freshwater ecosystem monitoring work.

3.4 General Managers' Report to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee

The Committee discussed the progress of the Envirolink Tool funding application and noted the benefits of this tool, which seeks to link catchment scale nutrient management issues to farm scale solutions through Land and Environment Plans. Officers will ensure that Iwi are invited to participate in the development of this programme.

Discussions are ongoing about the sustainability of the Ballance Farm Environment Awards. The Committee noted that it is becoming increasingly difficult to get a sufficient number of applications in all of the four categories.

The Committee commended the efforts of staff in submitting an application to the 'Fresh Start for Freshwater Clean-up Fund' for Wairarapa Moana.

4. Recommendations

That the Council:

1. **Receives** the report.
2. **Notes** the content of the report.

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:



Wayne O'Donnell
General Manager,

Barbara Donaldson
Chair