

**Year End**  
**REPORT**

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30 June 2013

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT  
GROUP

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# 1 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE

## 1.1 Parks



### Overview

Significant track resurfacing completed at MacKenzie Track (East Harbour RP) and Korokoro Valley (Belmont RP), Birchville Dam track (Akatarawa Forest), Stuart Macaskill Lookout track (Te Marua), Te Onepoto Loop Track (Whitireia)

New toilet installed at the main entrance to Baring Head

Major storm damage impacts on Parks facilities and operations. Facility closures remain in place at several locations while repairs are underway

Directional signage installed at key road junctions at Akatarawa Forest. All gate locks changed in Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forest to better manage access and improve security

Matariki/ Arbor Day at Battle Hill attended by 170 people

Queen Elizabeth Park 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary tree planting event attended by the Governor General and 280 others

New Akatarawa Pakuratahi Ranger appointed

### Key results for the year

- ▶ Seven day ranger services are provided at Battle Hill, Kaitoke and Queen Elizabeth Parks. 5-day services are provided to Akatarawa/Pakuratahi Forests, Belmont, East Harbour, and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area. A 3-day per week service is provided at Whitireia Park
- ▶ The Eastern Parks team is now fully staffed with the appointment of Thane Walls as Akatarawa & Pakuratahi Forest Ranger

## Looking ahead

- ▶ Discussions continue with NZTA regarding mitigation and compensation for the effects of Transmission Gully Motorway (TGM) and the MacKays to Peka Peka Expressway (M2PP) on the parks. These are becoming more complex with two competing consortia intending to lodge bids in early October
- ▶ Development of a Paekakariki-Raumati South walkway/cycleway in Queen Elizabeth Park as part of the M2PP project
- ▶ Working with Biodiversity on the Area Plans for the High Value sites on the parks
- ▶ Reviewing environmental enhancement projects on the parks against the newly developed objectives and criteria
- ▶ Collaborating with the Department of Conservation as part of the Nature Central project
- ▶ Development of the Rimutaka Road Summit lookout and interpretation
- ▶ Implementation of the Whitireia Parks Millennium Pou site development project plan
- ▶ Play a key role in the development of the Rimutaka Cycle Trail. The trail will be officially accepted into the New Zealand Cycle Trail Great Rides in 2013 and be open for business later this year

## Departmental activity

The major projects undertaken this quarter include:

### Stratton Street plantation forest (Belmont Regional Park)

Tree removal to allow for road and skid construction has continued over the last three months. It is expected roads and skids will be completed in time for the arrival of the hauler in early August.

Wet weather has delayed the operation, the slope of the site has made it unsafe to work on during wet periods.

The storm event in June has created some additional challenges to the logging operation with around 30% of remaining standing trees being blown over. At this stage it appears most can still be harvested and sent to market for sale. Logging cost will increase to recover these trees which will hopefully be offset by the weaker NZ dollar and firm log prices in China.

Hutt City Council and the Environmental Regulation department have undertaken compliance inspections to ensure adherence to the resource consent conditions. Given the wet winter it is pleasing to see sediment is being well controlled by the measures in place.

We expected that the logging will be completed around the end of November allowing the revenue reinvestment programme to get underway in early 2014.

At the end of June around 2,500 tonnes of logs have been sent to market. Updated information will be produced and circulated to the local neighbours, park stakeholders, community groups and via the Belmont pages on the GWRC website through to completion of the logging operation.

## Asset management programme

Another round of storm related damage occurred in June with major windfall damage, slips, flooding and collateral damage across the parks network. Closures are still in place at several locations.

## Environmental enhancement projects

One of Parks' performance targets for the year was to establish objectives and criteria for environmental restoration sites across the parks network. Since 2000 we have been restoring and enhancing a range of sites, typically wetlands, dunes, riparian areas and rare forest types. Several of these sites now form part of the new Biodiversity Management Areas; work has finished on other sites, and new community groups have since formed with new areas in mind, eg, Friends of Baring Head.

To create a more transparent and adaptive framework for applying the project funds (\$81k per annum), we worked with the Biodiversity department to establish a set of objectives and criteria for evaluating the various sites. Guided by policies laid out in the Parks Network Plan, these objectives focus on sites with high or potentially high biodiversity values, that provide opportunities for the community (whether that be volunteers, business, NGOs etc) to be involved, or where the community has taken the lead on sites that are consistent with the Parks Network Plan and other strategic documents. The objectives provide the basis for four types of criteria: ecological, other values (cultural, recreation, heritage etc), community and strategic management.

We plan that sites will be proposed and reviewed as part of the Long Term Plan process; there will be a maximum 10 sites across the parks network (with any extra funds, eg, Honda TreeFund being applied to one or more of these sites to assist their completion rather than more sites being set up) and that site restoration will be guided by a restoration or planting plan.

The next step is to introduce and discuss the objectives and criteria with our Parks community groups, review current sites against them and consider new sites which may qualify for this support.

## Western Sector

### Battle Hill

Fencing maintenance has been completed with the focus on ensuring good boundary protection with neighbours and adjoining restoration sites. The drafting race in the woolshed yards was overhauled as many of the rails and posts were rotten and becoming a safety risk.

A new 25,000 water tank was installed adjacent to the woolshed to harvest rainwater should problems be experienced with the spring supply. It has been plumbed to allow direct connection for fire fighting equipment should the need arise.

A new steel gate was installed on the southern boundary of Battle Hill to reduce entry of unlawful 4 wheel drive vehicles and illegal hunters.

The June storm event brought down approximately 15 trees around the front area of the Park and several more around the Puketiro loop track. Several were in a dangerous state requiring the services of an arborist. The clean-up of the high risk damage was completed within a week

of the storm allowing safe access for visitors. Remaining tree damage on tracks and around the grass areas has been undertaken as weather and ground conditions allow.

The storm also brought down power and phone lines, making Battle Hill/Western Depot inaccessible to staff. Slips, tree falls and downed power lines forced the closure of roads either side of Battle Hill – highlighting some limitations of this work location as a Parks sector base. Battle Hill's Park operations continued, however, thanks to the resident Park Ranger. Power and phone services were restored several days after being cut, the Park Ranger making do with gas cookers, a generator and the wood burner in the ranger's residence.

Requests for access through Battle Hill by NZTA have almost been weekly over this period as consultants and engineers gain access for planning or survey work to support the TGM design phase.

Several of the local schools have undertaken annual cross country events with many having to reschedule due to poor weather and ground conditions.

The Battle Hill Arbor day event was combined with a Matariki celebration and attended by 140 students from Pauatahanui, Holy Family and Postage Schools and 30 adults on 11 June.

The students planted around 600 trees and attended a presentation about Matariki from Lisa Rewiti, an educator in Te Reo Māori, Tikanga and New Zealand social history. The feedback from the day was extremely positive, especially the inclusion of Matariki, which we hope to continue as part of future Arbor Day celebrations.

The Shaw Baton Relay Race was held in Battle Hill on the 27 April and was attended by 236 people.

### **Belmont**

The track realignment project linking Baked Beans Bend to Korokoro Forks wound down over the winter and will restart next summer, together with the Belmont Trig track improvement work. Work finished on a loud note – with



more than 20 hazardous trees being removed using a combination of controlled blasting and noisy chainsaw work. Weather conditions leading up to this were ideal, enabling crews to achieve a record three consecutive days of helicopter metalling work. Metal has been stockpiled in preparation for next summer. The track improvements will enable a broader range of visitors to access this iconic part of Belmont Regional Park. A brochure has been prepared to help explain these projects to park users.

Storm damage forced the closures of large areas within the Korokoro and Dry Creek catchments. Particularly complicated windfalls at several locations have required the expertise of specialist arborist contractors. Some areas are likely to remain closed for an extended period of time. Parks staff cleared several other areas of tree damage from access roads and tracks. A section of track in Dry Creek has been re-formed after slipping into the stream.

The resident Park Ranger was without power for several days as crews worked to repair networks within the urban area that were severely damaged by the high winds.

Cattle and sheep yards in Duck Creek were damaged by trees and staff are working with Landcorp to get these functional ahead of upcoming lambing and calving.

Major road upgrades have been completed on Hill Road and the Freeway; contributions from Vector have allowed works to be completed to a high standard. Recent wet weather has shown upgraded drainage measures have worked well leaving road surfaces intact without scouring.

Fencing maintenance and replacement is well underway with a major laneway fence adjacent to the “Freeway” being completed in conjunction with the road upgrade. The fence line for the Korokoro catchment retirement has been prepared, with construction to be completed by late August.

Additional funds from the Biodiversity department allowed retirement fencing to be constructed around the Electricity Flat section of the Cannons Creek catchment. The Wellington branch of Forest and Bird has expressed an interest in working with GWRC in undertaking restoration planting of this site.

Re-wiring of other sections of fence in the Cannons Creek catchment has been completed, strengthening the boundary between farmland and retired areas.

The programme of monthly dam safety inspections continued at Korokoro and Woollen Mills dams. Vegetation removal uncovered additional leaks in both dams. These will be monitored and findings discussed with specialist Dam safety engineers.

At the Dry Creek Loop track a problematic timber footbridge and a culvert were replaced with a new culvert as part of the Fibre Optic cable installation project. The old structures were poorly sited and the bridge was a risk of being undermined. The cost of the replacement was covered by Transpower with GWRC covering consent costs, a win-win outcome in working with outside agencies.

Transpower’s contractors have nearly completed installation of a fibre optic cable to support their network communication systems. The cable runs across the Park from Takapu Road to the Haywards substation on the Haywards. While it has been a major project, we were pleased that the access agreement ensured that “put right” conditions were thoroughly specified and Transpower is well aware of its obligations.

Our Landscape Architect completed the new Cannons Creek Restoration Plan and the document was distributed at the recent Friends of Maara Roa AGM. This will form the basis of the work to be completed in this area over the next ten years.

BAMBA have continued with the construction of a shared use walking/MTB track linking the Old Coach Road with Hill Road, completion is likely to be September. We have met with them to formulate a long term plan for MTB track construction linking opportunities in the Park as well as a downhill network of tracks in the logging block.

Orienteering Hutt Valley held an event on 14 April that attracted 134 people to the park. The Crazyman Multisport event was on 5 May and was attended by 257 crazy men and women.

### **Queen Elizabeth Park**

Rangers worked successfully with KDC staff to put in place a long term solution to storm water issues at Mackenzie Road, just in time to handle the June storm event.

The Wellington Road entrance to the Park did not fare so well, suffering extensive subsidence. This was largely caused by a slip in the Wainui Stream forcing the stream to carve a new channel at the base of the road. Consents are in process for the remedial works, scheduled for July and estimated to cost approximately \$20,000.

Also as a result of the storm, several trees around the Ranger’s residence toppled across the driveway, requiring the efforts of an aborist to remove them.

The planned fencing and road maintenance was completed, with the Whareroa Road surface now significantly improved. This renewal work will ensure a high standard of access to the Park is retained for many years to come.

We were also able to remove the dilapidated Sports Pavilion building near the Mackay's entrance to QEP, which will significantly reduce the risk of arson at the site. The same contractors also removed a derelict building within the Kapiti Pony Club licence area, disposing of it in an approved landfill as it contained asbestos.

The 2013 planting season is well underway with eight organised planting days being completed to the end of June. While the numbers of volunteers has been lower than hoped for, the help of corporate groups and local community service workers should allow us to achieve our target of 13,000 plants across all restoration sites within the Park.

This year we celebrated Arbor Day in conjunction with the 60th Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth Park. Sir Jerry Mateparae, the Governor General of New Zealand was welcomed on to the park by local iwi and the Kapa Haka group from Paekakariki School. Speeches followed from Kapiti Coast District Council Mayor, Jenny Rowan; GWRC Chair, Fran Wilde; Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park Chair, John Lancashire; and iwi representatives from Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai and Ngāti Toa Rangatira.

Paekakariki, Raumati South and Te Ra Schools were involved with 180 students attending, with another 100 adults enjoying the celebration. In total 1,000 trees were planted. The event included the commemorative planting of six Totara trees by the speakers and an unveiling of a commemorative plaque.

Three groups attended corporate plantings at Queen Elizabeth. All together the English Teaching College, English Language School and NZILA brought 71 people into the park, contributing 175 volunteer hours and planting 1,500 plants in the Northern wetland area. Two of the three groups planting days were held on a weekend and combined with Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park planting days.

Queen Elizabeth Park was busy with concession activities which included the Varsity Relay (244 people), Kapiti Primary Schools Mountain Bike Champs (71 people), NavQuest Orienteering (150 people) and College Sport Wellington Orienteering (110 people). The Kapiti US Marines Trust organised yet another successful Memorial Day event in conjunction with the US Embassy and the NZ Defence Force. It was attended by around 200 people including children from Paekakariki School.

### **Whitireia Park**

Major road resealing from the Thornley Street entrance was completed by contractors following the surface repairs undertaken in early 2012. Bollards have been installed near the toilets to prevent vehicle encroachment while still allowing disabled access.

Walking tracks were also improved, with re-metalling of the inland section of Te Onepoto Loop Track, and the installation of new track directional signage.

Initial project planning has begun on the Millennium Pou site development. The proposal was put to Ngati Toa and presented to the Park Board's May meeting for approval. The physical works are scheduled for completion in time for the site to be officially opened in March 2014 as part of the Great Outdoors Summer Events programme.

Restoration planting in conjunction with the Whitireia Restoration Group is underway although it has been disrupted by poor weather. Ngati Toa School and Aotea College students have undertaken planting and site protection works.



We are working with the Porirua City Council to permanently close vehicle access into Te Onepoto Bay. PCC is checking that this can be achieved through application of a little used bylaw, allowing installation of a locked gate. The Park Ranger continues to deal with rubbish dumping, graffiti and wilful damage to gates, bollards and fences, some of which is due to this unauthorized access via Te Onepoto Bay.

Whitireia Park did not escape storm damage – with windfalls affecting the main access road into the Park. Staff worked in difficult conditions to remove these and reinstate access.

Additional tree removal will be undertaken by Radio New Zealand contractors as several trees have been damaged and are threatening guy wires supporting the transmitter tower. This will be completed later in July and has been approved by the Whitireia Park Board.

A new entrance sign has been installed at the Thornley Street entrance to the park, replacing the very dilapidated old one. A new Whitireia Park directional road sign has been installed at the corner of Thornley and Dimmock Streets, making it easier for non locals to find the park. The new Whitireia Park brochure was completed during the period and will be distributed throughout the region in July.

## Eastern Sector Parks

### Akatarawa

The popular Birchville Dam walking track has been improved, with new surface metal laid, using metal flown to the site by helicopter. There was a high toll extracted on plant and equipment, with two power barrows, one digger, one trailer and a helicopter metal skip bin breaking down during various stages of the project. This instance reinforces the heavy reliance placed on mechanical plant for such operations.

The metalling of the recently realigned section of the Cannon Point Walkway has been rescheduled until suitable weather and ground conditions arise.

A road junction sign replacement programme is complete, making this Park slightly less hazardous for the public and staff to navigate. The signs assisted helicopter pilots during a recent search and rescue operation in the forest, almost immediately proving their value.

New padlocks and keys have been issued for gates at Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forests. The process was challenging; however, the result is a more secure, transparent and better managed key system, which will assist Parks in better managing access and recreation in the forests.

Meetings and a 4WD trip into the Rock Garden and Orange Hut with ARAC continue to build the relationship with ARAC. We have agreed to reinstate monthly meetings with the group to speed up development of a mutually acceptable Track Protocol for the forest.

### East Harbour

A new toilet has been installed at the Wainuiomata vehicle bridge site, at Baring Head. The toilet is a concrete structure, with opaque windows allowing in plenty of natural light. The building is ventilated, with a professional finish, and complies with disabled access standards. The design is well tested with many units installed at high use locations throughout the North Island. This facility will provide a much needed essential service for visitors to Baring Head, and the South Coast.

In the Northern Block, the Mackenzie Track upgrade is now complete. The track surface has been significantly improved.

The southerly storm had a major effect on East Harbour – with flooding, windfalls, slips, and damaged drains. The coastal edge bore the brunt of the damaging winds and sea surges. Getting access to and from the Park was problematic, due to HCC roading damage . Closures remain in place at Lake Kohangatera.

Flood protection and structural engineers have been working on a solution to raise a section of the 100m long boardwalk over the Gollans Stream wetland, in consultation with a neighbouring land owner. The storm of late-June brought about flooding affecting the wetland, with water levels over- topping the boardwalk. Flood debris upstream of the boardwalk have affected the structure and we have doubts about the long term viability of this facility.

Restoration in the park continues through both MIRO and Friends of Baring Head. Planting days at Khyber Pass saw 1,200 trees planted. MIRO have grown approximately 5,000 plants in their nursery this year. There was also a combined Roopu Tiaki, MIRO and GWRC planting at Parangarahu Lake on 5 June.

The restoration of the old pump shed by Friends of Baring Head is now complete and awaits the picnic table and interpretation to complete the project.



### **Kaitoke Regional Park**

Aging electric camping barbecues were replaced, after approximately 20 years of service. These facilities are heavily used, offering a safe and convenient option for campers. This work is part of a programme of renewal work needed for ensure the long term sustainability of Kaitoke’s visitor infrastructure.

The Stuart Macaskill lookout track surface was damaged from high rainfall events. The track was repaired and resurfaced.

Work has begun by Dept. of Corrections community workers on a “walk in” campground area alongside the Pakuratahi River.

Four new Totara were planted in the millennium plantings for recent Regional Councillors, followed by a tour of the Rivendell site and Swingbridge Track upgrade led by the Park Rangers.

There have been two filming company visits to the park in June, using the Farm Creek area and Rivendell for both a short sci-fi film and a French Lord of the Rings documentary.

An application has been lodged with NZTA for permission to commission brown “Rivendell” tourist information signs on SH2 near the park turn off. Noting the general interest in Lord of the Rings film sites, and with our new interpretation trail in place, this should help increase park visitation.



A corporate planting day was organised with Accor Hotels. Based at the Te Marua entrance, the day involved 22 people who contributed 66 volunteer hours and planted 800 trees.

## Pakuratahi Forest

The Rimutaka Rail Trail track surface and drainage system received much overdue maintenance, which will continue into 2013/14. The Trail was also affected by storm damage, bringing windfalls and a large slip.

Parks staff have contacted mountain bike trail builders in the Tunnel Gully/Mangaroa Tunnel area, who have been building trails there. GWRC has developed an MOU and are working with the group to formalise these tracks within the framework of the Parks Network Plan and best practice health and safety.

Unauthorized access into the forest has been largely addressed throughout the key change, but staff continue to work on securing access through the Glider Club, Kaitoke Hill Road and Colletts Road. New signage will also assist with compliance.

## Wainuiomata Recreation Area

Maintenance crews repaired the Orongorongo Access track slip, using hydraulic sluicing and mechanical removal techniques. The slip has now stabilized. Access to and from the site for crews was affected by heavy snow.



Our Wainuiomata Park Ranger is now located in the Lower Dam Office with full phone and internet access. This new location is proving to be invaluable as the ranger is on hand to talk to park users and address compliance issues (eg, dogs) as they arise.

Three new ecology-related interpretative signs have been installed at the Lower Dam to enhance the visitor experience. Since the March opening, the area continues to be well used,

even in winter.

A number of school water treatment plant and catchment tours have been completed in the last few months.

## Financial reports

Regional Parks Income Statement Year ending 30 June 2013	Full Year			Last Year
	Actual \$000	Budget \$000	Variance \$000	FY Actual \$000
Rates & Levies	4,922	4,922	-	4,610
Government Grants & Subsidies	-	-	-	-
External Revenue	618	446	172	529
Investment Revenue	-	-	-	-
Internal Revenue	277	223	54	851
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>5,817</b>	<b>5,591</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>5,990</b>
less:				
Personnel Costs	2,063	2,272	209	2,205
Materials, Supplies & Services	1,030	1,431	401	987
Travel & Transport Costs	183	122	(61)	169
Contractor & Consultants	1,192	430	(762)	770
Grants and Subsidies Expenditure	-	-	-	-
Internal Charges	214	194	(20)	839
<b>Total Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>4,682</b>	<b>4,449</b>	<b>(233)</b>	<b>4,970</b>
Financial Costs	264	282	18	263
Bad Debts	(14)	-	14	-
Corporate & Department Overheads	493	493	-	469
Depreciation	649	644	(5)	622
Loss(Gain) on Sale of Assets / Investments	31	(44)	(75)	(68)
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>6,105</b>	<b>5,824</b>	<b>(281)</b>	<b>6,256</b>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>(288)</b>	<b>(233)</b>	<b>(55)</b>	<b>(266)</b>
Add Back Depreciation	649	644	5	622
Other Non Cash	31	(44)	75	(68)
Net Asset Acquisitions	(837)	(812)	(25)	(427)
Net External Investment Movements	-	-	-	-
<b>NET FUNDING BEFORE DEBT &amp; RESERVE MO</b>	<b>(445)</b>	<b>(445)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(139)</b>
Debt Additions / (decrease)	610	580	30	244
Debt Repaid	(304)	(306)	2	(345)
Net Reserves (Increase) / decrease	40	173	(133)	69
<b>NET FUNDING SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>(99)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>(101)</b>	<b>(171)</b>
<b>Regional Parks Capital Expenditure Statement Year ending 30 June 2013</b>				
	<b>Actual \$000</b>	<b>Full Year Budget \$000</b>	<b>Variance \$000</b>	<b>Last Year FY Actual \$000</b>
Total Asset Acquisitions	306	276	(30)	255
Capital Project Expenditure	612	580	(32)	246
Asset Disposal Cash Proceeds	(80)	(44)	36	(74)
<b>Net Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>(26)</b>	<b>427</b>

## Financial variance analysis

- ▶ Parks has a net deficit of \$288k which is \$55k worse than a budget deficit of \$233k
- ▶ Personal costs for YTD are \$2063 which was \$209k less than budget of \$2,272k of which \$158k is staff costs charged to capital projects and to other groups and the balance is due to vacancies during the year
- ▶ Other direct costs are \$442k more than budget but this includes the costs of Belmont logging and is offset by higher income than budgeted
- ▶ As a result of the asset revaluation there was an unplanned \$100k write off in Parks accounts

Performance Measure	Performance Target		Comment
	Baseline	2012/13	
Percentage of the regional population that has visited a regional park in the last 12 months	59% (2010/11)	>60%	There is no survey in 2012/13, the next survey will be in 2013/14.  In 2011/12 63% of the regional population had visited a park in the last 12 months.
Percentage of regional park visitors who are satisfied with park facilities	94% (2010/11)	92%	There is no survey in 2012/13, the next survey will be in 2013/14.  In 2011/12 93% of visitors were satisfied with their experience in the Park.
Number of people attending Greater Wellington events in regional parks	4,730 (2010/11)	5,350	450 attended Arbor Day celebrations at Battle Hill (combined with Matariki) and Queen Elizabeth Park (combined with 60 <sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations).
Number of volunteer hours in regional parks	6,167 (2010/11)	Maintain or increase on previous year	There were 2,286 volunteer hours spent in the parks during the quarter.  Hours YTD = 8,453



greater WELLINGTON

REGIONAL COUNCIL

Te Pane Matua Taiao