



*caring about you & your environment*

## **Report 01.297**

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Report to the Landcare Committee  
from Graham Laws, Landcare Planner - Landscape Architect

### **Parks and Forests Marketing Strategy Update**

#### **1. Purpose**

To report progress marketing the Council's parks and forests in the 2000/01 financial year.

#### **2. Marketing Strategy**

In July 2000, Council approved a marketing strategy and three-year Action Plan for parks and forests (Report 00.489). The Strategy notes that officers will report progress against the Action Plan at the conclusion of each financial year. This report is designed to meet that requirement.

#### **3. Aims of the Marketing Strategy**

We identified that Parks and Forests marketing activities can contribute to three of the objectives in *Towards a Greater Wellington : Investing in the Future*.

- Maintaining services to existing users and encouraging inactive people to recreate in our areas - contributes to ***Healthy People in a Safe Region***;
- Educating and increasing peoples' awareness of the natural and cultural heritage values of the parks and forests and encouraging them to be involved in environmental enhancement work - contributes to ***A High Quality Environment***; and
- Identifying opportunities for and encouraging appropriate eco-tourism, commercial recreation and filming activities in the parks and forests - contributes to creating ***A Prosperous and Viable Region***.

## 4. Progress with the Action Plan

Progress with the key tasks in the Action Plan is summarised in **Attachment 1**. All actions are either completed or programmed for completion by year-end. Most marketing activity is undertaken during the summer when people are more likely to be encouraged outdoors into the parks and forests. Therefore the marketing programme for the year is now largely complete.

## 5. Marketing Activities

### 5.1 Events

Running events is a key requirement of the marketing strategy. In addition to the major events programme, *Regional Outdoors* (refer section 6), rangers have organised several events in the parks and forests:

- Akatarawa Forest: Orange Hut opening;
- Battle Hill: Regional Council/St Bernard's educational woodlot; joint holiday programme with Recreation Porirua; Spring visits for school children (1500 attended);
- Belmont Regional Park: Farm Open Day (over 400 attended);
- Kaitoke: Planting Day (30 attended); Potting-up day with Te Marua School (300 children involved); interpretative walks for girl guides;
- Queen Elizabeth Park: wetlands interpretative walks during Conservation Week; various planting days for children and other groups;
- Wainuiomata: club groups and recreational hunting access to water collection areas, and launch of the access plan.

### 5.2 Battle Hill Education Programmes

Over the last year the Ranger, John Bissell, developed education programmes at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park to help children learn about the environment, while having a spin-off effect of increasing visitor numbers. The programmes target different age groups and complement the Environmental Trails being developed by the Environment Division.

The Spring Visits programme was released in October 2000. Aimed at 3 to 7 year olds, it provides an introduction to farming and the environment with the key theme being *hands on* activities in the Park. The response was excellent with a large number of bookings made and over 1500 children taking part. Bookings are now being made for the coming spring (2001).

John Bissell has also been working with a teacher and Strategy & Marketing to produce a set of brochures that outline the wider educational opportunities available at the Park and link these to the school curriculum. The brochures were prepared in consultation with the Environment Division education co-ordinators, and are currently being printed.

### 5.3 Advertising and News Media Releases

Our advertising this year has been targeted at special interest groups. Officers worked with *Forest and Bird* magazine on an article for their November issue. We accompanied it with an advertisement that was also run in *NZ Wilderness* magazine. (Two staff, Nola Urquhart and Owen Spearpoint, featured in separate articles in the September edition.)

The *Kapiti Observer* ran a feature on boneseed, informing the public of our control method; cutting the plant rather than using chemicals. Nola Urquhart also distributes *Ranger News* to local residents and park users.

### 5.4 Interpretation Training and Signs

Steve Edwards ran an interpretation training session for rangers before the summer events. Another session is planned at Mt Bruce with DOC staff.

An information panel on coastal plants was installed near the sand dunes at Queen Elizabeth Park. We are also working on two panels for Belmont Regional Park. One interprets the history of the Korokoro Valley, the other provides information on the history of the ammunition magazines and Old Coach Road.

Other interpretation work includes an information panel for Battle Hill Farm Forest Park showing the range of sites people can visit on the property. The Kaitoke Regional Park Native Forest Trail brochure is updated and new plant name signs installed.

### 5.5 Updating Signs

Although not a Marketing Strategy action point, officers are aware of a wish among some Councillors to update the park and forest signs, particularly at main entry points. We have worked with a graphic design company to develop an updated signs package. Corporate Communications and Water Group staff have been involved with the project. Further work is needed linking the signage to the corporate communications strategy prior to presenting the package to the Committee.

### 5.6 Filming and Concessions

#### 5.6.1 Promotional Video for Filming

The promotional video for filming in the parks and forests, *Here and Now*, produced by Corporate Communications, is soon to be officially launched. The 12-minute video is a tool to market locations to moviemakers in New Zealand and overseas. We will invite location managers, producers and film directors, along with Film New Zealand and Film Wellington to the launch, in addition to councillors and officers from this and other councils in the Wellington Region.

Some copies of the video have already been distributed, many to overseas filmmakers. Feedback on the video from Film New Zealand, the agency responsible for marketing New Zealand to international moviemakers, has been very positive. The upcoming launch was publicised in *Film NZ News* recently (which goes to all local authorities as well as various filming bodies, e.g., SPADA and central government agencies).

Officers are putting information on filming opportunities on the Council's website and creating links with other relevant websites such as Film New Zealand's.

### 5.6.2 *Policy for Recreation and Tourism in WRC Parks and Forests*

The Council recently approved the *Policy for Recreation and Tourism in Wellington Regional Council Parks and Forests* (Report 01.205). During the review process, a summary Information Booklet was drafted for distributing to the public, along with guidelines for staff who work with concessionaires.

### 5.6.3 *Commercial Recreation and Ecotourism Concessions*

Consultants are preparing a strategy for marketing our parks and forests for commercial recreation and ecotourism concessions. The objective is to identify new opportunities for recreation and tourism concessions in the parks and forests and new ways of marketing the areas to potential concessionaires, e.g., national operators as well as new local operators. The project will involve external agencies e.g., Tourism Wellington and New Zealand Tourism Board.

## 6. **Regional Outdoors Summer Events Programme**

A key part of our marketing for 2000/01 was "*Regional Outdoors*", a summer programme of 35 events, from December through to March. Many occurred in conjunction with clubs and volunteer groups involved in the parks, (e.g., Maara Roa, Tramways Museum). Other Divisions, (e.g., Biosecurity, Environment) helped the Rangers with specialised, informative, talks. The programme targeted different people to those who normally use the parks and forests.

### 6.1 **Advertising and Promotion**

We distributed 5000 copies of the "*Regional Outdoors*" programme through public libraries and visitor information centres and by mail to callers. Corporate Communications promoted the programme with press releases, articles in *Elements* and on our web-site. A limited number of newspaper advertisements and informal radio interviews with park rangers also helped to generate interest in the events.

Officers jointly promoted the new Tane's Track *KiwiWalk* with the author of the "Power Pramming" book and co-ordinated marketing with Sport Wellington using their distribution network.

### 6.2 **Survey of Participants**

We surveyed "*Regional Outdoors*" participants to measure the effectiveness of the programme, asking similar questions to those in the March 2000 Visitor Satisfaction Survey to compare some data. We distributed questionnaires at many of the events but unfortunately missed some that were run by volunteers and other groups, particularly the Belmont events. The results are summarised in **Attachment 2**. They indicate that participants enjoyed their experience and generally had a high level of satisfaction.

### 6.3 Key Results

There were over 1300 participants at the 35 “*Regional Outdoors*” events. Thirty-six percent were first-time visitors to the park or recreation area.

The highest attendance at an event (250+) was Tane's Track KiwiWalk Launch. Other events that were well attended included:

- Kilmister Track Opening;
- QEP Archaeological Walk;
- Wainuiomata Dam Dog Day;
- Battle Hill 4WD Sunset Trip;
- Kaitoke Family Treasure Hunt and Rainforest Walks.

Battle Hill History, and QEP US Marines, Wetlands and Remnant Bush Walks were also popular.

Public feedback and press releases generated 35 newspaper reports (a total of 1350 column cm) over the period of the programme.

### 6.4 Lessons for Future Events

- ***More 'Interpretative' Events:*** There is a clear demand for more interpretative events spread throughout the year.
- ***Arrange Transport for "Point-to-Point" Walks:*** Most of our visitors are strangers to each other and it is safer to provide commercial transport for our events. This will require prior booking to manage numbers and user charges to cover hire of buses.
- ***Work Closely with Volunteers and Other Agencies:*** Volunteers often have expert knowledge and we can jointly promote events for mutual benefit. It is important, however, that Regional Council officers are actively involved in organising and running the events to provide information about the parks and ensure safety.

## 7. Communications

Officers will prepare a press release in conjunction with Corporate Communications to publicise the overall level of satisfaction with the “*Regional Outdoors*” programme and the intention to run another events programme during the 2001/02 year.

## 8. Recommendations

*That the Landcare Committee:*

- (1) *receive the report and note the progress on the action plan for marketing the Council's parks and forest for 2000/01.*

(2) *note the success of the Regional Outdoors programme.*

(3) *note Parks and Forests will run another events programme during 2001/02.*

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission:

GRAHAM LAWS  
Landcare Planner - Landscape Architect

SUSAN EDWARDS  
Manager, Parks and Forests (Strategy &  
Marketing)

BRUCE ANDRELL  
Manager, Parks and Forests (Operations)

ANDREW ANNAKIN  
Divisional Manager, Landcare

**Attachment 1** : Progress with Marketing Parks and Forests 2000/01

**Attachment 2** : Results of *Regional Outdoors* Survey