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## **Report 02.501**

16 July 2002

File: R/1/1/12

ks-#120192

Report to the Landcare Committee  
from Matt Ballantine, Principal Ranger (Western Sector) and  
Fraser Oliver, Principal Ranger (Eastern Sector)

### **Ranger Services Performance Indicator**

#### **1. Purpose**

To report to the Landcare Committee on the Ranger Services delivered in the 2001/02 financial year.

#### **2. Annual Plan Performance Indicator**

The 2001/02 annual plan contains the following performance indicator:

*Within a budget of \$628,000, Ranger Services will be provided that:*

- (1) Facilitate approved public access to the Regional Parks, Forests and Water Collection Areas.*
- (2) Educate and inform visitors and users.*
- (3) Liaise with community and stakeholder groups.*
- (4) Ensure compliance with Council policies.*

The performance indicator **was achieved** at a cost of \$625,300.

#### **3. Summary of Services Provided in the 2001/02 Annual Plan**

The service we provide is:

- A seven day per week residential Ranger service at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, Queen Elizabeth Park, Kaitoke Regional Park and the adjacent Hutt Water Collection Area, and Wainuiomata / Orongorongo Water Collection Area.

- A Ranger service is provided five days per week at Belmont Regional Park, and the Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forests.
- A part-time patrolling service on the Hutt River Trail and at East Harbour Regional Park.

#### 4. **Facilitation of Public Access to the Regional Parks, Forests and Water Collection Areas**

All Park Rangers have managed approved access into their respective regional parks, forests and water collection areas.

Ranger staff have run twelve interpretative tours as part of phase two, of the Wainuiomata / Orongorongo access plan.

Permits were issued for recreational access into the Akatarawa Forest, four wheel drive and motorbike usage. Permits were also issued for approved recreational hunting areas.

The Akatarawa Forest hosted 139 motorised events during the year with the number expected to increase in the coming year.

The Wainuiomata / Orongorongo Rangers managed several professional goat-hunting operations and a successful balloted public hunt during the month of April. These have been reported separately to Council.

Overall, estimated visitation decreased by 5% from 801,370 visits in 2000/01 to 762,776 visits in 2001/02, in the four regional parks and one forest where visitation is estimated. (We do not estimate visitation at East Harbour Regional Park, Akatarawa Forest, Hutt Water and Wainuiomata Recreation Area.)

Wet and windy weather over the summer period was a major factor in lower visitor numbers this year.

#### 5. **Educating and Informing Visitors**

Rangers have educated the public on the recreational, environmental and heritage values of the regional parks and forests by answering public enquiries, providing interpretative talks and facilitating education programmes.

##### **Highlights for the Year**

The "Spring Visits" education programme was successfully run at Battle Hill attracting over 1,500 pre-school and primary school children and parents. The programme ran from spring through to the end of summer and included a self-guided interpretation trail based around Battle Hill's natural and heritage features. The package was developed with schoolteachers and identifies resources available at the Park.

Rangers successfully implemented the Regional Outdoor Programme over the summer period delivering over 30 events within the parks and forests. The Rangers undertook interpretation training prior to the events as part of ongoing skill development. A number of the events were undertaken jointly with community and Care groups.

A number of Rangers have taken part in the “Take Action” environmental education programme. They have developed and maintained infrastructure and helped run the field programmes. The programme has introduced many new user groups to the parks.

Other events held throughout the year included:

- launching the Swingbridge Track Kiwi Walk.
- hosting work experience as part of the Upper Hutt industry schools partnership programme.
- guiding over 30 media groups and public through the *Lord of the Rings* Rivendell site.
- presentations to several groups of students from Victoria University’s Biological Sciences Department.

## 6. **Liaison with Community and Stakeholder Groups**

Rangers managed all concession, lease and licence holders within the terms of their agreements. They also liaised with user and stakeholder groups to present Council’s policies during the management plan process and explain park and forest values. Rangers have a key role in community liaison and supporting Care groups as they have daily contact with key park user groups and other agencies.

Rangers gave a number of presentations to key community groups and stakeholder groups including the Tararua Tramping Club, Orongorongo Club, Rimutaka Forest Park Trust, Upper Hutt Branch of Forest and Bird, Probus Clubs, Girl Guides and Scout groups.

Community planting days were held at Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP), Belmont and Kaitoke Regional Parks. Five planting days at QEP included volunteer involvement from local residents, Forest and Bird, Kapiti Environmental Action, tramping clubs and school groups. At Belmont Regional Park, the Friends of Maara Roa supported by Council staff undertook planting days.

Conservation Corps worked at Battle Hill throughout the year on environmental and farm based activities. The group proved a valuable resource in helping with native tree propagation, planting and re-vegetation. Correction Institution groups were used extensively on various manual labour jobs throughout the Eastern Sector parks and similar work was carried out at Kaitoke Regional Park as part of Youth Aid supervision.

The Rangers wrote numerous articles for local newspapers and for Elements that highlighted events, volunteer recruitment and general park happenings.

The Belmont Ranger has been involved with establishing the Friends of Belmont group and the opening of the Kilmister Track.

The Forest Lands Ranger attended Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee (ARAC) meetings finalising track user guidelines.

Arbor Days were held at QEP and the Rimutaka Inline Walkway summit and involved local school children, Councillors, special guests and Ranger staff.

## 7. Ensure Compliance with Council Policies

Rangers have enforced the Regional Council's Parks, Forests, Recreation Area and Water Collection Area Bylaws. This was achieved by regular patrols, providing after hours callout and security services. Our focus is on compliance by co-operation, and we try to educate offenders to influence their long-term behaviour. We issue trespass notices and prosecute only when necessary.

The total number of incidents reported and followed up on during the year:

Park/Forest	Number of Incidents
Battle Hill Farm Forest Park	63
Belmont Regional Park	6
Queen Elizabeth Park	39
Kaitoke Regional Park	50
Akatarawa Forest	4
Pakuratahi Forest	4
Wainuiomata/Orongorongo	62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>228</b>

Compliance within the Parks is at a satisfactory level. Incidents reported in the parks have generally halved against last year's figures (375 incidents in 2000/01). This suggests patrolling and visitor behaviour education is achieving the desired results.

## 8. Communication

There are no communication opportunities specifically arising from this report.

Rangers have actively co-ordinated press releases and activities that have been covered by a number of local and regional newspapers. Rangers have also facilitated a number of articles for the *Elements* publication.

A separate news-clipping file has been kept.

## 9. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

- (1) **Receive the report.**
- (2) **Note the contents of the report.**

Report prepared by:

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