

Report 03.457
Date 31 July 2003
File PK/01/01/01

Committee Landcare
Author Philippa Crisp, Principal Advisor, Planning and Policy

Environmental asset management plan performance indicator

1. Purpose

To report to the Committee on progress on the Environmental Asset Management Plan (EAMP) during the 2002/03 financial year in order to meet the performance indicator requirements of the annual plan.

2. Annual plan performance indicator

The 2002/03 annual plan contains the following performance indicator:

Environmental assets within the Regional Parks, Forests and Water Collection Areas will be monitored, protected and enhanced, in accordance with the Asset Management Plan service levels and nationally recognised protocols for forest health monitoring.

Compliance with the standards in the Asset Management Plan and the protocols will be reported to the Landcare Committee following the end of the financial year.

The performance indicator was achieved.

3. Progress of the environmental asset management plan

We have been implementing pest control programmes to maintain ecosystem health in the Council's parks and forests. Possums, goats, pigs, rabbits, deer, mustelids and pest plants have been controlled according to the highest priority needs identified through monitoring work and the pest control programme.

Monitoring work and surveys have continued to provide useful information for the environmental management of Council lands and about the success of control operations. All Water Group contract specifications were met and an independent Landcare Research audit of the data collection in the permanent plots has shown that our work meets industry standards.

4. Key aspects of the work programme achieved

The following is a summary of the key aspects of the work programme that were achieved during the year.

Monitoring

- rata digital photography was completed in East Harbour Regional Park and the Hutt and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Areas
- hinau fruitfall plots were measured in the Akatarawa Forest and the Hutt and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Areas
- tawa fruitfall plots were measured in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area
- three exclosure plots, and their associated control plots, were re-measured in the Hutt Water Collection Area
- bird transect surveys were conducted in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area and Kaitoke Regional Park
- new bird transect surveys were established in Queen Elizabeth Park, Battle Hill Farm Forest Park and the Hutt Water Collection Area
- post-operational possum monitoring was completed in Dry Creek, Belmont Regional Park
- pre-operational possum monitoring was completed in Cannon's Creek, Belmont Regional Park
- video recording of animal activities in Queen Elizabeth Park and the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Catchment Area was undertaken
- an introduced insect/fungi survey was conducted in the Akatarawa Forest, East Harbour Regional Park, the Pakuratahi Forest, and the Hutt and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Areas
- bat surveys were completed in the Akatarawa Forest, East Harbour Regional Park, and the Hutt and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Areas
- a botanical survey of a wetland in the Akatarawa Forest was completed
- the distribution of the rare plant *Rhabdothamnus solandri* in Battle Hill Farm Forest Park was surveyed and mapped
- the growth of a rare mistletoe in Kaitoke Regional Park was measured and a report on this plant was prepared
- buddleia was surveyed in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Catchment Area
- contorta pine was mapped in the Pakuratahi Forest
- rodent and mustelid numbers were monitored in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area
- dune vegetation plots (that are part of a national trial) were set up in Queen Elizabeth Park
- monthly flowering and fruiting recording was completed across all parks and forests.

Pest Animal Control

- A possum trapping operation was completed over three months in Dry Creek, Belmont Regional Park. Possum numbers were reduced from a pre-operational trap catch rate (RTC) of 29.6% to a post-operation trap catch of 3.9%.
- An ongoing bait station operation was initiated in Cannon's Creek remnant bush. Volunteers from the Friends of Maara Roa group are involved in filling the bait stations on an ongoing basis. The pre-operational possum monitor showed an RTC of 16.6%.
- Three Judas goat control operations and a pig control operation were completed in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area (a total of 60 goats, 35 pigs and 8 deer were culled).
- A large vertebrate control operation was conducted in Kaitoke Regional Park and the Hutt Water Collection Area, resulting in the culling of 42 goats, 7 pigs and 5 deer.
- A recreational hunting ballot (7 goats, 6 pigs and 8 deer) was completed in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area.
- Large vertebrate control operations in the Pakuratahi Forest, Belmont Regional Park and Battle Hill Farm Forest Park were conducted.
- Rabbit control was undertaken in Queen Elizabeth Park.
- A 1080 operation, with some cyanide control, was undertaken in the Pakuratahi Forest and parts of Kaitoke Regional Park, as part of the Mangaroa Tb operation.
- Pre-operational planning for the Hutt Catchment 1080 operation was completed.
- Ongoing possum and mustelid control in the bush remnant at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park.
- The ongoing possum control programme in Queen Elizabeth Park was expanded to include dune remnants (as well as the bush remnant).

Pest Plant Control

Pest plants were controlled on Council land according to the pest plant priorities identified through weed mapping and strategic analysis. The control operations completed include:

- boneseed, Italian buckthorn, German ivy, blackberry, Japanese honeysuckle, pampas, boobialla and karo on the dunes at Queen Elizabeth Park
- willow, blackberry, poplar and Japanese honeysuckle in the Poplar Avenue wetland in Queen Elizabeth Park
- German ivy, convolvulus, holly, tradescantia, wilding pines, pampas, hawthorn and Himalayan honeysuckle in Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

- tradescantia, Japanese honeysuckle, holly, hawthorn, sycamore, blackberry, broom and Himalayan honeysuckle in Kaitoke Regional Park
- old man's beard, sycamore, hops, pampas, cathedral bells, buddleia, banana passionfruit and karo in Belmont Regional Park
- sycamore, elderberry, pampas, buddleia, tradescantia, holly, tradescantia, privet, eleagnus, Mexican daisy and ivy in the Pakuratahi Forest.
- old man's beard, selaginella, Japanese honeysuckle, buddleia and pampas in the Akatarawa Forest
- pampas, wilding pines, buddleia, and old house site plants in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area
- convolvulus, ladder fern, Japanese honeysuckle, tree lupin, ivy and cotoneaster in the Wainuiomata Recreation Area.

Fish passage barriers

Two road fords in the Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forests were acting as barriers to fish passage. These fords were both lowered over 1.5m and rock riprap used to allow fish to migrate upstream.

Fire Protection

Staff attended three fires throughout the year, assisting Territorial Authorities with their fire fighting commitments. The fire risk on the Kapiti Coast was high during the summer months, while the fire risk in the Hutt Valley was ranked as moderate. Staff have attended fire training exercises and we maintain a team who have met the minimum requirements needed to fight fires.

5. Where to from here?

During the 2003/04 year, we will continue to implement the EAMP by:

- completing programmed pest control operations using the most effective techniques
- continuing to work towards an integrated program of pest control in high ecological value areas on Council land
- using new GIS information developed by Landcare Research to help determine priority sites on Council land
- incorporating East Harbour Regional Park into the environmental programme
- exchanging knowledge and ideas with other agencies, such as the Department of Conservation and the Coastal Dune Vegetation Network
- continuing to work with the community.

6. Communication

This report is part of the verification process for meeting Annual Plan performance indicators. We will be working with Corporate Communications to ensure continued publicity of the outcomes of this plan.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *receive the report.*
2. *note the contents of the report.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Philippa Crisp
Principal Advisor, Planning
and Policy

Murray Waititi
Manager, Parks and Forests

Rob Forlong
Divisional Manager, Landcare