



**Report**                **06.247**  
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**Committee**        **Landcare**  
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## **East Harbour Park draft Management Plan**

### **1. Purpose**

To seek the Council's approval to release the *Draft East Harbour Regional Park Management Plan* for public consultation.

### **2. Significance of the decision**

The matters in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### **3. Background**

The East Harbour Regional Park Management Plan review began in mid 2005 by advertising the Council's intent to review the plan and inviting submissions. Submissions closed on 30 June 2005 and were considered by the Landcare Committee at the 29 March 2006 meeting (Report 06.62). A summary of submissions was included with that report. The issues raised in submissions were discussed at the 7 April 2006 Council workshop and have been considered throughout the preparation of the draft plan. A draft management plan is included with this report (**Attachment 1**).

### **4. Submissions**

A total of 54 submissions were received covering a variety of topics. A summary of submissions was included in Report 06.62.

### **5. Draft Management Plan**

The draft management plan was written by taking into account the submissions received, the current management plan's provisions, discussions at the 7 April 2006 Councillor workshop, internal working group discussions and the *Regional Parks Network Management Plan*.

## 6. Stakeholders

Officers have continued to liaise with the Department of Conservation, Hutt City Council and Iwi throughout the drafting of the plan. There will be further consultation with these parties during the second phase of consultation.

## 7. Changes from existing plan

While the draft plan may look somewhat different to the existing management plan, there have been few changes in the plan's substance and how the park will be managed. Following is a summary of the major changes to the plan or the major issues that have been raised. There are also a number of wording changes that reflect the transfer of management of Crown and Hutt City Council owned land to Greater Wellington. **Attachment 2** provides a summary of all the changes to the plan.

### 7.1 Dog access

A change to dog access is proposed in the draft plan. Dogs would still be permitted in the Northern Forest Zone, but would be excluded from the Gollans Valley Remote Area and from the Pencarrow Lakes block. Dogs are not currently allowed in the Lakes Block but restrictions in the Remote Area would be a change from the current policy. This change is proposed because of the potential risks to dogs associated with the intensive predator control in the mainland island and in anticipation of future releases of birds and other fauna to the area. There is likely to be a mixed reaction from submitters to this provision. The following policy has been included in the draft plan:

*Policy 3.19 "To permit dogs in the Northern Forest Zone only. Dogs must be kept under control at all times and all dog refuse disposed of. Dogs are not permitted in the Gollans Valley Remote Area or the Pencarrow Lakes block."*

### 7.2 Cycling access

A range of views were expressed in submissions on cycle access in East Harbour Regional Park. The following policy has been included in the draft plan:

*Policy 3.20 "To permit cycling on the tracks in the Pencarrow Lakes block only. Bikers must stay on the formed tracks and give way to walkers."*

This provides for bike access in the Lakes block where the tracks are relatively wide, with good sightlines, making them suitable for dual-use by cyclists and walkers. There are opportunities in this block to provide a range of mountain biking experiences and this will complement the popular cycling experience provided by Hutt City Council along the Pencarrow Coast Road.

Cycle access to the Northern Forest block was contentious in the first round of submissions. This draft policy prohibits the use of cycles in the Northern Forest. The terrain in this part of the park is extremely steep, making it usable for experienced riders only. There is high potential for conflict between

walkers and cyclists due to poor sightlines along the steep forest tracks. In steep areas bikes can cause considerable damage to track surfaces. A number of alternative mountain biking opportunities are provided nearby. Greater Wellington has developed mountain bike tracks in the Wainuiomata Recreation Area, Hutt City Council provides cycling opportunities on firebreaks in the area and cycling would be allowed in the Pencarrow Lakes block of East Harbour Regional Park.

It is anticipated that this issue will generate debate within the community and will be revisited during the second round of consultation.

### **7.3 Camping**

In the past, camping has been permitted in the Northern Forest block and in particular at Butterfly Creek picnic area. However, there is a high potential for conflict between overnight campers and day users of this popular part of the park. The opportunity to experience 'remote' camping in an area so close to the city is extremely rare, so it is desirable to allow some small scale camping to occur in the remote zone, where there will be little conflict between users. The following policy has been included in the draft plan:

*Policy 3.22 "To permit low impact 'remote' camping within the Gollans Valley Remote Area. Stays are for a maximum of one night except at the ranger's discretion. No camping is permitted in other areas"*

### **7.4 Recreational hunting**

Recreational hunting is not seen as being an appropriate activity in the park. A large number of people visit the Northern Forest block throughout the year and there are a growing number of volunteers and Greater Wellington staff involved in pest control and species monitoring in the forest. The risk to public safety from recreational hunting in this relatively small area of forest is considered unacceptably high. Professional hunting, however, may be required from time to time to reduce browser numbers in the area and protect ecological values.

Policy 3.28 "*No recreational hunting is permitted in the parks*" has been included in the draft plan.

The Department of Conservation has indicated that they intend to phase out duck-shooting at the Pencarrow Lakes, (letter from DOC provided as an appendix to the draft management plan). The high ecological values of these lakes mean that the risks of introducing aquatic weeds and of disturbance to wildlife associated with boats and/or dogs is no longer regarded as acceptable. As management of the lakes is the responsibility of the Department of Conservation, duck-shooting is not covered directly in the management plan, however, policies relating to dogs, firearms and use of motorised vehicles in the Park support the approach adopted by Department of Conservation. The decision to exclude firearms and motorised vehicles from the Pencarrow Lakes block also recognises the growing use of this part of the Regional Park by other

recreational uses, particularly mountain bike riders. The policies in the draft plan read:

Policy 3.28 *“No recreational hunting is permitted in the park”*

Policy 3.29 *“The carrying of firearms in the park is prohibited except for management purposes”*

Policy 3.30 *“The recreational use of off-road motorised vehicles (including trail bikes) is not permitted. Off-road motorised vehicles will be allowed for management purposes only”*

## **8. Next steps**

The next phase of the review process is to consult with the public on the draft management plan for a two-month period during the latter half of this year. Ongoing discussions will continue with the Hutt City Council, the Department of Conservation and Iwi.

Copies of the draft plan will be sent to interested stakeholders, placed at Council offices and will be available on Greater Wellington’s website. Letters will also be sent to the original submitters with a copy of the draft plan, for their information and further comment.

## **9. Communication**

Notices will be placed in the region’s main newspapers asking for comment on the draft plan. A third newsletter will be sent to people interested in the management plan review outlining the issues that have been raised and introducing the draft plan. A media release will be issued.

## **10. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Recommends to the Council that it approve the release of the draft East Harbour Regional Park Management Plan for public consultation, subject to any minor technical amendments that may be authorised by the Landcare Committee Chairperson.***

Report prepared by:

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**Attachment 1: Draft East Harbour Regional Park Management Plan**

**Attachment 2: Review of East Harbour Management Plan**