



Report 05.360
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Committee Landcare
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Ranger service performance indicator

1. Purpose

To report to the Landcare Committee on the Ranger Services delivered in the 2004/05 financial year.

2. Annual Plan performance indicator

The 2004/05 Annual Plan contains the following performance indicator:

Ranger services will be provided that facilitate public access, educate and inform visitors and users, liaise with community and stakeholder groups and ensure compliance with Council policies.

The service will be to the satisfaction of the Landcare Committee and reported following the end of the financial year, within a budget of \$730,000.

The performance indicator **was achieved** at a cost of \$747,000.

3. Summary of services provided in the 2004/05 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 the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area;
- A five day per week (including weekends) ranger service at Belmont Regional Park, Akatarawa Forest, Pakuratahi Forest, the Hutt River corridor and 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. Rangers have issued permits as required for concessions and restricted activities.

Ranger staff have run 12 interpretive tours involving 442 participants as part of phase three of the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo access plan and 70 people through the Orongorongo catchment.

106 permits were issued for recreational access into the Akatarawa Forest, for four wheel drive and motorbike usage. The Akatarawa Forest hosted 98 motorised events during the year. Permits were also issued for approved recreational hunting areas.

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 remained steady (from 807,000 visits in 2003/04 to 826,000 visits in 2004/05), in the five regional parks and the Pakuratahi Forest where visitation is estimated. (We do not estimate visitation at East Harbour Regional Park, Hutt Water Collection Area, Wainuiomata Recreation Area and the Akatarawa Forest.) We are currently working on a more in depth visitor monitoring system across the entire network and hope to roll that out over the next couple of years.

4.1 Educating and informing visitors

Rangers have informed the public on the recreation, environmental and heritage values of the regional parks and forests by answering public enquiries, providing interpretive talks, facilitating education programmes and implementing environmental initiatives that involved the community.

4.2 Highlights for the year

The rangers helped successfully implement the Regional Outdoor Programme over the summer period delivering over 40 events within the parks and forests. The rangers undertook environmental education and interpretation training prior to the events as part of ongoing skill development. A number of the events were undertaken jointly with community and friends groups.

The “Farm Visits” education programme was successfully run at Battle Hill attracting pre-school and primary school children and parents.

A number of rangers have taken part in the “Take Action” environmental education programme. They have maintained infrastructure and helped run the field programmes. In the past, the rangers have helped develop infrastructure needed to support the programme, however, there isn’t a need for any further

infrastructure in the foreseeable future. The programme has introduced many new user groups to the parks.

Other events held throughout the year included:

- International visitor walks including 100 Chinese delegates hosted at Kaitoke Regional Park
- A music event was held at Tunnel Gully
- *Pauatahanui Country Festival* held at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park
- *Big Coast* and *Karapoti Classic* mountain bike rides

5. 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 have a number of presentations to community groups and stakeholders including tramping clubs, community service groups, Girl Guides and Scouts.

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

Rangers organised work programmes and did some supervision of the Conservation Corps who worked at Battle Hill throughout the year on environmental and farm based activities. The Corps provide a valuable resource in helping with native tree propagation, planting and re-vegetation. Department of Correction's groups were active in various jobs throughout the Eastern Sector. A significant achievement included continued maintenance of 1,000 native trees as part of riparian management in the Summit Yards of the Rimutaka Rail Trail. A total of 350 hours was carried out at Kaitoke Regional Park as part of Youth Aid supervision in conjunction with the Corrections Department.

Work included the preparation of the Rivendell site for the Arbor Day planting with Plateau School. Clearing of noxious weeds, bark mulching and planting up of the Waterworks road entrance to the park.

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 the Friends of Belmont Group, hosting Hutt Corridor Roving Group and wind farm investigation. The QEP Ranger attended meetings and liaised with the Friends of QEP Group.

The Forest Lands Ranger and the Eastern Principal attended the regular Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee (ARAC) meetings.

Arbor Days were held at QEP and Battle Hill and involved local school children, Councillors, special guests and Ranger staff.

The East Harbour Regional Park Ranger has established relationships with the East Harbour Environmental Association, MIRO (Mainland Island Restoration Organisation), the East Harbour Forest Rangers, Wainuiomata Community Council and various Eastbourne residents' associations attending a number of evening meetings throughout the year. Regular liaison with Hutt City Council officers has also occurred during the year.

6. Ensure compliance with Council policies

Rangers have enforced Greater Wellington's Parks, Forests, Recreation Area and Water Collection Area Bylaws. This was achieved by regular patrols, providing after-hour 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	76
Belmont Regional Park	15
Queen Elizabeth Park	53
Kaitoke Regional Park	22
Akatarawa/Pakuratahi Forests	9
Wainuiomata/Orongorongo	20
Hutt River	79
East Harbour Regional Park	23
TOTAL	297

Compliance within the parks is at a satisfactory level. Incidents reported in the parks are fairly consistent with last year's figures (283 incidents in 2003/04) and revolved around the same types of infringements i.e. dumping rubbish, trespass, vandalism etc. This suggests patrolling and visitor behaviour education is achieving the desired results.

7. Communication

There are no communication opportunities specifically arising from the report.

Over the past year 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.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receive the report**
2. **Note the contents of the report.**

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