



October 2020

parksplanning@gw.govt.nz

Submission on the Draft Parks Network Plan

General

This submission is made on behalf Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and Catchment Community Trust and the Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet.

We acknowledge, strongly support and endorse the intent of the draft objectives and policies in the draft Parks Network Plan and related provisions which will, in our view, contribute to the better protection and improved health of Te Awarua-O-Porirua.

It is a comprehensive and well-crafted plan which explains clearly how the council intends to manage the parks as an integrated network. We endorse the integration approach as this leads to better use of council and community resources.

General principles

We propose that the draft network plan be tested against the following set of overacting principles:

- apply the principles of best practice sustainable land management
- provide for a diversity of recreation experiences
- ensure that the interests of all ratepayers are represented (not dominated by internal processes which are not transparent)
- ensure that existing traditional recreational activities are accommodated
- equity of access for recreational pursuits remains a core value for the parks
- abide with regional pest management strategies that set the framework for actively managing pest species.

Restoring natural values

We particularly support and endorse the proposal (section 1.5) to phase out most livestock grazing activities and place a “concerted focus on restoring natural values.. including wetlands” (p13; p.23). We appreciate that this would have been a challenging decision and we congratulate the council on it. We note that this decision will make a major contribution towards the council achieving its climate change objectives.

Master planning

We note that Master Planning (section 2.2.2) will play a large role in determining the implementation of objectives and policies in many parks. Master planning can be very time and resourcing demanding and can result in decisions and actions which may not be responsive to shifts in resourcing or community expectations.

While we understand the need for further detailed master plans to implement the actions set out for the various parks, we would suggest consultation at the master plan level be targeted and focussed and be organised so as not to delay the process of change.

We propose therefore, that the plan be reviewed to consider whether master plans are needed in every identified case or whether more generic and less specific 'plans' might be more appropriate and timely.

Belmont regional park

We strongly support the intention to restore and revegetate the area of Belmont regional park west of Transmission Gully (action 159) and the high priority given to this area (Map 10).

Battle Hill farm forest park

We strongly support the intention to develop a new "park environment plan" to guide sustainable land management and restoration work (Actions 123, 124, 126 and 152).

We support proposed initiatives to minimise potential downstream effects arising from forestry and farming on Te Awarua-o-Porirua (Action 126). The draft plan correctly identifies the influence the council can have on adding landowners by managing its farm and forestry land in a sustainable way - the council can be a leader and influencer in a catchment which has a notable influence on the health and wellbeing of Pauatahanui Inlet and the wider harbour. For this reason we strongly support Action 152.

Resourcing

The draft plan is ambitious with 395 identified actions of varying complexity and timeframes. At the same time, the draft plan states (p.13) that the parks operating budget is approximately 4% of the total annual GW budget. The draft plan does not say whether it is feasible to achieve the "Actions" within this budget even allowing for 'community capital'.

Although it might be outside the scope of the draft plan we consider that community acceptance of the draft plan and the reputation of the council requires that the council provides the resources to ensure implementation of the plan within stated timeframes.

We trust that these comments are helpful and we look forward to continuing engagement with the council as it implements the parks network plan.

Yours sincerely



Mark Neeson
Chairperson

Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and Catchment Community Trust
PO Box 50078; Porirua, 5240
Email: phacctsec@gmail.com

Lindsay Gow
Chairperson
Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet
(pp: Mark Neeson)