

Draft Northern Reserves Management Plan

Summary of Submissions

This document outlines the main points made by submitters to the draft Northern Reserves Management Plan. Indications of support have been provided when 3 or more submitters made the point or suggestion.

A total of 70 submissions were received in a 2-month consultation period (March and April 2008).

There were many comments about the maintenance of the reserves. These have been included in this report.

LANDSCAPE

PROTECT LANDSCAPE

Many submitters want to see the protection of ridgelines, hill tops, the harbour escarpment and streams and gullies, many of which are privately owned. These areas include the western hills of Tawa, Stebbings Valley, the Horokiwi ridge and the harbour escarpment. Submitters to the draft plan want it to outline how these landscapes will be protected.

Some submitters noted that rural landscapes are important in the northern area and should be retained for grazing.

Landscape connectivity and coherence are important. There is a need to review Councils reserves acquisition policy to take into account the landscape, indigenous remnants and the ecological connectivity.

Council should:

- 1) Use the District Plan to protect landscapes before developers build on them
- 2) Ensure developers include roadside plantings in developments and minimise the impacts of construction.

MANAGE LANDSCAPE CHANGES

Exotic tree harvesting is planned within the next 10 years on some northern reserves e.g. Spicer Forest. It is suggested a plan is developed so the community is aware of this work and decides on the future of this area before harvesting begins.

ECOLOGY

PROTECTION OF LAND FOR ECOLOGICAL PURPOSES

Submitters support the ecological protection of streams and gullies (x7), forest remnants and the Harbour Escarpment.

Selected areas were also identified as needing protection

- Council reserve:
 - Woodburn Reserve (protect ecological values from horse riding)
 - The ecological impacts of the Westchester Drive link between Churton Park and Glenside need to be fully explored before any decision is made on this.
- Private land:

CHURTON PARK and GLENSIDE

- Pigeon Gully, 395 Middleton Road. Important local seed source.
- Land adjacent to Lakewood Reserve (north end). Recommend Council purchase.
- Stebbings Valley forest remnants

TAWA

- Marshall Ridge area. Ecologically viable block of land.
- Block of land at end of Greyfriars Crescent, Tawa (bird population). Recommend Council purchase.

HOROKIWI

- Hillcroft Road section, Horokiwi (x7). A dam site which would link 2 Council reserves. Has potential to be turned into a wetland. Recommend Council purchase or protect land as part of Lincolnshire Farms development.

Submitters said it was important to

- 1) Acquire land to ensure ecological connectivity
- 2) Ensure size of reserves, acquired from developers contributions, will be ecologically viable, to support flora AND fauna

Monitoring of reserves is required to record the health of the northern ecosystems and identify gaps in the network (x3).

CORRIDORS AND CONNECTIVITY

Corridors and ecological connectivity are important. Submitters support the plans objectives of protecting the following corridors:

- Harbour Escarpment to Horokiwi and Belmont (x7)
- Redwood Bush to Spicer Forest
- Gilbert Bush to Woodridge Reserve
- West to East Tawa connection (at Southern and Northern end of Tawa)

Future planning is required for some reserves, to ensure they become important components of the northern reserves network .e.g. Spicer Forest (x3) and ex-Transpower land block.

Some made the point that other public open space is important in achieving the goals of this plan. For example Council should recognise Greater Wellington floodways as important ecological corridors in the northern area.

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Council should continue to support community efforts with ecological restoration (x8). Some groups thanked Council for the advice and plants provided.

Submitters support the use of native vegetation (x8) in re-vegetation projects, preferably locally sourced material.

It has been suggested that Council should involve local schools in restoration projects in their local neighbourhood.

A large number want Council to continue with and enhance pest and weed control on northern reserves (x18).

It has been recognised by submitters that Council needs to work with other landowners to ensure stream protection and weed & pest control. Major landowners in the Northern ward include Transit, Ontrack and Greater Wellington.

A number of submitters supported riparian planting to improve stream environments (x5). Some people said any riparian and re-vegetation planting should ensure views are not fully blocked. (x4)

Other suggestions to enhance ecological restoration and protect the environment include:

- Fence off areas (x4).
- Look at installing fish ladders at man-made barriers in streams.
- Plant corners and slopes of reserves.
- Consider regeneration at some sites.
- Provide information on plants to plant in area and weed control. New subdivisions could have planting plans.
- Insist on QEII covenants on private land to ensure protection of forest remnants or wetlands in perpetuity (the Biodiversity Action Plan has some actions around this topic).
- Ban grazing and the commercial use of reserves.

RECREATION

TRACKS, HORSE RIDING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING ARE COVERED IN THE TRACKS & ACCESS SECTION.

PLAYGROUNDS & YOUTH FACILITIES

There is a lot of support for upgrades of neighbourhood play areas (x17). Council was congratulated on recent playground upgrades. Some people wanted more functional playgrounds that cater for multiple age groups (x3) and have some variety i.e. not all upgrades are modern kitset versions. Including some open space for informal play is also important.

Priorities included:

- Willowbank Reserve (x5). Proposed developments around Takapu Railway Station will make Willowbank Reserve more popular.
- The proposed Newlands Community Park. Newlands does not have a Community Park and the playground network does not meet Councils' Playground Policy.

Some people were concerned that their local playground was scheduled for decommissioning (x4), including Larsen Park, Pinkerton Park and Burbank Crescent Park. These submitters were concerned that people would now have to drive to playgrounds. They also noted that the site selected to retain a playground was not comparable to the site proposed for decommissioning – they do not have kick-around space or cater for a broad range of age groups.

Submitters are concerned about what will happen to parks that will have playgrounds decommissioned.

To cater for older children and youth, it was suggested that Tawa Skate Park be upgraded. There are no youth facilities at Churton Park. This draft plan does not acknowledge this or give any action to fill this gap.

One submitter said the balance of funding for formal (sports field and playground) and informal recreation needs to be reviewed, with more emphasis on the informal open space of which more people can use.

SPORTS GROUNDS

Some people were concerned that there is no mention of new hard courts for netball or tennis (x4) in the draft plan. Does Council intend to provide these facilities?

Council has been asked why Lyndhurst tennis court is shut to the public, because this would make a good community asset.

Parking needs to be improved at sports grounds, along with the entrances.

Amesbury Drive was identified in the draft plan as a possible site for a sports field and playground. If Amesbury Drive does not go ahead, where will these community recreation facilities go? No other sites were identified, and the area is experiencing rapid growth in population and needs community facilities.

PARKS

Some submitters said Parks need more work than just an upgrade of the playground. Other facilities need to be considered e.g. toilets, entrance ways, safety, sealed pathways (all weather).

Traffic and pedestrian management around (and through) some recreation venues needs to be assessed too e.g. Alex Moore Park, Lyndhurst and Newlands.

At Glenside Reserve, the proposed carpark and playground will result in a loss of grazing land. Subsequently fewer horses will be able to graze there. This needs more discussion.

Council needs to consider the safety of all users of reserves. Some concerns were raised about incompatible activities. For example

- Glenside and Woodburn horses and other users,
- Mountain biking incompatible with horses and walkers

Parks require maintenance plans to ensure consistency when new staff employed.

DOG EXERCISE AREAS

There are 11 Dog Exercise Areas in the northern ward. Submitters want better signage and enforcement of on-lead areas (x5).

Dog exercise areas would benefit from fencing and rubbish bins.

The draft plan identified a site for a dog exercise park. Only 1 submitter mentioned this and did not approve.

PLANNING ISSUES

Council should link open space planning and wider planning matters e.g. co-ordinate any work on Newlands Park with the mall development across the road. There is also a need to plan and protect, before open space and ecological values are lost to development (x5)

Council is encouraged to work with Porirua City Council on recreation projects that share a boundary. The Councils need to co-ordinate the timing and funding of any work e.g. Spicer Forest, Porirua Stream Walkway. A number of submitters are interested in what will happen with Spicer Forest (x6).

TRACKS & ACCESS

PRIORITIES

Track priorities for submitters to the draft plan include:

- New tracks and links identified in plan (x24)
- Porirua Stream Walkway (x13)
- Hutt Escarpment (x6)
- Lyndhurst Park (active transport)
- Open Space Access Plan priorities

Some submitters said negotiating access over private land is a higher priority.

New tracks were suggested

- 1) re-opening a track from Bellevue to Hutt Rd and
- 2) linking Stebbings Valley to Ohariu Valley

The proposed Westchester Drive link needs to be assessed further. The ecological impact needs to be considered.

ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE

Submitters support improving access to more people e.g. bridging streams and maintaining good track standards.

Multi-use tracks are important [Cycleway (x9) and Horses (x3)]. Porirua Stream Walkway and Harbour Escarpment need to be built for multiple users.

Some suggestions were provided on how Council can improve access to open space:

- Improve entrances to Parks
- Need multiple access points to tracks (e.g. Skyline)
- Tracks and parks need maintenance plans and budgets (x6)
- Promote public transport links to track entrances

Some believed the plan should acknowledge other tracks open to the public e.g. Greater Wellington Belmont Regional Park and Outer Green Belt tracks.

HORSES

As has already been mentioned, there is concern that the ecological values of Woodburn Reserve will be damaged by horses. Walkers experiences could also be compromised. Arthur Carmen Reserve was suggested as a potential horse riding site.

MOUNTAIN BIKES

Mountain bikes are able to use Council tracks unless they are declared closed. Some people said mountain biking was not compatible with walking and horses, and should only be allowed on some tracks. The update to the Open Space Access Plan provides guidelines on how to assess tracks for user safety, environment sensitivity.

CULTURE & HISTORY

RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION

The historic features in the northern reserves need to be recognised and protected:

- Halfway House at Glenside – needs to be managed sustainably or preserved (x4). This is an important part of the history of Wellington.
- Seton Nossiter Park – Council needs to recognise and officially designate historic features.
- Tawa Cemetery – include in Northern Reserves Management Plan (x2). Landscape values and pest control requirements do not get mentioned in the Cemetery Management Plan. The reserve is an important part of Tawas' reserve network
- Include more heritage items in the District Plan e.g. trees and houses
- Provide Maori place names (Currently Reserve naming is usually associated with nearest street)
- Get reserve names right (Waihinahina OR Dennis Duggan and Edward Wilson OR John Walker Reserve)

ADMINISTRATION

RESERVE CLASSIFICATION

Some were concerned that a number of reserves have not been vested. Vesting is seen as a priority to protect open space (x3).

Leave reserve classification of Glenside Reserve as Recreation Reserve.

FUTURE USES OF RESERVES

There is support for retaining the Newlands Community House on the reserve (x13).

There are a number of uncertainties for current tenants that need to be sorted.

Suggested uses for decommissioned playgrounds

- Pinkerton Park – multi-use, visible park; carpark
- Jay St Park – sell it; carpark
- Coronation Park – decommission playground

It was also suggested that Council sell some land at Lyndhurst Park and invest it in the Park.

Shifting Newlands Fire Station would create new open space in Newlands.

Some submitters want a ban on grazing or other commercial uses of reserves. Horse grazing was viewed as an acceptable activity at Glenside Reserve (x3)

RESERVE ACQUISITION

Developers Contribution: there is a need to consider the recreation, ecological, landscape and heritage values of land given as reserve in new subdivisions. Is it a viable size? Will it provide a corridor for flora and fauna?

MORE DETAILS NEEDED

Produce Management Plans for some reserves. More detailed action or implementation plans would help.

Parks and tracks also need maintenance plans and appropriate budgets to implement.

ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLIC LAND

Submitters want the Plan to acknowledge other reserves and public land, and Regional Plans

- Refer to Outer Green Belt Management Plan reserves (x4)
- Glenside should be recognised in Town Belt Management Plan
- Show Greater Wellington land on maps – its public open space.
- Include Regional Plans whose outcomes will be supported by this plan
- Show public land on maps - that require weed control e.g. Transit, Ontrack