

**Report 99.554**

23 September 1999

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Report to the Landcare Committee  
from Anne Manley, Parks Planner - Policy, Regional Parks (Strategy & Marketing)

## **Changing the Name of East Harbour Regional Park**

### **1. Purpose**

To provide advice on the formal process for changing the name of East Harbour Regional Park, as requested by the Landcare Committee (refer Report 99.494).

### **2. Legal Obligations When Changing the Name of a Regional Park**

We have had legal advice that the Wellington Regional Council would need to undertake a full public notification and consultation process before the name of East Harbour Regional Park could be changed.

In summary, Simpson Grierson advise that the Council may change the name of a Regional Park. However, changing the name would constitute a technical amendment to the Park's Management Plan. If an amendment is to be made to the Plan, the Local Government Act 1974 requires the Council to follow a specified procedure for public notification and consultation (refer sections 619F - 619H). This involves:

- Giving public notice of the Council's intention to amend the Plan and inviting comments/suggestions on the proposed amendment;
- Giving full consideration to any comments/suggestions received;
- Then preparing the amendment to the Plan in draft form, giving public notice of the amendment, and calling for submissions (by a date specified, being not less than two months after the first date of publication of the notice).

Consideration must be given to *any* submissions received before approving the Plan. (The procedure assumes a review of the Management Plan. The Council will be bound to consider all submissions, irrespective of whether they relate to the name of the Park or some other issue.)

It will also be important to involve other Park landowners (Hutt City and the Department of Conservation) when considering changing the name of East Harbour Regional Park.

If the procedure above is followed and a name change approved, the Local Government Act will still refer to *East Harbour Regional Park*, unless the Act is amended. However, we have been advised that an amendment to the Act is not necessary to change the name of the Park for common use. The reference to East Harbour Regional Park in the Act is declaratory only (it *identifies* an area, rather than *naming* a specified area).

### 3. Other Issues

#### 3.1 Timing of a Name Change

In addition to being required, consulting the public on a name change represents prudent management of what is a public area.

Changing the name of East Harbour Regional Park is likely to draw attention to the condition of the Park and its management by Council. Historically the Council's funds and efforts have been directed to other Regional Parks. This approach has often been questioned by the public and it may be appropriate to defer changing the name until the programme for change (now commencing) has advanced to a point where the public see active management by Council in the Park.

Just a few months ago the Landcare Committee gave its support to a future development strategy, including a visitor survey (1999/2000) and (in 2000/01) a review of the East Harbour Regional Park Management Plan (refer **Attachment 1**). Considering a name change as part of this overall review would avoid the need to duplicate public consultation (and the associated costs), and potential criticism of Council for changing the name of the Park now, but doing nothing or little else.

A name change can provide an excellent opportunity to *present* changes and can be used as a vehicle for doing so. For example, a name change would tie in particularly well with the launch of a new marketing strategy to raise the profile of the Park. A formal "opening" of the Park could be held in future using the new name, highlighting the introduction of the Development Concept for the Lakes Block, land rationalisation and improvements to access at the southern end of the Park (refer Report 99.352).

#### 3.2 Naming Rights

A further option with respect to the name of East Harbour Regional Park is to consider selling naming rights. At this stage it is unclear whether this would be a viable course of action or whether seeking sponsorship for individual programmes and/or structures within the Park would be more practicable. This could be investigated.

Applying the legal interpretation above, public consultation would be needed before the name could be amended to include reference to a sponsor. Furthermore, it may be judicious to seek the views of the public on the overall issue of selling naming rights to Parks, and it may well be appropriate to raise this as a Network issue rather than in relation to one Park only.

#### 4. **Communication**

There are no communication opportunities arising from this report.

#### 5. **Recommendations**

*That the Landcare Committee:*

- (1) *Receive the report and note the contents.*
- (2) *Note that in July 1999 the Committee approved a future development strategy for East Harbour Regional Park (refer Report 99.352) and that as part of that strategy public consultation is scheduled to be undertaken through a visitor survey (in 1999/2000) and through the review of the Park Management Plan (in 2000/2001).*

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**Attachment 1 :** Future Direction for East Harbour Park : Timetable and Costings for Years 1-4 (1999/2000 - 2002/2003)