



Report **06.660**
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Committee **Landcare**
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Battle Hill Farm Forest Park draft management plan

1. Purpose

To seek the Council's approval to release the *Draft Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Management Plan* for public consultation.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision 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 Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Management Plan review began in April 2006 by advertising the Council's intent to review the plan and inviting submissions. Submissions closed on 28 April and were considered by the Landcare Committee on the 22nd June. (Report 06.248). The issues raised were discussed at the 31 May Council workshop and have been considered throughout the preparation of the draft plan. A draft management plan has distributed to Councillors through the Councillor Bulletin. *The Draft Plan is attached as a separate document.*

4. Submissions

A total of 29 submissions were received. They covered a variety of topics for consideration, which are summarised as **Attachment 1**.

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 31st May, Councillor workshop, internal working group discussions and the current *Regional Parks Network Management Plan* and the "*Puketiro Wind Farm proposal*"

6. Stakeholders

Officers have continued to liaise with the Iwi throughout the drafting of the plan. Submissions are expected from these parties during the second phase of consultation.

7. Changes from existing plan

While the draft plan may "look" quite different to the existing management plan, there have been very 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. **Attachment 2** provides a summary of all the changes to the plan.

8. Key Issues

8.1 Development surrounding the park

The key issues which face Battle Hill comes from not just the activities on the Park but the activities which are carried out around and adjacent to the Park including further subdivisions of the Horokiri Valley, the implications of Transmission Gully, Windfarm development on the Puketiro Ridgeline and the impacts of the forestry operations imminent on the eastern slopes of the Park.

8.2 Transmission Gully

If the proposed Transmission Motorway goes ahead, the impact on Battle Hill will be significant. The importance of as many mitigation measures being put in place to protect the parks existing values was seen as important, throughout the submission process. Mitigation measures include visual and sound buffers,

vehicular and pedestrian access across what will become the two separate units of Battle Hill and protection of remnant vegetation and waterways.

8.3 Puketiro wind farm

Puketiro wind farm, if constructed, will have an impact specifically on the park if access roads and transmission lines are sited on Battle Hill, as well as the visual intrusion on the skyline. There is potential during the construction phase of the operation (2yrs approximately) for significant impacts to occur. Page 32 of the draft management plan details these impacts, which include the effects of potential roading through the park, the amount of vehicle movements effecting the recreational and farming viability of the park and the ongoing maintenance of the road to service the turbines. During the negotiation for the windfarm development the impact these will have and any mitigation measures or alternative access will be considered.

However within the plan, policies have been included to permit the development of the windfarm and associated infrastructure, by determining the Puketiro windfarm proposal as a “restricted activity”. This covers possible roading required to develop and service the windfarm, the possibility of overhead transmission lines to transfer power away from the windfarm site to the 110KV lines through Battle Hill and references to allowing turbines to be permanent structures on the park itself.

Whilst the Regional Park network management plan makes reference to accommodating new proposed network utilities, as a “restricted activities” in parks specific plans, any new development is subject to fulfilling the policies within the Regional Park network management plan (Policies 74 – 85). The development is also subject to any planning and subsequent resource consent processes.

8.4 Forestry

Battle Hill was bought with the intention of providing recreational and forestry opportunities. The Park is managed by two separate departments each responsible for servicing those functions. The draft plan does not address the

issue of forestry management except in broad terms and where it is necessary to protect the impact the forestry will have on the Park or the downstream catchment (Pauatahanui Inlet) from water and soil disturbance.

8.5 Forestry Access

Future access to the forestry block during the harvesting operations is still being negotiated, with a variety of options being considered. One option is to develop roading through Battle Hill, which will again have a temporary disturbance to the operation of the Park. The potential impacts of this have been outlined on Page 25 and 32 and policies have been included to minimise the adverse affects on the park itself.

9. Next steps

The next phase of the plan review process is to consult on the draft plan for a two-month period early next year.

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 advising where copies of the draft plan are available for their information and further comment.

10. Communication

Notices will be placed in the region's main newspapers asking for comment on the draft plan. A second 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 made when the plan is issued.

11. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the contents of the report.*
- 3. Recommends to the Council that it approve the release of the draft Battle Hill Farm Forest 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: Summary of submission

Attachment 2: Table of changes to the draft management plan

Attachment 3: Battle Hill Farm Forest Park draft management plan