
Okahu Catchment Ecological Restoration Plan Update

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Purpose

1. To update the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Reserves Board of the Ōkahu Catchment Ecological Restoration Plan.

Executive summary

2. The Ōkahu Catchment Ecological Restoration Plan (ŌCERP) has been defined by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei to implement their intentions to restore the mauri of Ōkahumatamoemoe (Ōkahu Bay).
3. This report updates the board on progress on ŌCERP work-streams over the past quarter, provides information and background on the grooming of Ōkahu Bay and recommends the board support ŌCERP staff and endorse the implementation of hand-grooming at the bay.

Recommendation/s

That the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Reserves Board:

- a) receive the Ōkahu Catchment Ecological Restoration Plan Update.
- b) endorse the direction provided by the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Taumata to refuse mechanical grooming of Ōkahu Bay in accordance with the ecological vision for the area.
- c) request that the Ōkahu Catchment Ecological Restoration Plan Manager investigate options and costs associated with hand grooming Ōkahu Bay and report back to a future meeting.

OCERP background and update

4. The Ōkahu Catchment Ecological Restoration Plan (ŌCERP) has been defined by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei to implement their intentions to restore the mauri of Ōkahumatamoemoe (Ōkahu Bay). Over the past five years the hapū have identified their own ecological health indicators and they have defined the objectives that aim to restore the mauri of the bay. From this direction the management plan has been written to hold the kaitiakitanga intentions of the hapū at the centre of the decision making process.
5. The aim of the restoration plan is to promote, develop and enhance Ōkahu Bay as the public face or gateway to the Whenua Rangatira while respecting its existing cultural and spiritual value to tangata whenua and enhancing its relationship with the Waitemata.
6. The Ōkahu Catchment Ecological Restoration Plan visionary statement is:
Waters fit to swim in at all times, with thriving marine eco-systems that provide sustainable kaimoana resources to a Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei community who have strong daily presence in and on the bay as users and kaitiaki.
7. Progress has been made over the past quarter on all OCERP objectives; citizen science programmes, moorings removal from Ōkahu Bay, Phase II of the Mussel Reef restoration project, mussel shell filtration system project, sand dune restoration programme, the Ōkahu Tidal Creek Reinstatement Project and the potential for hand grooming of Ōkahu Bay.
8. An adaptive management framework has been utilised to broker strategic relationships with agencies and tertiary education providers to gain a body of research that will inform the

definition of mitigation techniques, priorities and implementation projects. Recent internships have provided engineering analysis of the geological mechanisms of Pourewa which have been added to the Pourewa Management Plan proceedings.

9. Engagement with the three Ōkahu Bay catchment schools Ōrākei Primary, St Joseph's School and St Thomas' School to implement all citizen science monitoring programmes of ŌCERP is enabling ownership and commitment to the restoration plan that endeavors to set Orakei School up as a 'restoration hub'.
10. An active link has been fostered with Ngāti Whātua tamariki to offer vocational pathways that offer the ability to become kaitiaki. Ōrākei School now acts as the Tuakana (leader) for the annual Shellfish Monitoring Programme in Ōkahu Bay. An annual survey has been conducted since 2007 and analysis and mapping of results are underway.
11. In 2014 Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei responded to the advanced draft Auckland Council Unitary Plan by submitting that all moorings be shifted out of Ōkahu Bay to the eastern side of Waitaramoa (Hobson Bay) of the marina - where mooring space is undersubscribed and where the environment is more open and 'flushed' than within the confines of Ōkahu Bay. In June 2016 the first boats were moved from the moorings of Ōkahu Bay, these boats were derelict. The Unitary Plan will come into effect by 2017, and will state that within 18 months of this that all boats will be moved from Ōkahu Bay.
12. In August 2014 the hapū welcomed two tons of mussels that came from Ngati Paoa and the Ōrākei Water Sports waka ama crew, alongside the Auckland University and Ōkahu Bay Landing boats laid the first stages of the mussel reef restoration beds at the call from the pūtātara (shell trumpet). Since then three further mussel drops have occurred.
13. Phase II of the restoration program is to enlist more mātauranga (traditional knowledge) by working alongside kai raranga (weavers) to provide harakeke (flax) ropes and nets to seed mussels onto the rocks of Ōkahu Bay in order to get them off the smothering impact of the sediment of the floor of the bay. Further research has been supported to investigate 3D options for mussel seeding with Massey University. These structures are to be designed and installed within the next year.
14. A collaborative relationship between Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Reserves Board, The University of Auckland and Stormwater360 is currently defining a process of characterising the stormwater infiltration from Tamaki Drive and designing an appropriate filtration system to be implemented on the open stormwater drainage in the eastern end of Ōkahu Bay. Design of the platform to hold the filtration system is underway in order to prevent any root system damage. Further analysis of the characterisation of the flow is also underway.
15. Restoration of the native ecology of the sand dune system on Ōkahu Bay is underway; replanting the native species to further enhance the marine and terrestrial ecology whilst providing Ngati Whātua Orakei kai raranga (weavers) with a much sought after source of resource for their raranga. Propagation and field testing has started off site, wananga and sourcing of plant materials are underway.
16. Clarification of the outcomes of the Ōkahu Tidal Creek Reinstatement Project with Auckland Council in February 2016 has provided further discussion between the parties to define a 'project team' comprising of Ngati Whātua Orakei, Auckland Council Stormwater and Parks to work together. Initial steps to further define the impact of stormwater and wastewater separation throughout the catchment on the options defined in the project are underway.
17. In 2014 Opus were contracted to design a potential wetland treatment system on the corner of Watene Crescent and Tamaki Drive to alleviate the flooding in that area. As part of the design process it was identified that a stormwater pipe which flows under the sand of Ōkahu Bay, exiting at the high water mark, is problematic due to its blocking potential. Budgetary constraints impacted on the project and its progress was stopped. Further to this, in July 2016 a 'sink hole' has appeared on Ōkahu Bay at the point of exit of this very pipe creating Health & Safety concerns for the public. Instigation of a report and follow up investigation are underway with Auckland Council.

Grooming of Ōkahu Bay

18. A request from the Chairperson of the Ōrākei Local Board was received in October 2015 regarding the possibility of mechanical grooming of Ōkahu Bay as is the practice on Mission Bay. The request was taken to the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei taumata who declined the request as mechanical grooming 'sweeps' the beach of all detritus which has significant impact on the ecological functioning of the bay; all seaweed, invertebrates, food source for birds, fish eggs, organic matter.
19. A query to Auckland Council to initiate a 'hand grooming' process is underway. For longevity of this request to be upheld it is proposed that the reserves board endorse the refusal to implement mechanical grooming of Ōkahu Bay in accordance with the ecological vision of OCERP and the Taumata, and support the investigation into hand grooming of the beach.
20. A reply to the request for mechanical grooming of Ōkahu Bay was provided to the Ōrākei Local Board to decline this process and opt for a hand grooming process in its place.

Implementation

21. If the Reserves Board endorse the proposal to implement hand grooming instead of mechanical grooming at Ōkahu Bay, the OCERP manager will follow up with the Community Facilities department on the feasibility and budget implications for carrying out this work, noting that due to a budget shortfall in operational expenditure the funding for this may need to be advocated for through the Long Term Plan or volunteer options investigated.

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report.

Signatories

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