

Date: Thursday 1 June 2023
Time: 10.02am
Meeting Room: Reception Lounge
Venue: Auckland Town Hall
301-305 Queen Street
Auckland

Komiti mō te Whakarite Mahere, te Taiao, me ngā Papa Rēhia / Planning, Environment and Parks Committee

OPEN MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS

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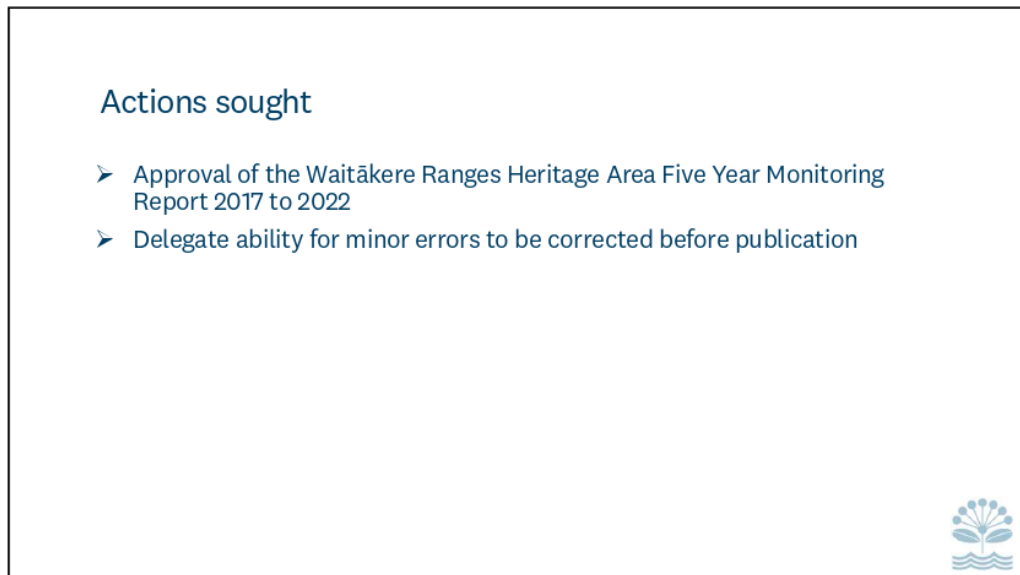
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| 8 | Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Five-year Monitoring Report 2023 | |
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Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Five-year Monitoring Report 2023 -
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Attachment A

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Report purpose

1. Statutory



Section 34 of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 requires council to report at five yearly intervals on:

- The state of the environment in the heritage area
- Council's progress towards achieving the objectives of the Act
- The funding impacts from activities to be undertaken to give effect to the Act

2. Strategic

Monitoring helps Council to assess the ongoing impact of council's many activities in the heritage area. It may be used to inform decision making in the context of the annual plan / long term plan, and local board plans



Two earlier reports were published in 2018 (2013-2017) and 2013 (2008-2013)




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The Act

- Sets the boundaries of the heritage area and says that it is a nationally, regionally and locally significant place
- Seeks to promote, protect and enhance specific 'heritage features' for present and future generations
- Sets out objectives for the heritage area including maintaining it, avoiding adverse effects on it, and how people might live in it
- Sets out an approach for when decisions threaten serious or irreversible damage to a heritage feature, and the relationship between the Act and the Resource Management Act 1991




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Where is the heritage area?


- On two coastlines, with a city border
- 27,700* hectares of public and private land
- 18,000* hectares of this is regional park
- 6,800* hectares designated water supply catchment, including five dams
- Over 21,000* residents of which over 17,000* living in the eastern foothills

* Approximate



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Who looks after the heritage area - governance and management










- Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Whātua are mana whenua
- Governance responsibilities are shared between the Governing Body and three local boards. A significant majority of the heritage area is within the Waitākere Ranges Local Board boundary
- Most operational functions and decision-making powers are delegated to council employees
- Watercare Services Limited has designated land, water supply and catchment functions, and manages specific assets and activities
- Auckland Transport (AT) provides and maintains roads and other transport assets, services, and related infrastructure
- The Department of Conservation (DOC) manages several small areas of parkland
- Residents and visitors all play a vital stewardship role




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2017 to 2022: an extraordinary period



-  2018 / 2021 flash flooding damages roads, homes and property
-  Road network and the forested areas of the regional park badly affected by slips
-  2018 most forested areas / tracks closed to control the kauri dieback threat. This is followed by a track reopening programme
-  2019/2020 region wide drought in which dam levels reach historic lows
-  2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic restrictions on the resident population and Council staff working in the heritage area
-  2021/2022 visitor counts increase to 1.282 million (491,000 in 2011/2012)



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Nihotipu Dam in 2019 drought



Nihotipu Dam in October 2021



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Summary conclusions (A)



1. The funding impact from activities to be undertaken to give effect to the Act

- While it is sometimes a challenge to understand expenditure within the heritage area, council and local board decisions are integrated within the budgets of appropriate departments and / or CCOs
- A wide variety of management activities, depending on function
- No overarching budget, governance or management programme



2. Kaitiakitanga, community and built / cultural heritage

- Community stewardship is very visible across all of these areas and contributes to the economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of residents and visitors
- Active communities volunteer as first responders, surf lifesavers, run community projects and facilities (i.e. community libraries, heritage and arts activations) and carry out weed and predator control. Often supported by council through funding, expertise and cooperation
- Some community concerns: development in the foothills, the impact of visitors on quality of life, environmental management (needs and funding), and frustration about the sustained long-term management approach required for kauri dieback



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Summary conclusions (B)



3. Landscape, landforms and land use

The impact of consenting activity and how the built environment around the regional park is changing the landscape:

- Minor change in the general condition and character of landforms and landscapes, indicating that planning provisions continue to be effective. Only minor or very minor negative changes were found within individual landscape units
- Many examples of positive outcomes and changes
- An increased number of land slips observed, with actual and potential impact on the road network, homes, property, and ecosystem health



4. The heritage area as both a wilderness area and a public place

The impact of activities in the regional park, water designations and the road network

- Council closed many tracks to help prevent the spread of kauri dieback. Upgrades to 'kauri safe' standard was established as a cornerstone of the precautionary response
- Pressure on the track network increased as regional and national travel options were restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic response. Given the limited number of open tracks, some of those experienced particularly high use
- Stressors at key sites include high levels of congestion at particular car parks, on tracks, and at popular destinations like coastal beaches and waterfalls, particularly at peak times



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5. The state of the environment

Environmental progress and outcomes, pest plant / pest animal and other management activities, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems:

- Distribution of the kauri dieback pathogen is localised to areas on the periphery of the regional park. While these areas still present a risk of spread to other catchments, it is not as widespread as previously thought
- Monitored ecosystems demonstrate patterns of growth consistent with regeneration
- Many improvements identified, noting that many plants, animals, ecosystems, etc. continue to be vulnerable, and that improvements rely on continued resourcing to progress or to avoid reversing

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 Looking back to the heritage area across urban Glen Eden	 Waiapu (former quarry) in the Waikare Valley	 Changing land use in the rural foothills	 Volunteers shut seeds at Arahata Ranger's Station
 Glen Esk Valley in Pihia	 Collecting data from the stable sand dunes at Waiapu	 Tikanga looking past historic Lopdell House to new development	 View across residential Tikanga to the Manu Hau Harbour
 Waikomata view of housing looking from the foothills towards urban Auckland	 Hokitika Frog – a nationally and internationally important and critically declining species vulnerable to predators and declining habitats	 Auckland Transport reopens Mountain Road after a storm event in 2021 in which ten major road slips occurred	 Council closed many walking tracks as part of a precautionary response to managing kauri dieback

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