

Report No.	21-20
Information Only - No Decision Required	

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this item is update members of Council's Environment Committee on the progress made in the Natural Resources & Partnership Group's activity over the period 1 October to 31 December 2020 with some additional updates up to the time of writing. The item provides updates on progress against the Annual Plan targets.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 21-20 and Annexes.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. There is no financial impact associated with recommendations in this paper.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. This is a public item and therefore Council may deem this sufficient to inform the public.

5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. It is considered that there is no significant risk impact of this item

6. CLIMATE IMPACT STATEMENT

- 6.1. This item reports on Horizons' activity in relation to Horizons' Annual Plan targets and is not considered to have a climate change impact.

7. SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

- 7.1. The Natural Resources & Partnerships Group activity includes the non-regulatory and science programmes across the land and water management, biosecurity, biodiversity and environmental reporting activities of the Long-term Plan. The group also delivers regulatory functions for biosecurity and supports Horizons' regulatory programmes.
- 7.2. Over the financial year that commenced in July the Natural Resources and Partnerships group prepared and presented a range of Council Papers including:
- Jobs for Nature Funding;
 - Tōtara Reserve Poplars;
 - Tōtara Reserve Poplar Removal Procurement;
 - National Wilding Conifer Programme;
 - Wilding Conifer Procurement;
 - Lake Rākau Hamama;

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- Implementation of Government's Freshwater Reform Package;
 - Biodiversity Partnerships Programme;
 - Biodiversity Priority Sites Update;
 - Pest Plan Update;
 - National Environmental Standards for Stock Exclusion – implications for consenting of water abstractions.
- 7.3. Progress on the Land Management Activity within the Group was reported to the Catchment Operations Committee in December and will be further updated to Council in April. Overall the Land Management activity is on track to deliver additional activity this year.
- 7.4. The Biosecurity Animals programme (Annex A) is on track to achieve all of its targets having added an additional 36,920 ha of new work to the programme this financial year for a target of 6,217 ha. Overall the programme is scheduled to complete maintenance control on over 865,000 ha and in the first six months of the programme has delivered 48 percent of the programmed bait station fills for the year. The rooks programme has been successfully delivered with additional rook nests treated this year. A significant contributor to this was additional reporting by the community of rook nests and the second round of nest control that was completed for the first time this year. The amenity pests programme continues to be busy with 311 enquiries during the reporting period, the greatest number of enquiries related to rabbits, followed by possums and mustelids.
- 7.5. The Biosecurity Plants programme (Annex B) has continued to respond to new pest plant issues during the reporting period, this includes a new find of *Sagittaria platphylla* near Palmerston North. Work on the alligator weed issue near Palmerston North has continued and staff have also worked with the team at Kitchener Park around a *Phragmites karka* infestation. A significant result for our biological control programme was the discovery of tutsan beetle establishment in the region. Further the green thistle beetle population has continued to expand. The national wilding conifers programme has progressed well with nine of the 46 operational areas completed and the majority of others having work underway.
- 7.6. The Biodiversity Programme (Annex C) has continued to implement the changes made by Council as a result of a review of the programme. For the priority habitats programme the site summaries and management plans have been established for the core 68 sites at management level three and above. Work is underway to add the further seven bush remnants and four wetlands. Six new bush remnants and one wetland have been identified for addition to the programme, the team are prioritising getting work underway at these sites and finding the additional sites to meet the Annual Plan target. Work on the biodiversity partnerships programme continues and updates are provided in Annex C. The Tōtara Reserve work programme has focused on the removal of poplars which was completed in December prior to the full opening of the campgrounds. A focus for the team at present is the design and implementation of an upgrade to the water supply. This piece of work is the key next step for the capital upgrades at the site and other upgrades are on hold until the budget requirements for the water supply are established.
- 7.7. Progress on the Water Quantity and Quality activity is updated on in Annex D. The item updates on the monitoring programmes that are underway including the swim spot monitoring and seasonal river flow and ground water conditions. The expanded Freshwater and Partnerships programme has established the three Jobs for Nature projects (Regional Riparian Fencing and Planting, Enhancing Fish Populations through Fish Passage Repair and Lake Horowhenua Water Quality Interventions). The projects are in addition to the Freshwater Improvement Fund programmes underway in the Whangaehu, Manawatū and Lake Waipu. Overall the programme is tracking well with the regional targets for stream fencing and planting looking to be exceeded with use of reserves as approved by Council.

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The establishment of the boat ramp at Lake Horowhenua is on track for completion by May 2021 in advance of the weed harvesting trial that is planned for later in the year.

- 7.8. The Environmental Reporting programme (Annex E) is progressing State of Environment reporting for the region and the individual Freshwater Management Units. The annex also overviews the six Envirolink funded projects that are underway for the year.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

- 8.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

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ANNEXES

Table 1

Table 2

Table 3

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- A Biosecurity Animals Progress Report
- B Biosecurity Plants Progress Report
- C Biodiversity Progress Report
- D Water Quality & Quantity Progress Report
- E Environmental Reporting Progress Report