

Chairperson and Subcommittee Members
GRANTS ALLOCATION COMMITTEE

9 FEBRUARY 2016

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

HERITAGE FUND ALLOCATIONS 2015-16

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This report summarises applications for grants from the Heritage Fund and makes recommendations on funding allocations.

DELEGATION

- 2 The Subcommittee may make a decision under the following delegation in Section C.1. of the Governance Structure:

“The Subcommittee will have the authority to assess all applications and allocate funds for the following grant programmes: Heritage Fund Allocations”.

BACKGROUND

- 3 The Heritage Fund was established in 2001 with the intention of assisting and actively encouraging landowners and members of the Kāpiti Coast community to manage, protect and enhance natural features throughout the district, including ecological, geological, historical and cultural sites.
- 4 To be eligible for funding, projects must meet the criteria set out in the Heritage Fund Application Criteria and Guidelines, attached as Attachment 3, or be a contribution to the establishment of a QEII Trust covenant.
- 5 A total of 10 applications for funding in 2015-2016 have been received requesting a total of \$31,257, slightly less than the \$31,390 available for allocation this year. All the projects meet the funding criteria and merit support.
- 6 All applications are for management and protection projects in the natural heritage category. The following section will cover the details of each project and provide reasoning for the recommendations made. The location of projects is shown on a map (Attachment 1), and there are photographs of project sites (Attachment 2).

CONSIDERATIONS

319 Mangaone North Road, Te Horo

- 7 The owners seek funding to support the establishment of an extensive network of self-setting predator traps throughout a 55ha area of established and regenerating native bush in the Tararua foothills protected by a QEII Trust covenant.
- 8 Since establishing the covenant in 2008 the owners have controlled possums, stoats and rats that invade from neighbouring pine plantations and the nearby Tararua Forest Park. Now in their late 60's, the owners are struggling to sustain current methods requiring frequent checking of single strike kill traps, and the carting of heavy loads of poison bait to bait stations. Further, they want to reduce the risk that poisons pose to dogs used by visiting hunters who control pigs and goats.
- 9 With the advent of self-setting kill traps for possums, stoats and rats that need checking only every three months, the owners see the potential of continuing to effectively control pest animals themselves for years to come. The traps are expensive compared to traditional traps, and they are seeking a grant to subsidise their purchase.
- 10 The application meets the Heritage Fund criteria for a natural heritage protection project, because controlling pest animals is essential to maintaining the ecological health of native forest ecosystems.
- 11 The application is for **\$3,500** out of a project cost of **\$7,000**. It is recommended that **\$3,500** is granted.

647 Rahui Road, Ōtaki

- 12 An escarpment runs above the end of Rahui Road that is partly clad in native bush, identified and protected in the District Plan Heritage Register as ecological site K025.
- 13 At 647 Rahui Road the bush covers the upper part of the escarpment, with the remainder of the steep slope in rough pasture. During the last three years the owners have fenced and retired a small area below the bush. With Council advice they have planted the retired area with local native trees, which have grown quickly.
- 14 The success of this pilot project has inspired the owners to fence, retire and plant a larger area of .24ha to buffer the ecological site and improve connectivity with an unprotected strip of native bush running along the toe of the escarpment beside Rahui Road. They have contacted the QEII National Trust with the intention of covenanting the ecological site and the retired areas to protect them in perpetuity.
- 15 The application is for funding to subsidise planting 1,000 eco-sourced native trees this winter. Next year another 1,000 trees will be planted, completing that phase of the project. The owners will then maintain the trees until they are well established. The planted area of pioneering species will buffer the existing bush, and eventually merge with it through natural succession of canopy species such as kohekohe.

- 16 This restoration project meets Heritage Fund criteria and should have significant biodiversity benefits. In addition to buffering the ecological site a large new area of bush habitat will be created and eventually protected by covenant.
- 17 The application is for **\$3,000** out of a project cost of **\$6,000**. It is recommended that **\$3,000** is granted.

176 Te Hapua Road, Te Horo

- 18 This is a Natural Heritage Management project to enhance parts of the regionally significant Te Hapua wetland, which is registered as an ecological site (K057) in the District Plan Heritage Register. The parts of the wetland complex on this property are protected by a QE II covenant.
- 19 The owner is following a management plan for restoration of the wetland prepared by ecologist John Preece, and has received advice and support from Kāpiti Coast District Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Department of Conservation. The restoration sites were fenced to exclude stock, pine and willow trees and other pest plants that were degrading the wetland were removed, and the owner is replacing them with eco-sourced native plants grown in her own nursery. Pest animals such as possums and stoats are being controlled using traps. The owner keeps a restoration diary, and has recorded spending more than 200 hours a year on the project.
- 20 The owner helped establish a residents' care group for the greater Te Hapua wetland which has been active in promoting restoration and sustainable management.
- 21 The application is for **\$2,750** out of a project cost of **\$5,500**, to cover plant purchase, nursery expenses, and the employment of a labourer to help with heavy work too onerous for the applicant, who is in her 70's. The project meets the Heritage Fund criteria. Therefore it is recommended that funds are granted as requested.

516 State Highway 1, Waikanae

- 22 This property was once the home of Henry Elder, a prominent early Waikanae settler, and one of the district's biggest colonial era landowners. Elder was unusual for his time in that he saw value in preserving areas of native bush. He preserved bush on the banks of the Waikanae River, on steep slopes and in gullies, and around the big house he built above the State Highway on the south side of the Waikanae River Bridge.
- 23 Some of what Elder preserved still exists, including a 6.7ha block of bush around the house site. This block of kohekohe-titoki-tawa forest is protected by QE II covenant and is listed on the District Plan Heritage Register as ecological site K071. It adjoins Council owned reserve land on the south bank of the Waikanae River upstream from the main trunk rail bridge.
- 24 Since buying the property 16 years ago the landowners have made efforts to enhance the bush through plant and animal pest control and extensive planting. Weeds have continued to be a problem however, partly because of severe infestations on adjacent land owned by Kāpiti Coast District Council, Kiwirail, and the New Zealand Transport Agency.
- 25 In collaboration with Greater Wellington Regional Council, Kāpiti Coast District Council has started a long-term programme to control weeds on the banks of the

Waikanae River. As part of this programme weeds are being controlled on Council land adjacent to the protected bush at 516 SH1.

- 26 The landowner has applied for **\$3,500** out of a project cost of **\$10,000** for weed control targeting vine weeds and *Tradescantia fluminensis* (wandering jew) within the covenant to dovetail with the control programme on adjacent public land. This would also benefit the council's programme, as it would help prevent reinvasion of public land by weeds from the covenant.
- 27 In 2014-15 the landowner was granted \$4,000 for stage two of the programme. Specialised weed control contractors were engaged and their work monitored by Council's Programme Manager Biodiversity. Initial control of environmental weeds was achieved across most of the covenant, but follow-up work is required.
- 28 The application meets the criteria for a natural heritage management project. Therefore it is recommended that **\$3,500** is granted.

State Highway 1, Ōtaki

- 29 This is a Natural Heritage Protection project to fence and permanently retire parts of Haruatai Forest adjacent to Haruatai Park in Ōtaki. Haruatai Forest is a 7ha swamp forest remnant listed as Ecological Site K015 in the District Plan Heritage Register.
- 30 Haruatai Forest is considered regionally significant because swamp forest and associated wetland habitat is nationally under-represented. The forest is part of Greater Wellington Regional Council's Key Native Ecosystem programme, which funds protective management of the region's top 64 biodiversity sites.
- 31 Though a corner of the forest extends into Haruatai Park most of the forest and surrounding farmland is in joint Maori ownership, administered by a trust. The farmland is leased to a farmer who grazes cattle in unprotected parts of the remnant. Cattle also get into other parts because of inadequate fencing.
- 32 Since 2008 Council's Biodiversity Programme Manager has collaborated with Greater Wellington Regional Council biodiversity staff to help the trust manage the forest by controlling pest plants and animals.
- 33 This collaboration resulted in meetings last year with the landowners, who agreed to fence and retire unprotected parts of the forest, upgrade the fencing around others and improve sustainability by fencing to reconnect a separated fragment.
- 34 Last year Te Wananga O Raukawa students studying the forest planted 300 native trees to start the planting programme. They will plant 1,000 trees this year.
- 35 The application is for **\$5,000** out of a project cost of **\$10,000**. Greater Wellington Regional Council will contribute \$5,000 as part of its Key Native Ecosystem programme.
- 36 Haruatai Forest is a high priority for protection and the application meets the Heritage Fund criteria. Therefore it is recommended that funds are granted as requested.

60 Awanui Drive, Waikanae

- 37 The edge of Jack's Bush/Nga Manu, the largest and most important native coastal forest remnant in the district, extends onto residential properties in Awanui Drive in Waikanae. Jack's Bush/Nga Manu is listed in the District Plan Heritage Register as ecological site K133.
- 38 Residents with an ecological site on their properties can apply to the Heritage Fund to subsidise the cost of protective maintenance. The residents of 60 Awanui Drive have applied for a subsidy to engage a certified arborist to trim matai, kohekohe and titoki trees on the edge of the site, near their house.
- 39 Council has granted resource consent for trimming the trees subject to conditions, including a requirement for the work to be done by a certified arborist. Trimming is limited to thinning and the removal of deadwood and storm damaged limbs.
- 40 The application states that the trimming is to maintain and preserve ecological site K133. Trimming of native trees within ecological sites according to arboriculture criteria is seldom necessary to maintain or preserve a site's values, but may be the best option where the state and position of trees is hazardous, or adversely affecting the use of a residential section by the owners. Such cases need to be assessed through the resource consent process. In this case, resource consent was granted.
- 41 The application is for **\$1,650** out of a project cost of **\$3,305**. It is recommended that **\$1650** is granted.

Waiorongomai Road, Ōtaki

- 42 This is a natural heritage management project to restore Lake Waiorongomai, the largest (15.1ha) and most significant dune lake with a connection to the sea remaining in Foxton Ecological District. The lake and its riparian margins are listed in the District Plan as Ecological Site K001.
- 43 In addition to possessing regionally significant ecological values because of the habitat it provides for waterfowl and native fish, Waiorongomai is sacred to Ngā Hapu o Ōtaki, whose members are undertaking a long-term restoration project.
- 44 Though Waiorongomai and its connection to the sea survived the native vegetation clearance, drainage and farming that followed European settlement, the adverse effects of these activities degraded the lake to the extent that traditional eel harvesting was no longer viable.
- 45 Ngā Hapu o Ōtaki member Aroha Spinks is co-ordinating restoration of the lake's ecological health as part of her Massey University PhD programme. She secured support for the project from the Maori trust that administers Waiorongomai and most of the surrounding land, and from the farmer that owns the balance.
- 46 Greater Wellington Regional Council has contributed more than \$50,000 to fence the lake and its connection to the sea via Waiorongomai Stream.
- 47 Fencing allowed restoration planting to start this year around the lake margins, a milestone for the project. Greater Wellington also paid for installing a network of stoat traps around the lake that are maintained by hapu members. Nine stoats were caught within a few months of the traps' installation.

- 48 The application is for **\$5,000** to buy local native plants for the restoration planting programme. The plants will be planted and maintained by hapu members.
- 49 Restoring Lake Waiorongomai is an ambitious long-term undertaking that will have significant ecological and social benefits. The project meets the Heritage Fund criteria. Therefore it is recommended that funds are granted as requested.

366 State Highway 1, Paekākāriki

- 50 On the foothills north of Paekākāriki are small remnants of kohekohe forest, an important coastal forest type reduced to less than 10% of its former extent. The remnant at 366 SH1, listed on the District Plan Heritage Register as Ecological Site K139, is well maintained by the landowners and in good condition, but threatened by environmental weeds.
- 51 The landowners have applied for funding to control an infestation of banana passionfruit, a vigorous exotic vine that smothers native vegetation and is capable of collapsing the forest canopy. The location and extent of the infestation make it necessary to engage a specialised contractor to achieve effective control.
- 52 The application is for **\$500** out of a project cost of **\$1,000**, with the applicant paying 50%. The application meets the Heritage Fund criteria. Therefore it is recommended that funds are granted as requested.

1400 Ōtaki Gorge Road, Ōtaki

- 53 This is a Natural Heritage Management Project to assist the control of pest animals and weeds on a 125ha block on the edge of Tararua Forest Park. The block is part of Ecological Site K017 and is almost entirely covered by native bush, including primary forest on steep faces that escaped logging.
- 54 As such it is a valuable part of an evolving 'mountains to the sea' ecological corridor that has the potential to link the wilderness of the Tararua Ranges to Kāpiti Island via the Ōtaki River. The block provides habitat for keystone species such as kereru, and has resident populations of many native forest bird species including tomtit, whitehead, rifleman and bellbird.
- 55 Pest animal control on this block complements intensive control on adjacent Department of Conservation land conducted as part of 'Project Kākā', an innovative ecological management initiative designed to improve biodiversity in selected areas of the Tararua Forest Park.
- 56 The applicants are dedicated conservationists who have already spent large amounts of money protecting and restoring biodiversity on their land. They are seeking a contribution of **\$2,750** toward the **\$5,500** cost of hiring a 'Bobcat' bulldozer and operator to maintain a 3km track used to access their bait station and kill trap network. The track has become overgrown and partly blocked by slips in recent years. Clearing the track will make it safer and easier to service the network vital to maintaining their ecological site's high values.
- 57 If Ōtaki Gorge Road remains closed it will be impossible to get the bulldozer on site. In that eventuality the funds would be used to purchase self-setting predator traps to augment the existing pest animal control network. The placement of self-setting traps in remote and inaccessible parts of the block would result in pest animals being controlled effectively across a larger area, benefiting native flora and fauna.

- 58 In 2012-13 the landowners were granted \$1500 toward the cost of establishing their pest animal control network and to subsidise weed control. Council's Biodiversity Programme Manager subsequently visited the property and found that the funds were spent effectively, with pest plants and animals controlled across a large area.
- 59 This project meets the Heritage Fund criteria for natural heritage management. Therefore it is recommended that funds are granted as requested.

228 State Highway 1, Paraparaumu

- 60 On the uphill slope adjacent to State Highway 1 south of the Otaihanga roundabout is Muaopoko Forest, a 100ha remnant of kohekohe-nikau forest identified as Ecological Site K087 in the District Plan Heritage Register. Muaopoko Forest is classified as regionally significant because of its size, condition and diversity, and contains a rare plant (*Mazus novaezealandiae*), and a rare tree species (*Streblus banksii*, turepo). Part of the forest is included in Paraparaumu Scenic Reserve, managed by the Department of Conservation, another block is owned by the Forest and Bird Protection Society, and smaller areas are in private ownership.
- 61 Muaopoko Forest covers about 2.5ha of the property at 228 State Highway 1, whose owner has planted thousands of native trees on former farmland to buffer and enlarge the forest. In addition to controlling weeds and pest animals in the bush on his property, he voluntarily maintains possum bait stations in an adjacent Council water supply reserve.
- 62 The landowner has applied for funding to buy eco-sourced native trees to continue his planting project, which will eventually enlarge Muaopoko Forest by 1.5ha, providing more habitat for native wildlife. Tree species that were milled for timber and are no longer present, such as totara, matai and rimu, will be planted.
- 63 The application is for **\$3,607** out of a project cost of **\$7,214**. Muaopoko Forest is a high priority for protective management, and the project meets the Heritage Fund criteria. Therefore it is recommended that funds are granted as requested.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Policy considerations

- 64 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

Legal considerations

- 65 There are no legal considerations.

Financial considerations

- 66 If funding is approved as recommended, the 2015-2016 Heritage Fund budget will be underspent by \$133. There are no other financial considerations.

Significance and Engagement

- 67 This matter is not deemed significant under Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

Publicity

68 The opportunity exists for positive publicity associated with these projects. A press release will be prepared about the funding allocations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

69 That the Grants Allocation Sub-Committee approves funding to applicants from the Heritage Fund as set out in the following table.

Project	Total Project Cost	Requested Assistance	Recommended Assistance
319 Mangaone North Road, Te Horo	\$7,000	\$3,500	\$3,500
647 Rahui Road, Ōtaki	\$6,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
176 Te Hapua Road, Te Horo	\$5,500	\$2,750	\$2,750
516 SH1, Waikanae	\$10,000	\$3,500	\$3,500
State Highway 1, Ōtaki	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
60 Awanui Drive, Waikanae	\$3,305	\$1,650	\$1,650
Waiorongomai Road, Ōtaki	\$70,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
366 State Highway 1, Paekākāriki	\$1,500	\$500	\$500
1400 Ōtaki Gorge Road	\$5,496	\$2,750	\$2,750
228 SH1 Paraparaumu	\$7,214	\$3,607	\$3,607
Total	\$126,515	\$31,257	\$31,257

Report prepared by **Approved for submission** **Approved for submission**

Rob Cross

Tamsin Evans

Wayne Maxwell

**Programme Manager
Biodiversity**

**Group Manager
Community Services**

**Group Manager
Corporate Services**

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 – Location of Heritage Fund Projects 2015-16

Appendix 2 – Site Photographs

Appendix 3 – Heritage Fund Criteria