

Chairperson and Committee Members

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

2 FEBRUARY

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

HERITAGE FUND ALLOCATIONS 2011-2012

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To summarise applications for grants from the Heritage Fund and to make recommendations on funding allocations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION

- 2 The Council's significance policy is not triggered by this report.

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 heritage features throughout the district including ecological, geological, historical and cultural areas and sites.
- 4 The allocation of funds is consistent with LTCCP Outcome 1 "there are healthy natural systems which people can enjoy" and Outcome 4 "the District's resources are used wisely".
- 5 To be eligible for funding, projects must meet the criteria set out in the Heritage Fund Application Criteria and Guidelines, attached as Appendix 3, or be a contribution to the establishment of a QE II Trust covenant.
- 6 Nine applications for funding in 2011-2012 have been received for the total of \$28,269 available this year for allocation.
- 7 The range of applications includes both protection and management projects in the natural heritage category.
- 8 The following section will cover the details of each project and provide reasoning for the recommendations made.
- 9 The location of projects is shown on a map (Attachment 1), and there are photographs of project sites (Attachment 2).

CONSIDERATIONS

234 TE HAPUA RD, TE HORO

- 10 This is a natural heritage management project located within a wetland registered as an ecological site on the District Plan Heritage Register (site number KO55). The wetland comprises 4.1ha placed under Queen Elizabeth II National Trust Open Space Covenant in 2004. The wetland is part of the regionally significant Te Hapua complex, which is highly representative of a formerly extensive swamp and is considered one of the best and largest remaining examples on the Kāpiti Coast. The area provides habitat for endangered species such as spotless crane, *Ranunculus macropus*, *Carex dipsacea*, *Potentilla anserinioides*, and other species becoming uncommon in the Wellington Region including *Gratiola sexdentata*, kapungawha and *Baumea articulata*.
- 11 The landowners are highly committed to the restoration of the wetland and have followed a management plan by ecologist John Preece. With advice and support from Kāpiti Coast District Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Department of Conservation, the owners have undertaken extensive pest plant and animal control, including the successful eradication of pampas grass, grey willow, and blackberry. Large areas dominated by exotic weeds and grasses have been planted with eco-sourced native species as part of an ongoing programme to protect and enhance the wetland. The plantings need intensive maintenance for five years to ensure their survival in what is an extremely harsh coastal environment.
- 12 The project's purpose is to follow the management plan's requirement to maintain plantings by frequent releasing to prevent smothering by exotic weeds and grasses. The application is for financial assistance (\$3375 out of a project cost of \$6750) to employ a labourer to work with the landowners for three hours per week for 45 weeks, enabling the landowners to cope with the work required.
- 13 This project meets the Heritage Fund criteria as this wetland has the highest priority for Natural Heritage Protection. Therefore it is recommended that funds are approved as requested.

32 Park Avenue, Waikanae

- 14 This is a natural heritage management project to control environmental weeds around the Kawakahia wetland, part of the Te Harakeke wetland complex (120ha) including the Council-owned Pharazyn Reserve and a wetland owned by the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust north of the Reserve.

- 15 Te Harakeke wetland is the largest dune swale wetland remnant on the coastal plain of the Foxton Ecological District. It is part of Greater Wellington Regional Council's Key Native Ecosystems programme and identified by the Department of Conservation as a Wetland of Ecological and Representative Importance and as a site of Special Wildlife Importance. These classifications are due to large areas of the complex being in their natural state and in good condition, and providing habitat for endangered and vulnerable native birds (Australasian bittern, North Island fernbird, grey duck, New Zealand falcon), vulnerable native fish (Giant kokopu, short-jawed kokopu) and rare native plants (*Nertera scapanioides*, *Korthasella salicornioides*).
- 16 Kawakahia comprises the 40 hectare southern portion of the wetland complex. It is under Queen Elizabeth II National Trust covenant and is identified as Ecological Site KO66 in the District Plan.
- 17 While the body of Kawakahia wetland is in good condition, its margins are severely infested with a range of environmental weeds that are preventing the regeneration of native vegetation that would provide a buffer, improve connectivity and restore swamp forest and dry dune ecosystems. In this financial year Greater Wellington has spent \$5,000 on a long-term weed control project that Kāpiti Coast District Council and the Department of Conservation have supported in previous years. The landowner is contributing labour and machinery costs.
- 18 The application is for a **\$5,000** contribution to a follow-up project this autumn, concentrating on weed infestations not included in the Greater Wellington operation in spring and early summer. Large scale weed control has already proved effective at Kawakahia, and is the key to an enhancement strategy to which the landowner is committed, and which deserves Council support. The proximity to the Pharazyn Reserve means there will be benefits to future weed management on Council-owned land.
- 19 The application meets all the Heritage Fund criteria. Therefore it is recommended that funds are approved as requested.

25 Hadfield Road, Peka Peka

- 20 This is a natural heritage protection project to covenant a block of modified primary coastal kohekohe-tawa-titoki forest protecting a stream in a gully on a steep slope. The 2.15 ha remnant forms an ecological link with a covenanted bush block on the escarpment above SH 1, which in turn links to Awatea Bush. Collectively these forest covenants will compliment the network of wetland covenants in Te Hapua Road to the north-west, forming a sequence of protected ecosystems between the coast and the Tararua Ranges.
- 21 Once covenanted, this block will be added to the list of ecological sites on the District Plan Heritage Register.

- 22 The QE II Trust has applied for **\$3,311** for fencing costs out of a total project cost of **\$13,244** to be split four ways between Kāpiti Coast District Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council, the QE II Trust and the landowner.
- 23 Council resolved in 2001 as part of its Heritage Strategy to provide a guaranteed contribution to any new QE II Trust covenant established on the Kāpiti Coast (Appendix 4 attached). Therefore it is recommended that funds be approved as requested.

418 Ōtaki Gorge Road, Ōtaki

- 24 This is a natural heritage protection project to covenant five totara forest remnants covering 18.8ha on the Hautere Plains south of the Ōtaki River. Though listed as ecological sites on the District Plan Heritage Register (KO46, KO31, KO32, K135) these remnants are either unfenced or inadequately fenced and suffer from severe pest plant and animal problems threatening their high values.
- 25 One of the blocks (KO31) is the best remaining example of totara forest on the alluvial plains in the Kāpiti District, while a second (KO46 – 7.04 ha) is the largest. Both blocks are classified as regionally significant. Only scattered fragments of the great totara forest for which the Hautere Plains was renowned remain. The adequate protection of the blocks on this property is a milestone for the preservation of this forest type in the district.
- 26 In 2010/2011 the QE II Trust was granted \$6,000 from the Heritage Fund as a contribution toward fencing costs. Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Department of Conservation Biodiversity Condition Fund are funding a three year pest plant and animal control programme. DoC has granted \$6,553 and Greater Wellington \$4,348 for weed control in 2011/2012, and the QE II Trust has applied to the Heritage Fund for \$4,318 to match Greater Wellington's contribution. The funds will pay for a specialist contractor to continue control of the invasive environmental weeds *Tradescantia fluminensis* (wandering jew) and *Rhamnus alaternus* (evergreen buckthorn).
- 27 Constructing stock proof fencing and controlling pest animals and weeds are essential to establishing QE II covenants, which are not registered until basic requirements are met. Council resolved in 2001 as part of its Heritage Strategy to provide a guaranteed contribution to any new QE II Trust covenant established on the Kāpiti Coast (Appendix 4 attached). In addition, the Trust's application meets all of the criteria for a natural heritage protection project; therefore it is recommended that funds be approved as requested.

66 Smithfield Road, Waikanae

- 28 This is a natural heritage management project to protect and enhance a 4ha remnant of wetland, swamp forest and dry forest of high quality and diverse species representation listed as ecological site K133 on the District Plan Heritage Register. Located within 300m of Nga Manu Nature Reserve, the remnant forms part of an important ecological link between Kāpiti Island, the Hemi Matenga Reserve and the Tararua Ranges. The remnant is protected by a QE II Trust covenant and the landowners are committed to improving its values through good management.
- 29 The applicants seek **\$1,500** out of a project cost of **\$3,000** for pest animal control products and native plants for buffer planting on forest margins.
- 30 This project meets all the Heritage Fund criteria, therefore it is recommended that funds be approved as requested.

95 Panorama Drive, Paraparaumu

- 31 This large Panorama Drive property (5.35 ha) includes edges of a much larger Ecological Site (KO95, 72 ha) encompassing the top and eastern flanks of the north end of the Paraparaumu Escarpment. The property adjoins the Council's Kaitawa Reserve and includes riparian margins of the Wharemauku Stream. The applicant proposes a natural heritage management project to control pest animals and weeds, and to enrich regenerating native bush within the ecological site by planting appropriate native species.
- 32 Ecological Site KO95 is regarded as regionally significant because it comprises under-represented kohekohe-titoki coastal forest and a large area of regenerating kanuka-mahoe forest. It also provides an ecological link between the Council-owned Raumatī Escarpment (Matai Huka) and Kaitawa Reserve, both of which are undergoing restoration.
- 33 The owners of this property are dedicated conservationists who are committed to restoring the values of their ecological site. They have constructed predator fences along three sides of the property and for three years have attempted to control pest plants and animals. They have applied for **\$2,599** out of a project cost of **\$17,099** to establish a network of bait stations and kill traps, and to fund the purchase of native plants to aid regeneration.
- 34 This project meets all the Heritage Fund criteria; therefore it is recommended that funds be approved as requested.

152 Te Hapua Road, Te Horo

- 35 The owners of the wetland that is the subject of this application have spent the last 13 years restoring its degraded values. The 11.6ha wetland is part of the regionally significant Te Hapua wetland complex listed on the Heritage Register of the District Plan as ecological site KO55. Council biodiversity staff have worked with Te Hapua Road landowners for ten years to encourage the protection and sustainable management of their wetlands. The wetland at 152 Te Hapua Road is one of 10 in the complex protected by QE II Trust covenants, the highest density of covenants in one area in the Wellington region.
- 36 Because of its large size and the former severity of weed infestations, the owners face ongoing challenges in keeping weeds under control and continuing their restoration efforts. They are part of a dedicated group of Te Hapua Road wetland owners who are following a weed control programme co-ordinated by Kāpiti Coast District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council, and supported by the QE II Trust and the Department of Conservation.
- 37 The owners have applied for **\$3005** out of a project cost of **\$6,010** for access track maintenance and pest plant and animal control. Most of the project cost is to pay specialist contractors.
- 38 This project meets all the Heritage Fund criteria; therefore it is recommended that funds be approved as requested.

266 SH 1 North, Ōtaki

- 39 This is a natural heritage management project to maintain a grove of significant oak trees and a rare espaliered pear tree on the grounds of an historic Ōtaki cottage. One of the three oak trees was planted when the cottage was built in 1888, and the other two in the grove were planted in 1915. The oaks are listed together as T64 on the District Plan Heritage Register.
- 40 The oak trees require the removal of dead wood and limbs growing close to buildings.
- 41 The espaliered pear tree, listed as T97 on the District Plan Heritage Register, was planted by the cottage's original owners and is believed to be the oldest and largest espaliered pear tree in the country.
- 42 Regular maintenance of the tree by an arbourist is needed to preserve its form and to secure stays that support branches.
- 43 The owner has applied for **\$740** out of a project cost of **\$1,480** and has supplied a quote for the work from a certified arborist.
- 44 This project meets the Heritage Fund criteria for natural heritage management; therefore it is recommended that funds be approved as requested.

516 SH 1, Waikanae

- 45 On 26 April 2011 a severe gale damaged a 130-year-old Redwood tree planted on a property that was once the home of Henry Elder, a prominent early Waikanae settler, and one of the district's biggest colonial era landowners.
- 46 The current owners believed that the tree was protected, because when they bought the property 16 years ago the tree bore a plastic plaque identifying it as such. Since then the tree's bark has grown over the plaque; only a small part remains visible.
- 47 A large limb broke off the tree from the trunk, destroying a garage and two vehicles inside. The owners were concerned that the tree posed a hazard to their nearby house, but they wanted to preserve the tree because they believed it was a protected heritage feature and it was also integral to the character of the historic property. A certified arborist reported that the tree could be made safe by the installation of a customised bracing and bolting system.
- 48 The owners decided to engage the arborist to install the protective bracing system, and to apply to the Heritage Fund for a contribution to the \$8,273 cost of the project.
- 49 The tree is not listed on the Heritage Register of the District Plan. Documentation on significant trees goes no further back than 1997, when the District Plan was reviewed, and there is no record of the tree in that documentation. It is likely that the tree was once protected under older local government provisions, and that for reasons unknown it was not included when the list of significant trees was updated during the last District Plan review.
- 50 According to the Heritage Fund guidelines, a heritage feature does not have to be listed in the District Plan Heritage Register at the time funding is applied for; it is sufficient for there to be agreement to the feature's registration. Because of its age and historical links with an important figure in the early European settlement of Waikanae, the tree fulfils the criteria for listing on the register as a significant tree. The owners have agreed with Council officers that the tree should be listed in the register as part of the current District Plan review, therefore the owner's application is in accordance with the Heritage Fund guidelines.
- 51 The application is for **\$4137** out of a project cost of **\$8273**; it is recommended that funds be approved as requested.

Financial Considerations

- 52 If funding is approved as recommended, **\$28,015** of the **\$28,269** in the 2011-2012 Heritage Fund budget will be allocated. There are no other financial considerations.

Legal Considerations

- 53 There are no legal considerations.

Delegation

- 54 The Environment and Community Development Committee has delegated authority to consider this matter. Reference Section B.1 of the Governance Structure reads:

7.1 Authority to develop (within any wider existing strategic framework) policies and work programmes that support the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the community. This authority encompasses the power to:

- *Have oversight of all cultural, arts and heritage matters.*

Policy Implications

- 55 There are no policy implications from this report.

Publicity Considerations

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

CONCLUSION

- 57 Applications for the Heritage Fund received this year are all considered eligible. Should the recommended funds be approved, conservation projects estimated to cost more than \$145,000 will be enabled. The funds would support the protection in perpetuity of 21ha of lowland forest, and assist the protective management of 55.7ha of wetland and 9.35ha of mature and regenerating native forest. In addition, support would be provided for the maintenance of significant trees on two properties in accordance with Council policy.
- 58 Much of Kāpiti's threatened indigenous biodiversity survives in scattered remnants on private land. Protecting such remnants is one of the foremost objectives of national, regional and local government biodiversity policies. This year's Heritage Fund allocations will support the achievement of that objective by encouraging private landowners to protect and enhance significant natural heritage features, thereby fulfilling the intent of the Fund's creation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

59 That the Environment and Community Development Committee approve funding to applicants from the Heritage Fund as set out in the following table.

Project	Total Project Cost	Requested Assistance	Recommended Assistance
95 Panorama Drive, Paraparaumu	\$17,099	\$2,599	\$2,599
152 Te Hapua Road, Te Horo	\$6,010	\$3,005	\$3,005
266 SH North, Ōtaki	\$1,480	\$740	\$740
32 Park Avenue, Waikanae	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
66 Smithfield Rd, Waikanae	\$3,000	\$1,500	\$1,500
25 Hadfield Road, Te Horo	\$13,246	\$3,311	\$3,311
418 Ōtaki Gorge Rd, Ōtaki	\$80,000	\$4,348	\$4,348
234 Te Hapua Rd, Ōtaki	\$6,750	\$3,375	\$3,375
516 SH1, Waikanae	\$8,273	\$4,137	\$4,137
Total	\$145,858	\$28,015	\$28,015

Report prepared by:

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ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 1 – Location of Heritage Fund Projects 2010-2011

Appendix 2 – Site photographs

Appendix 3 – Heritage Fund Criteria and Guidelines

Appendix 4 – Council resolution 10.20.17, 4 October 2001