

Chairperson and Subcommittee Members
GRANT ALLOCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

20 JANUARY 2015

Meeting Status: **Public**

HERITAGE FUND ALLOCATIONS 2014-15

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 2014-2015 have been received requesting a total of \$34,310, substantially more than the \$30,484 available for allocation this year. All the projects meet the funding criteria, making it necessary to prioritise allocations based on careful consideration of project needs and priorities set out in the fund criteria. The amounts recommended should enable all of the projects to proceed.
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

234 Te Hapua Road, Te Horo

7. This is a natural heritage management project for a wetland registered as an ecological site on the District Plan Heritage Register (site number KO55). The wetland comprises 4.1ha placed under QE II Trust 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*.
8. 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.
9. 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. As the landowners have aged – they are in their 70's – they have found it difficult to do the amount of hard manual work required. The application is for financial assistance (**\$2340** out of a project cost of **\$4680**) to employ a labourer to work with the landowners for three hours per week for 26 weeks, enabling the landowners to cope.
10. In 2013-14 the landowners were granted \$2,419 from the Heritage Fund for the same purpose. Council's Biodiversity Advisor subsequently visited the property and found excellent progress being made in establishing native plants across large areas to buffer the wetland. Environmental weeds were under control and a pest animal trapping network was well maintained.
11. This project meets the Heritage Fund criteria as this wetland has the highest priority for Natural Heritage Protection. The amount requested in Heritage Fund applications exceeds the funding available, making it necessary to prioritise applications. A smaller grant would not jeopardise this project and would still be appreciated by the landowners. Therefore it is recommended that **\$2014** is granted.

313 Reikorangi Road, Waikanae

11. This is a natural heritage management project to enhance Bluff Hill Bush, a 13.3ha remnant of kohekohe/tawa forest above the Waikanae River.
12. Bluff Hill Bush is protected by QE II Trust covenant and listed as Ecological Site K078 in the District Plan Heritage Register. Because of its size, quality

and location the remnant is classified as regionally significant. Greater Wellington Regional Council has included Bluff Hill in its Key Native Ecosystem programme for the top biodiversity sites in the region.

13. In addition to covenanting Bluff Hill Bush, the owners have fenced, retired pasture, planted streams on their farm and controlled pest animals such as possums, stoats and rats.
14. They seek support for planting native trees in retired pasture around Bluff Hill to enlarge the bush and stop colonisation of the margins by weeds such as barberry and blackberry. Without assisted restoration the margins will be slow to regenerate and weeds will be a long term problem for the covenant and the surrounding farm.
15. The application is for **\$3,000** out of a total project cost of **\$6,000** to plant areas such as the steep slope shown in the picture in Attachment 2. The funds would be used to buy ecologically sourced native plants from a local grower, and to subsidise planting costs. The owners would prepare the site by controlling invasive weeds, assist with planting and maintain the plants for five years to ensure establishment.
16. The application meets the Heritage Fund criteria. Bluff Hill covenant is a high priority for protective management. As reducing the amount granted could discourage the landowner from proceeding, it is recommended that funds are granted as requested.

95 Panorama Drive, Paraparaumu

17. 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.
18. 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 Raumati Escarpment (Matai Huka) and Kaitawa Reserve, both of which are undergoing restoration.
19. 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 **\$970** out of a project cost of **\$1,925** to expand a network of bait stations and kill traps to control possums, stoats, rats, feral cats and hedgehogs.
20. In 2012-13 the landowners were granted \$3,500 to establish the network, to control invasive weeds and to plant native plants. Council's Biodiversity Advisor subsequently monitored outcomes and last visited the property in September 2014. The pest animal control network was exemplary and severe weed infestations had been controlled across the property.

21. The project meets the Heritage Fund criteria. The landowner's contribution is much greater than the amount stated in the application. Their outstanding pest animal control efforts merit full support, not least because they help protect Kaitawa Reserve; therefore it is recommended that funds are granted as requested.

Waiorongomai Road, Ōtaki

22. 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.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. Ngā Hapu o Ōtaki member Aroha Spinks is coordinating 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.
26. Greater Wellington Regional Council has contributed more than \$50,000 to fence the lake and its connection to the sea via Waiorongomai Stream.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. Restoring Lake Waiorongomai is an ambitious long-term undertaking that will have significant ecological and social benefits. The project meets the Heritage Fund criteria. The amount requested in Heritage Fund applications exceeds the funding available, making it necessary to prioritise applications. Reducing the amount granted will not affect the success of this project, therefore it is recommended that **\$4,000** is granted.

1400 Ōtaki Gorge Road, Ōtaki

30. 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 KO17 and is almost entirely covered with native bush, including patches of primary forest on steep faces that escaped logging.

31. 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.
32. Pest animal control on this block complements intensive control on adjacent Department of Conservation land conducted as part of 'Project Kaka', an innovative ecological management initiative designed to improve biodiversity in selected areas of the Tararua Forest Park.
33. 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 **\$1,500** toward the **\$3,000** 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.
34. 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 Advisor subsequently visited the property and found that the funds were spent effectively, with pest plants and animals controlled across a large area.
35. This project meets the Heritage Fund criteria for natural heritage management. The amount requested in Heritage Fund applications exceeds the funding available, making it necessary to prioritise applications. As reducing the amount granted would jeopardise this project, it is recommended that funds are granted as requested.

516 SH 1, Waikanae

36. 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 Bridge.
37. 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 KO71. It adjoins Council owned reserve land on the south bank of the Waikanae River upstream from the main trunk rail bridge.
38. 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.
39. 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.

40. The landowner has applied for **\$5,000** 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.
41. In 2013-14 the landowner was granted \$4,000 for stage one of the programme. Specialised weed control contractors were engaged and their work monitored by Council's Biodiversity Advisor. Initial control of environmental weeds was achieved across most of the covenant, but follow-up work is required.
42. The application meets the criteria for a natural heritage management project. The amount requested in Heritage Fund applications exceeds the funding available, making it necessary to prioritise applications. Though reducing the amount granted would reduce the amount of pest plant control done this season, it would not jeopardise the effectiveness of the long-term programme. Therefore it is recommended that **\$4,000** is granted.

99 Belvedere Avenue, Waikanae

43. This is a Natural Heritage Management Project to control invasive weeds in a highly valued area of bush and wetland listed in the District Plan Heritage Register as Ecological Site K133.
44. The site includes Nga Manu Nature Reserve and Jack's Bush and is one of the largest (44ha) and best swamp forest remnants in Foxton Ecological District, containing regionally significant sequences between wetland, swamp forest and dune forest.
45. For the last decade Council biodiversity staff have collaborated with landowners and Greater Wellington Regional Council to control pest plants and animals that damage native ecosystems.
46. Though excellent progress has been made, the site's large size and peri-urban location present challenges that can only be overcome by sustained long-term efforts.
47. To that end one of the largest landowners has applied to the Heritage Fund for **\$5,000** out of a project cost of **\$10,000** to control weeds such as *Parsiflora tripartita* (banana passionfruit), *Lonicera japonica* (Japanese honeysuckle) and *Rubus fruticosus* (blackberry) that pose serious threats to swamp forest and wetlands.
48. The project complements work being done by Greater Wellington Regional Council on the property, as well as the wider programme that includes the entire site.
49. The amount requested in Heritage Fund applications exceeds the funding available, making it necessary to prioritise applications. A smaller grant would enable the most important work within Ecological Site K133 to proceed without compromising the long-term pest plant control programme. Therefore it is recommended that **\$4,500** is granted.

150 Taylors Road, Ōtaki

50. This is a Natural Heritage Management Project to protect Pukehou Swamp, a 24.7 hectare wetland north of Ōtaki identified as Ecological Site KO13 on the District Plan's Heritage Register.
51. Pukehou Swamp is the best and largest example of wetland-swamp forest associations in the Manawatu Plains Ecological District. These associations once dominated the landscape between Paekākāriki and Foxton, but have been reduced to small and scattered remnants. Pukehou is considered regionally significant and is therefore a priority for biodiversity protection. In addition to providing habitat for native birds it is noted for containing rare plant species (*Korthalsella salicornioides*, *Hypolepsis distans* and *Doodia australis*).
52. Pukehou Swamp is threatened by widespread infestations of invasive weed species such as Japanese honeysuckle, pampas, old man's beard, blackberry and grey willow. For the last 10 years Kāpiti Coast District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council biodiversity staff have collaborated to encourage landowners who own parts of the swamp to control invasive weeds.
53. Following a meeting between Council staff and landowners at which Council assistance was discussed, an application was received requesting **\$5,000** out of a project cost of **\$10,000** for control of invasive weeds in the wetland at 150 Taylors Road, Ōtaki. Council staff would oversee a control programme by specialised contractors this autumn.
54. The project meets the Heritage Fund criteria. Controlling invasive weeds in Pukehou Swamp is essential to protecting and improving its high values. The amount requested in Heritage Fund applications exceeds the funding available, making it necessary to prioritise applications. Reducing the amount granted will enable the most important work to proceed and will not jeopardise this long-term project. Therefore it is recommended that **\$4,500** is granted.

113 Arcus Road, Te Horo

55. This is a Natural Heritage Management Project to enhance a Hautere Plains forest remnant listed in the District Plan Heritage register as ecological site KO48.
56. The 2.75ha totara-matai-titoki remnant is one of the largest examples of this under-represented forest type in Foxton Ecological District, making it a high priority for protection.
57. Though fenced and retired from grazing, the remnant is threatened by invasive weeds such as *Tradescantia fluminensis* (Wandering jew) and *Rhamnus alaternus* (Evergreen buckthorn). Decades of grazing meant there were not enough replacements for trees that died, leaving gaps in the bush where weeds thrive.
58. The landowners plan to restore the remnant by eradicating weeds and planting appropriate local native plants in gaps and around the margins. They are following advice from Council's Biodiversity Advisor on how best to proceed.

59. The application is for **\$3,000** out of a project cost of **\$6,000** to buy native plants and pay a specialised contractor to control weeds.
60. This project meets the Heritage Fund criteria and requires the amount requested to meet its objectives; therefore it is recommended that **\$3,000** is granted.

State Highway 1, Ōtaki

61. 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.
62. 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.
63. 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.
64. Since 2008 Council's Biodiversity Advisor has collaborated with Greater Wellington Regional Council biodiversity staff to help the trust manage the forest by controlling pest plants and animals.
65. This collaboration resulted in meetings this 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.
66. Fenced areas will be planted by Te Wananga O Raukawa students using the forest for conservation and environmental studies.
67. The application is for **\$3,000** out of a project cost of **\$8,000**. Greater Wellington Regional Council will contribute \$5,000 as part of its Key Native Ecosystem programme.
68. Haruatai Forest is a high priority for protection and the application meets the Heritage Fund criteria. Reducing the amount granted would jeopardise this project, therefore it is recommended that funds are granted as requested.

Financial Considerations

69. If funding is approved as recommended, the 2014-2015 Heritage Fund budget will be entirely allocated. There are no other financial considerations.

Legal Considerations

70. There are no legal considerations.

Policy Implications

71. There are no policy implications associated with this report.

Significance of Decision

72. This matter is not deemed significant under the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

Publicity Considerations

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

74. 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
234 Te Hapua Rd, Ōtaki	\$4,680	\$2,340	\$2,014
313 Reikorangi Road, Waikanae	\$6,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
95 Panorama Drive, Paraparaumu	\$1,925	\$970	\$970
Waiorongomai Road, Ōtaki	\$60,000	\$5,000	\$4,000
1400 Ōtaki Gorge Road	\$4,800	\$1,500	\$1,500
516 SH1, Waikanae	\$2,655	\$5,000	\$4,000
99 Belvedere Avenue, Waikanae	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$4,000
150 Taylors Road, Ōtaki	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$4,500
113 Arcus Road, Te Horo	\$7,000	\$3,500	\$3,500
State Highway 1, Ōtaki	\$8,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Total	\$116,972	\$34,310	\$30,484

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ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 1 – Location of Heritage Fund Projects 2013-14

Appendix 2 – Site Photographs

Appendix 3 – Heritage Fund Criteria and Guidelines