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Committee Environment Committee
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Special Projects update

1. Purpose

This report is to update the Environment Committee on the status of key Special Projects currently underway in the Environment Management Division.

2. Stormwater Action Plan

Greater Wellington is developing a draft Stormwater Action Plan (SWAP) in conjunction with representatives from all territorial authorities in the region. It is a non-statutory document that provides an overview of stormwater issues facing the region, summarises initiatives taken to date, defines agreed actions for the coming year, and provides references to key information resources. Further background was provided in a paper to this Committee on 20 February 2007.

Although territorial authorities agree with the objectives and approach, they have shown little enthusiasm for committing to organisation-specific action items (preferring collective actions co-ordinated by GWRC). Key outcomes of workshops to discuss the draft document were as follows:

- 23 action items were confirmed (see **Attachment 1**), under the categories of Planning, Investigations, Enforcement and Education (14 actions for GWRC and 9 to be jointly implemented).
- The SWAP would be published annually at the end of September, to coincide with necessary budget and project planning rounds.
- Reference will be made to related stormwater initiatives being undertaken by the Road Controlling Authorities Forum (stormwater quality guide), the Catchment Management Division's ('Watercourses Agreement' for the Wairarapa), and Local Government New Zealand (national standard for flood risk management).

Greater Wellington has already implemented some SWAP actions, namely:

- An application was made to MfE's Sustainable Management Fund, for \$85,000 to assist with the development of a computer based interactive stormwater education tool. All regional councils strongly supported this project, as did several national education groups and the NZ Water & Wastes Association. However, this application was declined.
- A 'regionalized' universal soil loss equation (USLE) has been developed on our web site, with Wellington-specific default values to make it easy to use. This assists those doing earthworks to estimate likely soil loss, and guides them in selecting appropriate erosion and sediment control measures.

3. Wind Resource Mapping

Work is currently underway to map the region's wind resource to provide baseline information and improve our understanding of possible development opportunities and pressures. This is a joint initiative between the Environment Management Division and the Water Supply, Parks and Forests Division, and is being conducted in consultation with all territorial authorities in the region.

We intend to make this information publicly available via our web site (if it is technically feasible to do so). Making this information available should broaden the understanding of the wind resource in the region, and will be relevant to a broad cross section of the community. Possible users of this information include following:

- Regulators (to develop appropriate policy and planning tools to balance wind resource harvesting with other considerations, such as regional development and amenity value).
- Landowners and investors¹ (to identify and assess potential development opportunities).
- Interest groups (to evaluate development opportunities and threats for their community or interest).

Proposals were invited from five consultancies with computer models capable of developing a suitable wind resource map. We have chosen to commission NIWA to undertake a \$20,000 modeling and mapping exercise, which will be completed early in the next financial year.

We are well aware that the growing wind resource development is imposing new pressures on planners and regulators in the future. When implementing its Regional Policy Statement commitments, the Council needs to objectively balance the economic benefits of wind power generation against the associated adverse environmental effects (e.g. on landscape, ecosystems and amenity). We believe that preparing this map will provide a basis for us to do so, by identify potential conflict situations in advance of development proposals, thereby enabling us to make necessary preparations.

¹ Several large power utilities have already conducted similar mapping exercises for their own purposes, and so are unlikely to use this map.

4. Communication

At this stage, no further public communication is necessary for this report.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report; and*
- 2. Notes the content.*

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Attachment 1: Confirmed Action items for the Storm water Action Plan