



## **Submission of Civic Trust Auckland**

### **Draft Regional Parks Management Plan**

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#### **Civic Trust Auckland**

Civic Trust Auckland is a non-profit public interest group, incorporated in 1968, with activities and interests throughout the greater Auckland region.

The aims of the Trust include:

- Protection of natural landforms
- Preservation of heritage, in all its aspects
- Encouragement of good planning, for the City and Region.

“Heritage” includes:

- **Natural** (landforms, sites, localities)
- **Built** (buildings, fixed artifacts, street furniture)
- **Objects** (sculpture, murals, vehicles, machinery)
- **Cultural / intangible** (Maori, early settler, other historical, archeological, place names).

The Trust works to assist the various regional and local authorities and other relevant bodies to save and preserve all heritage of importance and to help construct a better future built environment.

#### **The Regional Parks Management Plan**

Civic Trust Auckland recognises and celebrates Auckland’s regional parks as highly valuable assets for the region and commends the Auckland Regional Council on its careful and thorough management of the parks to date. The parks are world class and the quality of experience is high.

The Trust supports strongly the majority of the policies and practices described in the draft plan.

We are pleased to note at **9.1 Explanation** that:

*“All parks have been surveyed for cultural heritage sites and ongoing assessment of these sites will be undertaken to determine their value and significance”.*

We observe that the management of the parks involves many and varied aspects and that careful attention has been paid to detail in the plan both to management in general as well as to the different characters of the parks.

In terms of Civic Trust Auckland’s aims, we commend the intention expressed in **management principle 3**:

*“The council will work with other public agencies, adjoining communities and landowners to protect the integrity of the regional parks from visual intrusion, noise, and other environmental threats, and to enhance the ecological and landscape context of the parks and recreational opportunities”.*

Civic Trust Auckland recognises both the parks’ value to the people of the region, for example, in terms of landscape, recreation and heritage, and also the management challenges that the ARC faces in striving for a balance between use and protection while recognising changes in society and the pressure of development, and achieving sustainability so that the parks are available for future generations.

We appreciate the inclusion of a section on climate change.

We note that some restoration or control activities will not be undertaken or are given lower priority because of lack of resources. We are hopeful that this might change in the future.

The Trust notes the emphasis on educating the people of the Auckland region about the value of the parks themselves and also the wide range of experiences available for users of the parks, including hands-on activities.

The Trust acknowledges the huge amount of time and resources put into the parks and the ongoing commitment expressed in the plan to the management of the parks for the benefit of the people of the region. We observe that a large number of people within the region enjoy a relationship with the parks, not just the visitors but also the many volunteers.

### **Submissions**

NB All submissions relate to Volume 1 of the plan.

#### **Part 3.4 Future Regional Parks**

Our submission is:

The Trust supports future acquisition for the purpose of regional parks of interlinking open spaces close to and within urban populations, including in particular:

1. The extended Chelsea area
2. Wynyard areas
3. Maungataketake, being an extension of the Otuataua Stonefields through to McLauchlan’s Mountain (the Stonefields needing special protection)
4. Puketomo, also known as Crater Hill, at Puhinui.

We would also like to see the volcanic cones in the Auckland region incorporated as future regional parks.

#### **Part 4.1, principle 7: Protecting the park heritage features and telling the region’s stories**

Our submission is:

The Trust supports this principle and would like to be kept informed on how this is to be implemented for the individual parks.

#### **Part 4.1, principle 10: Managing the regional parks network as a whole and as part of a network of regional open spaces**

Our submission is:

We support the development of biking trials, equestrian trails and the like and note the provision of a walkway/cycleway in Omana Regional Park.

We would like to see the consideration of linking the northern regional parks from Long Bay up to Te Arai by cycle routes, perhaps as part of the national cycleway.

We would like to see the development of cycle routes linking the train stations in the south such as Otahuhu and Middlemore to Ambury Regional Park (which has an established cycling route) and the development of cycle routes which connect the north western cycle route with

Waitakere Regional Park and also connecting the Western train stations from Glen Eden through to Swanson via a cycle route to Waitakere Regional Park.

We support the investigation of the provision for family cycling on Exhibition Drive and its link to Arataki (74 under "Arataki Visitor Centre and precinct").

The development of cycle routes linking the parks to each other and/or public transport nodes also supports principle 8 (Minimising the impacts of development) and addresses the carbon footprint of the parks as outlined in 5.6 Explanation (f) as well as the issue of making the parks more accessible for people who do not have a private car.

Consideration could also be given to the use of free bikes within or between certain parks, perhaps following the model of the white bikes at the Kröller Müller Museum in The Netherlands.

The Trust appreciates the careful consideration given in each park to car parking needs and the reluctance to increase car parking. However the Trust believes that any plans to reduce car-parking should be made alongside improved public transport.

#### **Part 5.6 Management Tools - Explanation - radios and cell phones**

Our submission is:

We are aware that visitors are encouraged to behave appropriately through brochures, notice boards, park codes of conduct and public meetings. We observe that most park visitors would not access and read the relevant bylaws and there is nothing in the code of conduct that addresses the use of radios and cell phones in the parks. We consider that notice boards are the most likely medium to be attended to by most park visitors, with brochures being next.

The changes we would like are:

That the code of conduct be expanded under "Be considerate of others" to ban radios from the parks, including the use of car radios, and that visitors are encouraged to be considerate of other park users as regards cell phone use. These additions to the code of conduct should be notified on the already existing park sign boards,

#### **Part 5.7.3 Research, monitoring and benchmarking**

Our submission is:

We support the intention of the ARC to undertake research on the use and needs of park users and would like to be kept informed of this research.

#### **Part 6.2.2 Explanation - Park Sustainability Programme**

Our submission is:

We support this programme and the use of low-carbon and renewable energy sources and low impact technology.

We would like to see this programme showcased to the public, e.g. through a summary document made available to the public via a website / libraries / the Arataki Information Centre, as well as in the various brochures about the individual parks, and possible public presentations.

#### **Part 7.1 Reinstating traditional names**

Our submission is:

We are interested to know which parks, parts of parks and park features are being considered for reinstating traditional names and would like to be kept informed about proposed changes. We support the reintroduction of original Māori names where possible and take a long-term view in this respect.

#### **Part 10 - Farmed Settings**

Our submission is:

That the plan ensures that livestock operations are a direct function of the regional parks management structure and not contracted out unless for specialist advisory services.

#### **Part 11.1.1.8 New Immigrants and Refugees**

Our submission is:

The Trust supports the intention to *“Provide programmes, events and guided trips that introduce the public, and particularly new immigrants and refugees, to the regional parks and their values”*.

We would like to know how this is being implemented.

#### **Part 11.2.2 Ranger service**

Our submission is:

As regards objective 11.2.2: *“To protect, restore and enhance the park values and maximize the park visitor access to and safe enjoyment of the regional parks through the provision of a ranger service”* we submit that it is important to ensure that a park ranger service is retained as a direct function of the Auckland Regional Council/the body which replaces it or the new Auckland Council and not contracted out.

#### **Part 11.2.6 - Volunteers and partnerships**

Our submission is:

We support the willingness of the ARC to work with volunteers in a variety of ways as expressed in policies 11.2.6.1 - 11.2.6.8. The change we would like is to see volunteers and NGO partnerships play a greater role in the management of the regional parks. We would also like to see the formation of an honorary ranger service.

#### **Part 12.1 Explanation - use by persons with disabilities**

Our submission is:

We note that this section states, *“Some of the parks or parts of the parks are, however, remote and generally inaccessible to people with limited mobility”*. There are special needs young people and adults who are mobile who would enjoy using these remote parks.

The changes we would like are:

That consideration be given in all the parks to the provision of toilets and baby change areas that cater for special needs users who may need assistance with toileting.

#### **Part 11.1.2 Park visitor wellbeing**

Our submission is:

Park use includes the summer months and some activities within the parks will be on the beach or out in the open. Exposure of skin to the sun for long periods of time is a danger.

The changes we would like are:

That toilet facilities within the parks include the provision of sunblock.

That tsunami risk be recognized and clear signage provided in coastal reserves as to what to do in the situation of impending tsunami. There should be safety havens constructed, otherwise signage should indicate that visitors visit at their own risk.

#### **Part 11.1.4 Smoke free regional parks**

Our submission is:

We congratulate the ARC on this policy, for the reasons given in the plan. However, we are of the view that smokers should not be discouraged from using the parks. As stated in the plan at 1.1 the parks are *“places where people gain respite from the pressures of everyday life and re-create their spirit, in association with one another and with nature”*. It is our view that this should be inclusive of all people.

The changes we would like are:

That the plan gives consideration to providing a smokers' zone within or adjacent to at least some of the parks, such as a designated seat (as in Perth Zoo, for example) in an area where smoking and the disposal of cigarette butts (whether thoughtfully or thoughtlessly) has minimal environmental impact and fire risk. Furthermore, it needs to be made clear to the public whether smoking would be permitted within private vehicles in parks, and we note that this would be at odds with the ongoing campaign for smoke-free cars.

#### **Part 11.2.3 Promotion and information services**

Our submission is that we support Objective 11.2.3 *“To ensure the public are aware of and can enjoy what the regional parks network has to offer through promotion and information services”*.

The change we would like is that where possible each regional park has brochures on site giving information about all the other regional parks.  
Furthermore, we have discussed the masterpiece frames and may wish to make some points in this regard at the oral hearing.

### **Part 11.3.3 Dogs**

Our submission is:

We note under this section that *“New opportunities will be considered during the development of concept plans for all new regional parks”* regarding allowing dogs in parks.

The changes we would like are:

There should be a number of parks in different parts of the Auckland region that remain dog-free, to cater for park users of all ages who have a fear of dogs, and for the protection of animals in parks, particularly the ground birds.

### **Parts 12.1.3, 12.2.3, 12.5.1 - Vistas and views**

Our submission is:

We support the policies providing for the protection of vistas and views as outlined in these sections in particular, and, as noted below in our part 14 point, would like to be consulted on potential changes to these.

### **Part 12.3 Tracks**

Our submission relates to objective 12.3 *“To provide tracks on regional parks that do not detract from the park values and that enhance the enjoyment of park users,”* and under 12.3.1. Walking Tracks, *“These will be on easy to moderate grades with drained surfaces with limited provision of steps on excessively steep (sic) areas and bridging over permanent waterways”* and the following factor under 12.3.2 to be considered in relation to realigning existing tracks, *“improving the accessibility and comfort of visitors, safety and efficient maintenance”*.

The change we would like is that where there are steps, that the step at either end of the series of steps be the same height as the rest of the steps. Currently some of these end steps are higher than all the others, which is for some people, at best, uncomfortable, and at worst a safety hazard, as, having to negotiate a large step at the end of a series of steps, particularly after walking for several hours, can lead to injury. It is generally recognised as a safe design principle that all steps in a flight should be of uniform dimensions.

### **Part 12.5 Signs and notice boards**

Our submission is that a number of spelling errors have been noticed on signs.

The change we would like is that more careful proof-reading of the text for signs be undertaken.

### **Part 13.3 Transfer of Management**

Our submission is:

In response to the statement in this section. *“Any transfers [of land] will need to be undertaken following consultation with the community”*, Civic Trust Auckland wishes to be consulted on any proposals of transfer of management and in general opposes any transfers away from public ownership. It recognizes the need for licenses and leases in certain controlled circumstances.

### **Part 14 Implementation of the plan**

Our submission is:

In response to the following statement in this section: *“Ongoing consultation with the park stakeholders and community groups will also be an important component in ensuring delivery of this plan remains relevant to park users over time,”* Civic Trust Auckland, as a community group with aims that are relevant to the development and maintenance of the parks, wishes to be consulted about the implementation of the plan, especially in the areas of heritage as outlined in the following sections of the plan: 9 (Cultural heritage settings) and 12 (as regards protecting views and vistas).

Under objective 14.4, we wish that future governance of the parks includes an ongoing relationship with Civic Trust Auckland.

**Part 15.1.3 Ambury Regional Park - animals in distress**

Our submission is:

Visitors to Ambury Regional Park have observed a farm animal in difficulties and regretted their inability to do something to help.

The changes we would like are:

In accordance with 10.3.2 (f) *“ensure all animals suffering from injury or disease will be treated in an appropriate manner”* and (g) *“have a high level of surveillance and response times through the duty ranger service”*, that (1) there be made available instructions on how to assist animals in distress, and (2) the ranger’s contact details be made readily available.

Regarding (1), we note in part 5.6 Explanation that on-site interpretation *“can also be used to teach people about appropriate responses to situations on the park, such as safety issues, or issues requiring a particular response”* and consider that this would be an appropriate means to educate the public about how to respond to an animal in distress.

**Part 15.1.3 Ambury Regional Park - rabbits**

Our submission is:

Visitors to Ambury Regional Park have observed that the rabbits do not appear to be housed appropriately.

The changes we would like are:

In accordance with 10.3.2. Explanation *“Animal welfare considerations are becoming increasingly important for the management and farming of animals, both in New Zealand and internationally,”* that consideration be given to providing the rabbits with more suitable living quarters.

**Part 15.18 Waharau Regional Park**

Our submission is:

The Auckland Astronomical Society uses this park for its “Black Sky Weekends” (or “Dark Sky Weekends”) as it is a park with overnight facilities within easy reach of Auckland City where the night sky has minimal disturbance from city lights.

The changes we would like are:

That the Auckland Astronomical Society and the New Zealand Starlight Reserve Committee be consulted on their recommendations regarding the area of sky associated with Waharau Regional Park as a night sky reserve, similar to the Tekapo night sky reserve, which has restrictions on lights in the region. That all lighting in reserves and elsewhere in Auckland suburban and rural areas where artificial lighting is deemed necessary should adopt light shrouds to protect dark sky wherever possible as a basic principle.

**Part 15.19.5 Management Policies**

**Special Management Zones - Arataki Visitor Centre and precinct**

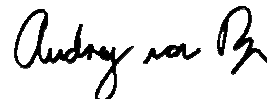
Our submission is that we support increasing events, and the changes we would like are more frequent rotation of the films and displays, to provide a more varied experience for returning visitors to the Centre.

I do wish to be heard at a Council Hearing in support for my submission.

If others are making a similar submission I would be prepared to consider presenting a joint case with them at a hearing.

Date of submission: 23 December 2009

Signature:



Board Member, Civic Trust Auckland