

# **SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**4 APRIL 2012**

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## **AGENDA ITEM C4**

### **LAKE DOMAIN RESERVE, FEATHERSTON – APPROVAL OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

To obtain approval for the development plan for Lake Domain Reserve, Featherston.

#### **Recommendations**

Officers recommend that the Council:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Approve the development plan for Lake Domain Reserve as detailed in Appendix 2 with the changes outlined in Section 2.2 of this report.*

## **1. Background**

Lake Domain is part of the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands only a few minutes from Featherston. It is an important ecological, recreational and amenity asset for Featherston residents and visitors providing a wild rugged escape.

The South Wairarapa District Council has worked with key stakeholders (including the Featherston Community Board) and with the help of landscape architect Rachel Callaghan to prepare a draft development plan that reflects the needs of the community and identifies actions that can easily be translated into on-the-ground works.

This plan sits under the Greater Wellington Concept Plan and is made up of two parts – the landscape development plan which is a visual representation of the proposed works; and a detailed list of works so the ideas can be translated into actions.

## **2. Discussion**

### **2.1 Feedback on the draft development plan**

Community consultation on the draft development plan was undertaken from 21 December 2011 to 17 February 2012. The draft was available in the Featherston library, key stakeholders were sent a copy of the draft, and there were articles in the local newspapers.

Sixteen submissions were received (four received late) with support for the key elements of the development plan. A summary of submissions is attached as Appendix 1.

Several submissions raised the issue of fire pits in the plan. There was some question about the safety of open fires and comment on other fire options. Officers discussed the points raised with Greater Wellington personnel and Council's Infrastructure and Services staff. It was agreed that while gas BBQs might be a nice idea, the logistics of installing and maintaining them at such an isolated spot may not be affordable or practical.

It was instead recommended that the (concrete pad) fire pits be retained but that they should be set in depressions to decrease any potential fire risk. Having designated areas for fires is considered far safer than having visitors light fires in unallocated areas. Appropriate signage outlining the different fire seasons and fire lighting restrictions is also essential.

Two submissions raised concerns about the recommended plantings and proposed areas of planting. Some of the plants identified in the draft plan were not endemic to the area, and/or were considered unsuitable for this particular environment. In addition, rare native sedges have begun regenerating along the lake margins and the plantings originally earmarked for the lake margin did not take account of this, or the sensitivity of the existing ecosystem. Officers met with Tony Silbery (DOC Biodiversity Officer) about these issues and his recommendations have been incorporated as minor changes to the development plan.

There was also some general criticism about development at the western end of the domain. The draft plan was developed with a view to concentrating efforts at the western recreation area to create a gateway to the lake and to encourage greater use of the reserve. Officers are of the view that the plan achieves this without needing to extend its scope.

## **2.2 Recommended changes to the draft development plan**

The following changes are recommended to the development plan:

- Include a requirement that fire pits are to be set in ground depressions.
- Remove references to plants that are not native to the area and replace with appropriate species.
- Minor changes to the plan to address concerns raised about lake margin planting.
- Minor amendment to plan to include a reference to the electricity Code of Practice and Electricity Regulations (this is in response to Powerco's submission).

These tracked changes have been included in the 'marked up' version of the draft development plan, which is attached as Appendix 2. If all of the changes are approved by Council they will be incorporated into the Lake Domain development plan.

### **3. Conclusion**

The development plan for Lake Domain Reserve has been a successful project in terms of engaging with the community. The approval of the plan by the Council will enable officers and the community to prepare a work programme for the implementation of the plan.

The key to the continued success of the project will be to ensure that the Council and the community uses the plan as a basis for work in the park and implements the plan as resources allow.

### **4. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Feedback on the Lake Domain draft development plan

Appendix 2 – Lake Domain Draft development plan

Prepared by: Vanessa Tipoki, Resource Manager Planner

Reviewed by: Glenn Bunny, Group Manager Planning and Environment

# **Appendix 1 – Feedback on the Lake Domain Draft Development Plan**

Name	Contact	Summary of feedback –	Suggestions	Officer comments	Recommendations
Richard Clark		Primary focus of the reserve should be the ecology of the area and water quality - fence waterways, educate farmers and sort out wastewater issues (starting with Featherston sewerage ponds).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No jet skis or trail bikes.</li> <li>- Keep pine trees, remove poplars.</li> <li>- BBQs should be gas only.</li> <li>- Security important.</li> </ul>	<p>Note that the whole of Lake Domain Reserve can be used for active recreation including jet skis and trail bikes.</p> <p>Agree that the most appropriate form of fire and fire setting needs to be determined.</p>	Retain poplar trees as the original Greater Wellington concept plan (that this development plan sits under) proposed keeping the existing poplars to “recognise European settlement activities”.
Wendy Diamond	Properties & Facilities Officer, SWDC	Supports the proposal.			
Garry Thomas	Featherston Community Board	Supports the proposal, particularly plantings and proposed upgrades to entrance and jetty.	Fire pits would be better set in a depression to prevent fire hazard.	Agree that the most appropriate form of fire and fire setting needs to be determined.	Recommend that fire pits are set in a depression and appropriate signage is in place for the different fire seasons.

Name	Contact	Summary of feedback –	Suggestions	Officer comments	Recommendations
Peter Gilbert	Heretaunga Boating Club & Wairarapa Yacht Club	Priorities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve boat ramp and jetty/indigenous plantings.</li> <li>2. Upgrade toilet and shelter block.</li> <li>3. Shelter planting.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Replace pines with more appropriate shelter belt planting.</li> <li>- Fire pits are too risky - gas BBQs set in enclosures would be more suitable.</li> </ul>		
Lee Carter	Featherston Community Board	Supports the proposal.	Sheltered communal area.		

Name	Contact	Summary of feedback –	Suggestions	Officer comments	Recommendations
Garry Foster	Department of Conservation	<p>Appendix 2 (recommended plantings) needs to be amended. Some of the outlined plants are not native to the area and/or are not suited to this particular environment.</p> <p>There are species of plants along the lake margins that are extremely rare and should be protected (includes <i>Carex buchananii</i> and <i>C. cirrhosa</i>).</p>	<p>Any proposed planting along the lake margin should be mindful of the existing nationally vulnerable plants with any proposed planting setback from the lake edge.</p> <p>Suggests meeting with Tony Silbery or Pat Enright (horticultural specialists).</p>	<p>Agree that plants should be sourced locally.</p> <p>Agree that existing native species along the lake margins should be protected.</p>	<p>Meeting held with Tony Silbery of the Department of Conservation.</p> <p>Recommend amending Appendix 2 to include more appropriate plant species.</p> <p>Recommend amending plan to restrict planting along lake margin as the existing ecosystem is already regenerating.</p> <p>Recommend officers work with other agencies and community groups to monitor vegetation along the lake margin.</p>

Name	Contact	Summary of feedback –	Suggestions	Officer comments	Recommendations
Porky Sexton	Featherston Community Board	<p>Top three priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mass shelter belt planting to the west of existing pines.</li> <li>2. Upgraded entranceway with information boards.</li> <li>3. Parking area at footbridge.</li> </ol>	Appropriate fire hazard signage is essential, especially at the eastern end of the reserve where weeds are largely uncontrolled.	Agree that fire risk signs should be placed on site.	Fire warning signs to be installed in appropriate locations.
Jo Johnson		<p>Agrees with proposal. Priorities listed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planting.</li> <li>2. Jetty.</li> <li>3. Shelter by toilets.</li> </ol>	Install gas BBQs (with nominal fee) around shelter/toilet area.	Agree that the most appropriate form of fire and fire setting needs to be determined.	



Name	Contact	Summary of feedback –	Suggestions	Officer comments	Recommendations
Debra Richards		There is insufficient manoeuvring space for campervans and motorhomes within the camping area. Unhappy that vehicle bridge on eastern side of reserve has been replaced with foot bridge – concerned that this has exacerbated fire risk and emergency services cannot access.	Fast-growing shelter plants are essential.	Reinstating the vehicle bridge is a major project and falls outside the scope of this development plan which focuses on the Western Recreation Area only.	
Peter Morgan	Friends of the Lake Domain Reserve	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planting within camping area will limit the amount of space available for use by campers.</li> <li>2. Western recreation area not suitable for camping until adequate shelter in place.</li> <li>3. Eastern area should have been included in development.</li> </ol>	Include eastern area in development. Weeds at this end of the reserve have become a fire risk.		

Name	Contact	Summary of feedback –	Suggestions	Officer comments	Recommendations
Kathryn Lacey	Powerco Limited	Powerco is neutral toward the development provided that any buildings, earthworks and vegetation within the vicinity of the overhead power lines comply with the New Zealand Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances NZECP 34:2001 (NZECP 34:2001) and the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003.		Agree that all existing vegetation and proposed plantings should be managed in accordance with the Code of Practice and Electricity Regulations.	Recommend minor changes to the plan to incorporate the Code of Practice and Electricity Regulations.
Gerard Nicholls	Featherston Walkways	<p>Supports the key design elements. Group would like to be involved with development at the site. Top three priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planting of native shelter belts.</li> <li>2. Linking the Domain to other walkways.</li> <li>3. Planting of lake margins.</li> </ol>	Improve access to the reserve by opening up Viles Road/South Soldiers Settlement Road.		

Name	Contact	Summary of feedback –	Suggestions	Officer comments	Recommendations
Mark Lovett		<p>Generally unhappy with proposal and would like development to be concentrated at Eastern end of the reserve.</p> <p>Is supportive of main entry landscaping, shelter and toilets, and entry signage.</p>	Install a bridge for vehicle access.	Reinstating the vehicle bridge is a major project and falls outside the scope of this development plan which focuses on the Western Recreation Area only.	
Geoff Doring	Forest & Bird Wairarapa	<p>Supports the proposal but would like motorbikes removed from the Eastern area.</p> <p>Top priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bird watching from Eastern end of reserve.</li> <li>2. Fire concerns.</li> <li>3. Information boards detailing native flora and fauna.</li> </ol>	<p>Information boards should show the entirety of Wairarapa Moana including other sites to visit (i.e. Onoke Spit).</p> <p>Lake Domain should be signposted on State Highway 2.</p>	Agree to extend scope of information boards.	Minor amendment to action plan replacing 'lake' with 'Wairarapa Moana'.

Name	Contact	Summary of feedback –	Suggestions	Officer comments	Recommendations
Philippa Crisp	Greater Wellington Regional Council	Some of the plant species listed in Appendix 2 are not considered appropriate for the reserve.	Should use plants that are eco-sourced and native to the site.	Agree that plants should be sourced locally.	Meeting held with Tony Silbery of the Department of Conservation.  Recommend amending Appendix 2 to include more appropriate plant species.
Tom Ward	Greater Wellington	Fire pits are inappropriate.  During normal summer months (when camping is at a peak) there are Restricted Fire Seasons (where any fire in the open would require a permit) and Prohibited Fire Seasons (no fires at all in the open). Traditionally the Prohibited Fire Season runs from mid-December through to March/April. These restrictions would apply to charcoal BBQs.	Install gas-operated BBQs. This has worked at Henley Lake.	Agree that the most appropriate form of fire and fire setting needs to be determined.  Gas BBQs were considered but it was decided that they were too costly and may become too difficult to maintain/police/operate.	Meeting held with Mark Allingham (Group Manager Infrastructure and Services) and Ian Richards (Roading and Reserves Manager).  Recommend that fire pits are retained but are set in a depression and appropriate signage is in place for the different fire seasons.

## **Appendix 2 – Lake Domain Draft Development Plan**

# LAKE DOMAIN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## Western Recreation Area

This document is the Action Plan for the Landscape Development Plan dated December 2011 (Appendix 1).

### KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

- Create a sense of arrival with built entry features, signage and native plants
- Wind shelter for campers and picnickers
- Concentrate camping facilities and shelter to the Western Recreation Area
- Incorporate native plantings throughout the Domain. Use native plants indigenous to the area (see Appendix 2).
- Enhance environmental education
- Use natural colours and materials for built structures
- Maintain and enhance views of the lake
- Encourage passive and active recreational groups to use the area and designate certain areas for certain users to avoid conflict between groups

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### MAJOR ACTIONS

#### Vegetation

1. Plant Native Shelter: Extend the existing shelter planting along boundaries and into the campground forming clusters to create nooks for camping. This initial planting may need to be fenced.
2. Detailed Edge Planting: Detailed edge planting along shelter fence structures.
3. Mass Shelter Planting to the West of Pine Trees: Planting intended to shelter the campground from the northwest wind. Once this is established, the mature pine trees can be strategically removed.
4. Landscaping with Native Plants: Use of native plants to enhance landscaping at the entrance and around built environments such as the toilet block.
5. Lake Margins: There are species of plants along the lake margins that are extremely rare and should be protected. Planting near the lake edge should be restricted to allow these plants to regenerate. Work with other agencies to monitor vegetation along the lake margin.

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6. Existing Pine Tree Shelterbelts: Plant natives in front of the pine shelter belt. Strategic removal of pines once the natives are established.
7. Existing Poplar Trees: Retain the Existing Poplar Trees.
8. Power Lines: All existing vegetation and proposed plantings within the vicinity of overhead power lines should be managed in accordance with the New Zealand Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances NZECP 34:2001 (NZECP 34:2001) and the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003.

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## Structures

1. Entry Landscaping: Replace the post and batten fencing at the domain entrance with low level rail fencing and landscape planting.
2. Artistic Signage: Install welcome and directional signs at the entry. Signposts made from chunky timber (eg bridge beams), with rusted steel signs, using laser cutting for wording and drawings. River stones at the base.
3. Wind Shelters: Build solid timber fences (approximately 1.8m high by 5m long) throughout the camping area orientated southwest to northeast to protect camp sites from the northwest wind.
4. Fire Pits: Construct several fire pit areas around the camp site for communal use and camp focus. The pits would be 5-6m in diameter, with central 1m diameter concrete pad (for build-your-own camp fire). Fire pits should be set in a depression to prevent fire hazards, with appropriate signage in place for the different fire seasons. Indestructible logs to be used as seating. BYO fire wood - or patio heaters during fire ban season.
5. Picnic Tables: At least six throughout the campground and grassed areas, particularly in sheltered areas.
6. Seats: At least six throughout the Domain, alongside walkways and off-road tracks.
7. Roofed Shelter: Build a roofed, three-walled shelter adjacent to toilet block, approximately 5m x 5m in size. Incorporate benches along the walls with a long dining table for communal use.
8. Water Provisions: An above-ground water tank for non-potable water (non-drinking) to be installed by the toilets. Investigate using the roofed shelter to collect rain water and/or utilise the existing bore.
9. Car Park and Turning Area at Toilets: Provide a turning area at the toilet block to minimise traffic through the campground. Low rails or bollards would help define the car area and a 3m-wide gap in the

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rails would allow campers' vehicles to access the unformed track through the campground.

10. Boat Ramp: Improve the existing boat ramp in conjunction with user groups.
11. Jetty: Investigate reinstating the jetty.
12. Fence Posts: Remove the fence that extends into the lake.
13. Traffic Management: Construct a 200mm high teardrop-shaped traffic island at the entranceway, adjacent to the cattle-stop. This would help prevent anti-social behaviour at the road end (i.e. cars doing burn-outs).

#### Recreational Activities

1. Walking/Mountain Bike Trails: Access tracks around the lake edge with links to Featherston via Turners Lagoon shall be developed over time as money and resources become available. These should recognise the sensitivity of the lake edge ecosystem.
2. Water Sports: (Windsurfing, jets skiing, yachting etc) Work with interest groups to maintain and enhance existing boat launch facilities, provide adequate trailer parking, and preserve windsurfer beach launch areas.
3. Educational Information: Provide information on the history, flora, and fauna of Wairarapa Moana. The camping ground shelter could contain larger information boards, while smaller interpretive signs could be located at various points around the Domain. User-targeted information about the wetlands could also be placed at the entry to Barton's Lagoon outlet (near the existing bridge).
4. Dogs: The Domain is often used by local residents as a place to exercise dogs without a lead. It is recognised that this is an important recreational use. However, dogs should be on leads around bird breeding habitats, and must be on leads within the fenced-off area of Barton's Lagoon. These areas can be appropriately signposted.

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#### OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

##### Eastern End of Domain

While it is not the focus of this development plan, these are recommendations for improving the eastern area of the Domain beyond the scope of the camping ground.



*Planting:* Shelter plant in pockets along the length of the roadway. Plant occasional groves of trees such as kahikatea and cabbage trees, with flaxes and sedges. Install picnic tables and seats.

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*Carpark at the Bridge (by Barton's Lagoon Outlet):* Upgrades are required to the road and car park at the bridge.

*Trail Bike Track:* It is agreed that an area should be set aside for use by motorbikes at the eastern end of the Domain. It is anticipated that the most suitable site will be the area already utilised by riders. Some investigation into the ecological value of the dunes by the Department of Conservation may be necessary with any identified areas to be fenced off.

*The Old Campsite:* It is unlikely that a vehicle bridge will be reinstated over Barton's Lagoon outlet. While camping can continue at the old campground at the eastern end of the Reserve, camping equipment would need to be carried to the site by foot. The Western Recreation Area is being developed for camping to concentrate development funding and to provide different recreational users with their own designated areas.

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*Wetland Restoration:* A huge amount of work by various agencies has already gone into restoring and protecting some wetland areas, particularly around Barton's Lagoon. There are further areas that may become available for restoration but these do not fall within the scope of this plan.

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## CONCLUSION

Camping, picnicking, walking, bird watching, mountain bikes, water sports, yachting, fishing, windsurfing, motorbikes, 4x4 vehicles, dogs – as with any multi-use public facility, consideration by all users will be key to the success of Lake Domain. Efforts have been made to designate areas for specific uses to reduce conflict between different groups.

This is an amazing resource to have on Featherston's doorstep. Coordinated and community-endorsed development such as this can only improve the area and truly make it something special for future generations to enjoy.

## **APPENDIX 1: DRAFT LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**







## APPENDIX 2 – RECOMMENDED PLANTINGS

Intended as a guide only - not a definitive species list for any or all of the areas.

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### INITIAL SHELTER SPECIES

- Coprosma lucida, C. robusta - karamu
- Cordyline australis – cabbage tree, ti kouka
- Elaeocarpus hookerianus - pokaka
- Hebe stricta – koromiko
- Hoheria sexstylosa – narrow leaved lacebark
- Kunzea ericoides - kanuka
- Leptospermum scoparium – manuka
- Melicytus micranthus – small leaved mahoe
- Melicytus ramiflorus subsp. ramiflorus – mahoe
- Myoporum laetum – ngaio
- Myrsine australis – red matipo
- Phormium tenax - flax
- Pittosporum eugenoides – tarata, lemonwood, P. tenuifolium - kohuhu
- Plagianthus regius – ribbon wood
- Podocarpus totara – totara
- Sophora microphylla - kowhai

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<#>Phormium cookianum and selected hybrids¶  
<#>Pimelia arenaria – sand daphne ¶  
<#>Poa cita – silver tussock¶  
<#>Pseudopanax ferox – fierce lancewood¶

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<#>Leptocarpus similis - Oioi¶  
<#>Phormium tenax – Harakeke¶  
<#>Plagianthus divaricatus – Saltmarsh ribbonwood¶

### SHELTERED EDGE PLANTING – decorative landscape plants

- Brachyglottis repanda
- Carex dissita, C. lessoniana, C. solandri, C. virgata
- Cortaderia fulvida – mini toetoe, C. toetoe – toetoe
- Eleocharis acuta
- Gahnia xanthocarpa
- Isolepis reticularis

### WETLAND PLANT SPECIES – grasses, sedges, rushes and other plants

- Carex secta, C. virgata
- Carex buechananii, C. cirrhosa
- Coprosma propinqua – mingimingi
- Cordyline australis – cabbage tree, ti kouka
- Cortaderia toetoe - toetoe
- Cyperus ustulatus - giant umbrella sedge
- Dacrycarpus dacrydioides – kahikatea