

## 8. SPENCER BEACH HOLIDAY PARK – LANDSCAPE PLAN

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	General Manager Community Services Group
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Recreation and Sports Unit Manager
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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval of the landscape plan (see attachment 1) for the Spencer Beach Holiday Park at Spencer Beach. This landscape plan will become part of the overall Management Plan which is being prepared by the Greenspace Unit for the Brooklands Lagoon and Spencer Park area.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The last overall Management Plan for Spencer Park was undertaken in 1982. The basis of that plan was to provide assistance with two distinct, but related aspects of reserve management as follows:
  - The promotion of a form of experience which combines the needs of the public and the enjoyment and appreciation of the Park's resources, without degrading of those resources.
  - The need to resolve conflicts which may arise because of different sectors of the public having different management and use expectations for the Park.
3. **The Policies on landscape of this plan were:**
  - To create a comprehensive landscape pattern which is sympathetic to the coastal environment and which links individual areas within the Park to form a coherent whole.
  - To assess the visual impact of major land use decisions for the Park.
4. **The Policies on vegetation were:**
  - To continue the revegetation and stabilisation programme on the dune areas.
  - To investigate the range of species suited to the physical conditions of the coastal site for shelter, drainage, interest and aesthetic reasons which would also provide suitable habitats and food sources for wildlife.
  - To follow a defined planting programme for the Park based on the above factors.
  - To continue to restrict access to the dunes in conjunction with a planting programme.
  - To protect and, wherever possible, supplement the indigenous vegetation and wetland areas.
5. There has been very little tree planting undertaken in the holiday camp area during the past 10 years since the facility has been leased. The increasing need to remove aging trees within the camping ground and along its boundaries has created the necessity of establishing a new landscape plan, replanting schedule and a list of trees that are suitable for this area.

### Consultation

6. The Greenspace Unit has involvement with the plan through Dieter Steinegg, Arborist, who has been consulted on the draft plan prior to its completion. The camping ground management staff have also had an input from an operational perspective.

7. The draft plan was made available for consultation during the 2004/05 summer season to enable regular campers to comment on the plan. A meeting was also held with interested campers during that time. Subsequent alterations were made to the plan and two focus group meetings were held with regular campers in early September 2005 resulting in the final plan being prepared.

8. **Vision for the New Landscape Plan**

As part of the landscape plan process the following vision was adopted.

***“Creating a choice of camping options while responding to the coastal environment”.***

9. **Replacement Plantings and New Plantings**

The camping ground area has been developed over a period since the 1930's when Pine shelter belts were planted on the perimeter. Further Pine plantings were undertaken in 1942 and other plantings have taken place over time. The Camp is still dominated by large Pine trees which are now becoming expensive to maintain. A number of Poplar rows have been created, with the largest being located on the southern boundary of the camp. The camp has also been susceptible to self-sown plantings in some areas, especially the frontage with Heyders Road where a number of Silver Poplars have grown in all directions. The plan prepares for the removal and replacement of the large Pines, taking into consideration the safety of campers being located beneath them.

10. The aim of the planting strategy is to:

- Respond to the coastal environment with a mix of coastal native shrub and ground cover species.
- Retain and replant large exotic and native canopy species for shade. Combine with exotic and native medium sized trees for shade and amenity.
- Trees to be planted where possible within plant beds for ease of maintenance.
- Use mass native plantings to delineate roads and contain spaces, and to replace small amenity beds.
- Add trees and fire retardant species as buffer zones adjacent to plantation blocks.
- Soften security fences and other features with planting of trees and shrubs.

11. A tree list has been established and was included with the draft landscape plans (see attachment 2).

- **Exotic Canopy Species**  
These trees to be retained as useful shade and amenity trees. Unsafe trees to be pruned or felled in accordance with tree management strategy. New medium and large sized trees to be planted as specimen trees.
- **Poplar Shelter Belts**  
These trees are still in good condition and are providing an important buffering effect. These are to be maintained for the medium term.
- **Heyders Road Frontage**  
Camp ground frontage to be opened out by the removal of all large poplar species. To be replaced with lower native shrub planting and groups of larger canopy trees.
- **Entrance Planting**  
Mass plantings of Cabbage trees to be retained and enhanced with new plantings and possibly the addition of mulched areas underneath to reduce mower damage.

- **Plantation Plantings**  
The plantation character of these plantings is generally valued by the users of the site, so where possible, the existing stands of Pines to be retained. Unsafe trees to be removed and new seedlings planted where gaps in the canopy allow. Mature stands may also be thinned and moved away from edges of drives and pathways to allow for more sunlight and security. Where possible, large signature Pine trees may be retained and enhanced by pruning and the removal of surrounding vegetation.
- **Fire Retardent Buffer Species**  
Where possible, fire retardant trees shall be planted in groups adjacent to the existing Poplar shelter belts as a buffer in the event of a fire. Trees should not be planted too close to buildings (approximately 10m distance) and include species such as *Acer* (Maple), *Fraxinus* (Ash), *Olea* (Olive), *Pittosporum*, *Acacia* (Wattle), *Cordyline* (Cabbage tree) and *Casuarina* (She Oak).
- **Native Shrubs and Trees**  
Native tree and shrub species to be used in mass plantings to emphasise the coastal nature of the site. Plantings will be used to contain spaces, line drives and pathways, indicate the presence of swales and other low-lying areas, and as attractive amenity planting. Native trees are also useful as shade and shelter trees. Some larger native tree species may be grown as specimen trees. Species include *Sophora* (Kowhai), *Cordyline* (Cabbage tree), *Hoheria* (Lacebark), *Plagianthus* (Ribbonwood), *Podocarpus totara* (Totara), *Elaeocarpus dentatus* (Hinau), *Prumnopitys* (Matai) and *Pittosporum*.
- **Safety Hazards**  
All trees are to be assessed yearly and maintained in accordance with the tree management strategy. Unsafe trees to be pruned or removed.

#### **Creation of activity areas**

12. The camp has large areas of open space to enable camping and other activities. To prepare for a period when the larger trees will come down and the reduction of shelter – the proposal is to plant medium sized trees and create some smaller areas, especially down by the Octagon to create some more intimate and sheltered camping areas. Three open space areas are still maintained for sports and other activities. The plan also continues to provide for the planting of larger specimen trees to maintain the current character of the camp.
13. It is proposed to create a confidence course in the area by the Lodge for use by schools and other groups when staying in the camp. The proposed plan also creates a full playground area combining the existing playground with the sandpit area. BBQ areas with some seating is also proposed by the accommodation blocks with a central BBQ area being created at the back of the Amenity Block in Camp 1.

#### **NEW FEATURES – FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

##### **Roadway extension/ Parking and Basketball Court area by Lodge and Homestead**

14. With the relocation and completion of the Homestead, and the lack of sealed parking by the Lodge, this area needs tidying up and developed to cater for the types of groups who use the accommodation in this area. This includes providing a full court basketball area and extending the access road past the Lodge and linking with the road to the beach.

##### **Future additional accommodation**

15. A site has been shown for the provision of additional accommodation in the event of further development of unit accommodation. This is on the northern boundary of the camp to avoid encroaching on existing camping areas. The existing amenity blocks adequately cater for the level of campers including the peak summer periods so no additional amenity blocks are envisaged at this point.

## **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

16. The tree removals and replanting are predicted to cost around \$15,000 - \$20,000 per annum over the 20 year period of the landscape plan. Tree removals and tree maintenance is currently costing \$10,000 per annum and is necessary for the safety of users of the camp. To undertake the additional improvements which have been programmed over the first six years will cost approximately \$260,000 (see attachment 3). The additional sums provided will enable annual replanting and also new landscaping. The replacement programme will ultimately reduce the risk of tree failure and future tree maintenance costs, while continuing to provide shelter, shade and an enjoyable environment for campers. The planned camp improvements are necessary to ensure that the camp continues to respond to the changing needs of general campers as well as catering for the increasing use by larger groups. These projects will be a mixture of capital and operating expenditure. Funding is available in 2005/06 to undertake the improvements as shown in the programme.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Community Board approve the Spencer Beach Holiday Park landscape plan to become part of the Brooklands Lagoon Spencer Beach Management Plan, and that implementation of the plan be undertaken as programmed.

## **CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION**

That the staff recommendation be adopted.