

## Operational Report

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### Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

14<sup>th</sup> January 2010

#### Purpose of report

- 1 To provide the Joint Committee with an update on operational matters since the previous meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

#### Main report

##### **Bonaly Country Park**

- 2 The Regional Park and the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust have prepared an application to the Forestry Commission's Woodland in and Around Towns (WIAAT) grant scheme for a range of woodland and amenity improvements in the lower park. The Ranger Service has tidied up the main car park area and arranged for new hedge planting with support from community volunteers and trees provided by the Woodland Trust's 'free trees' scheme.
- 3 A Statement of Intent (SOI) has been submitted to the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) for the restructuring of the Bonaly reservoir woodland. The SOI is the first stage of a full application process and will assess the suitability of the project under the SRDP and the likely level of funding available.
- 4 Detailed survey work and GIS mapping of the Bonaly Heather moorland has been completed. The survey provides detailed information about the condition and age structure of the moorland and will be used to introduce a carefully targeted heather burning regime over the winter months. Burning will be carried out 'in house' with external advisory support as required. It is anticipated that the management of the Bonaly Moorland will provide a training opportunity for staff and volunteers and act as a best practice exemplar for heather moorland management.

##### **Harperrig**

- 5 Discussions have been held and are currently ongoing between West Lothian Council and Cairns Farm about the long term provision of public car parking facilities at the west end of Harperrig reservoir.
- 6 Funding has been secured through the SRDP (Leader) for new signage, interpretation, waymarking and installation of bird hides. The project is match

funded with support from West Lothian Council. Final details are being confirmed with land managers and it is anticipated that work will start this winter.

- 7 Working with the Central Scotland Forest Trust (CSFT), funding has been secured from the Big Lottery and West Lothian Council to create a new route on the South shore of the reservoir from Cairns Farm to the Cauldstane Slap right of way. Work is scheduled to start early summer 2011.
- 8 The CSFT has submitted an application to the SRDP (Rural Priorities) for a package of new woodland planting on City of Edinburgh Council owned land around the reservoir. This will supplement the 5 ha. of new woodland planted at Carins Farm in 2010.

#### **Joint Meeting of Chairs**

- 9 On 29<sup>th</sup> October 2010, the Chairs of the Pentland Hills and Clyde Muirshiel Regional Parks met to discuss matters of mutual interest. Common ground was identified along with areas where both parks could learn from each other. It was agreed that respective Managers would work to identify opportunities for greater collaborative working. Initially, a joint 'exchange' of staff visits has been arranged for both services to learn more about how they approach common management issues.

#### **Pentland Inspirations**

- 10 The award ceremony for the 2010/2011 Pentland Inspirations competition was held on 22nd November in Edinburgh City Chambers. The ceremony was attended by some 70 entrants and hosted by Cllr Keir. A sample of entries is currently being exhibited throughout Edinburgh and the Lothians. Further details of the exhibition locations and a slide show of all winning entries can be viewed on [www.pentlandhills.org](http://www.pentlandhills.org).

#### **Charging for Events and Activities**

- 11 The Regional Park Service has started planning the annual programme of events and activities for 2011/12. It is proposed to introduce a small charge for selected activities, particularly those which incur additional cost to provide. The proposed charges are set out in Appendix 1. The majority of events and activities will remain free of charge for 2011/12

#### **Winter Weather Response**

- 12 Avalanche alerts were issued for the Pentland Hills during the heavy snowfall experienced in early December. The Regional Park worked with the Sport Scotland National Avalanche Warning Service and City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Education Advisors to assess the risk and provide regular web and media updates. Advice about how to minimise the risk and what to do in an emergency was placed in visitor centres and on the website. Several small avalanches did occur over the period without incident. Avalanche risk awareness training was carried out for staff.
- 13 During the worst of the winter weather the Regional Park has assisted Health & Social Care and Housing services with the provision of drivers and 4x4 vehicles where required. Those with care needs within the hills and the wider community were supported.

### **Threipmuir**

- 14 The car park at Threipmuir has been upgraded to provide additional capacity, a sealed surface and dedicated parking for visitors with disabilities. Some further work in relation to signage, and vehicular control measures are yet to be completed subject to weather conditions. All work will be fully completed before spring 2011.

### **Staffing**

- 15 Between June and November 2010, the Regional Park Service appointed a trainee under the Future Jobs Fund, Alan McDowell. Alan has supported the work of the Ranger Service over the summer by carrying out a wide range of estate maintenance activities. The service is currently joined by Graeme Anderson, from the City of Edinburgh Council Forestry Team on a temporary redeployment until February 2011. Graeme is also a member of the Voluntary Ranger Service and has used this experience to assist greatly with the day to day operations of the service.

### **Open Water Swimming**

- 16 Following the pilot of open water swimming at Harlaw and Threipmuir reservoirs during 2010, a review meeting has been arranged for 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011. The meeting will bring together swimmers, anglers and reservoir managers to agree a managed approach to open water swimming on Threipmuir reservoir during summer of 2011.

### **Financial Implications**

- 17 Funding for all proposed works at Harperrig has been identified and secured through a combination of external and local authority funding.

### **Environmental Impact**

- 18 The operational work of the Pentland Hills Regional Park aims to protect and enhance the environment of the Pentland Hills. The physical works identified in this report will increase woodland cover as a habitat and landscape feature and improve facilities for people to enjoy the countryside.

### **Recommendations**

- 19 It is recommended that:
- a) the Joint Committee notes the content of this operational report; and
  - b) approves the proposed charges for events in 2011/12 set out in Appendix 1.

  
**David Jamieson**  
Parks & Greenspace Manager

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Appendices	Appendix 1: Proposed Charges for Selected Events and Activities.
Contact/tel/Email	David Jamieson (Parks and Greenspace Manager, 0131 529 7055) Keith Logie (Parks Development Manager, 0131 529 7916) Alan McGregor (Regional Park Manager, 0131 445 3383)
Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	Relevant to the following National Outcomes: 1 We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe. 2 We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people. 6 We live longer, healthier lives. 10 We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need. 11 We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others. 12 We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations 13 We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity. 14 We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production. 15 Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
Background Papers	None

### Appendix 1: Proposed Charges for Events and Activities 2011/12

<b>Event</b>	<b>Charge</b>	<b>Estimated Income / £</b>
Bat Walk	£3 Adults, £1.50 Children	120
Pentland Skyline Walk	£5 / per head	75
Map & Compass Courses*	£25 / person / day course	1,120
Total		1,315

\*A charge is already made for map and compass courses. The charges shown are those proposed for 2011/12