

Resource Investigations Department Report

John Sherriff, Manager

February 2000

1. Resource Information

Since the last meeting the following severe weather bulletins were received:

27 - 29 November	Strong Wind Wellington
	Heavy Rainfall Wellington, Tararuas
19 December	Heavy Rainfall Tararuas
29-30 January	Strong Wind Wellington

The following rainfall and river alarms were also received and responded to:

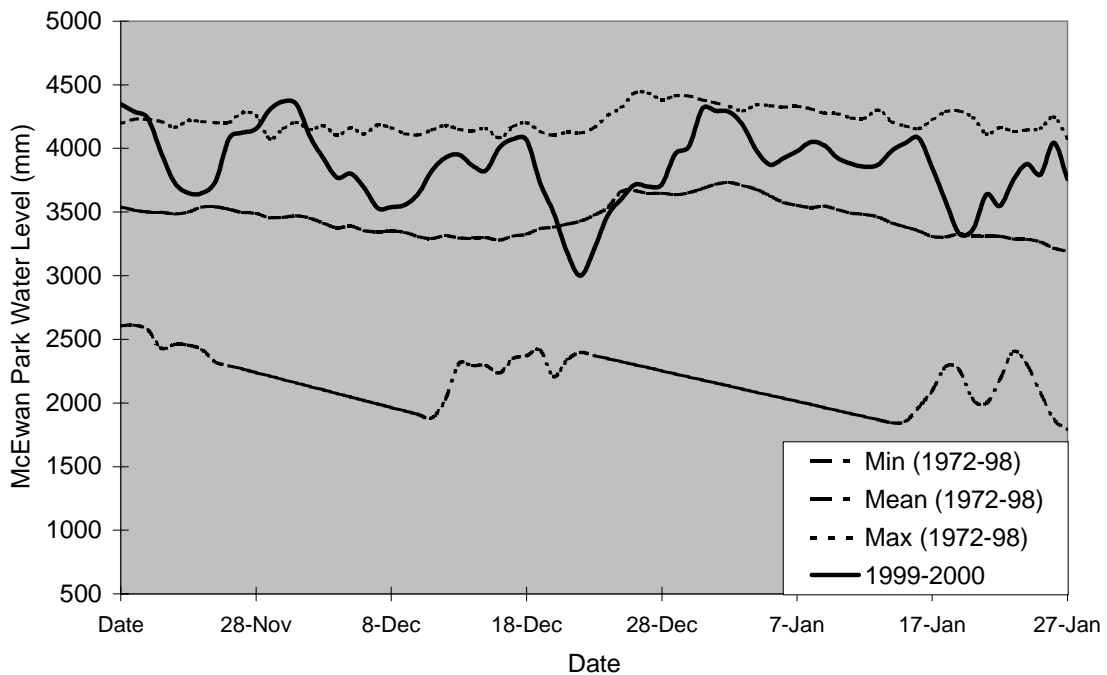
11 December	Transmission Lines Rainfall
19 December	Warwicks, Taungata and Oriwa Rainfall Alarms
	Waitohu and Otaki River Alarms
3 January	Taungata and Warwicks Rainfall Alarms
23 January	Warwicks Rainfall Alarm
30 January	Warwicks, Orongorongo and Oriwa Rainfall Alarms
	Porirua River Alarm

No major problems were experienced because of Y2K. A minor problem occurred with the graphics features of the flood warning system. This did not affect the functionality of the system and was fixed on 1 January 2000.

2. Resource Analysis

2.1 Groundwater Levels

Artesian pressure measured at McEwan Park since November has generally remained above average. Artesian pressure declined in mid December and mid January in response to temporary increases in municipal demand, but quickly returned to levels that were close to the highest levels recorded since 1972.



Groundwater levels on the Kapiti Coast are generally higher than for the same period in previous years.

2.2 Moera Gravel Aquifer Bore

Work on the Moera Gravel Aquifer bore is proceeding well. At the end of January the bore had reached a depth of 104 metres and had just entered the Moera Aquifer.

2.3 Rainfall and River Flows

Rainfall across the western Wellington Region was well above average during November but fell to around 50 to 70 percent of average during December. Only 65 millimetres of rain fell in the Wainuiomata area in December, representing 50 percent of normal rainfall. As a consequence, river flows were also below average in December (see attached Figure) after being well above normal for November.

Rainfall and river flows were around average for January. On 23 January the flow in the Waitohu Stream dropped to a level that was only 38 litres per second above the first stepdown flow set in the Regional Freshwater Plan. The Waikanae River receded to within 600 litres per second of its first stepdown level on the same day. Heavy rain late in the month led to a slightly higher than normal monthly average (see attached Figure). The Hutt and Wainuiomata Rivers were still well above their minimum flows. The much predicted, anticipated and 'hoped for' dry weather is still due to come during late summer and autumn.

2.4 Hydrological Network Review

A three yearly review of our hydrological network has been completed. A strategy for implementing the recommendations outlined in this review is currently being prepared for implementation between 2000-2003. Similar reviews are currently being undertaken for both the groundwater and surface water quality networks.

2.5 Freshwater Quality Report

The Annual Freshwater Quality Report has been completed and will be presented at this meeting. This is the first monitoring report we have prepared that provides results for the entire Wellington Region in conjunction with the Wairarapa Division.

3. Resource Quality

3.1 Pollution and Non-compliance Complaints

A summary of pollution complaints and our performance in responding to them will be reported to the Committee at the meeting.

3.2 Y2K

The long awaited Y2K celebration did not create any additional work load for the pollution response team. None of the incidents reported around this time were attributable to Y2K problems.

3.3 Enforcement Action

Two abatement notices have been served since the last meeting. On 24 December 1999 an abatement notice was issued to Armstrong Engineering, Upper Hutt requiring them to contain a discharge of fish oil and ensure that it was disposed of in a suitable manner.

On 1 February 2000 an abatement notice was issued to John Ray Ltd, Judgeford, requiring them to undertake action to prevent silt discharging into a tributary of Pauatahanui Stream from a quarrying operation.

3.4 Munitions Site Investigation

Consultants have been engaged to develop site histories for sites throughout the Region where munitions and military equipment have been stored or disposed of. This work is part of an on-going contaminated sites work programme. Munitions sites were identified in the Regional Discharge to Land Plan as a priority category of contaminated site.

The information gathered in this project will help us to determine if further investigations are needed at these sites. A press release sent out to highlight our investigation and asking for information from the public received a great deal of coverage. Staff have received a steady stream of responses from people from throughout New Zealand.

3.5 Infringement Notices

A paper outlining proposed procedures for implementing infringement notices was to be presented at this meeting. This paper has not yet been completed. Further work is required to ensure that the proposed procedure meets the legal requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991. A report will be presented at the next Environment Committee meeting.

4. **Staffing**

Greg Bevin, one of our Resource Technicians, has resigned to pursue opportunities in Hamilton. He will leave us at the start of March.

Nik Aitken, one of our Resource Quality Officers, has returned after travelling overseas for three months. Nik's position had been filled by Aotasi Iose, who has now left the Council.