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Report 02.590

20 September 2002

File: Y/21/1

Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Colin Wright, Divisional Manager, Wairarapa

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of current activities and provide information of interest since the previous meeting held on 20 August 2002.

2. Divisional Matters

2.1 Long Term Plan

Preparation for the formulation of the Council's next Long Term Plan is underway as Councillors are well aware. At present a series of Councillor Workshops are being held on various issues earlier identified. The Wairarapa Division has been involved with several of these workshops, particularly those on Biodiversity, Forestry and Bovine Tb.

At the same time targeted consultation is taking place to help determine the communities desired outcomes from local government. The Regional Council is working in with the City and District Councils on this consultation. Arrangements have been made for consultation with government departments and the South Wairarapa District Council in early October.

Appointed members of the Committee should note that they will be invited to attend the two day Councillors Workshop on 7 and 8 November when many of the key decisions will be discussed.

2.2 Farm Environment Awards

Arrangements are underway for this year's Wellington Regional Farm Environment Awards following the very successful inaugural event last year. Entries will be invited in October.

As previously, the emphasis will be on sustainable farming in the wider sense of the word, not just economics. The event will be much more about the sharing of information on successful practices rather than just a competition.

Again, the event will involve a number of organisations, both commercial and others, working collaboratively with the Council.

2.3 Irrigation Study

Stage 2 of the Wairarapa Irrigation Study is now well underway. A meeting of the steering group was held on 22 August when the main consultants gave a presentation on their more recent investigations.

At present the consultants are looking at a variety of possible sites for storage lakes so that all possible options have been considered. This is a key issue as without suitable storage to supplement river flows there will be little expansion of irrigation in the Wairarapa in the future.

Up to approximately 60 million cubic metres of storage is required in the long term. This is about 20 times the volume stored in the Stuart Macaskill Lakes at Te Marua.

The Stage 2 investigation is scheduled to be completed in April next year.

2.4 Staffing

Ian Heslop, Divisional Engineer, has resigned to work with a consulting company in Christchurch on irrigation and hydro-electric projects. Ian has made a very big contribution to river management work in the Region over the past 10 years and his absence will be noticed. We wish him well in his future career.

Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)

2.5 Soil Conservation Works Programme

Planting programmes are nearing completion. The winter period, particularly through July and August, has been wetter than the years since the 1997 drought and this has lifted soil moisture levels considerably. As a consequence planting will extend beyond the end of September.

The hill country planting is complete. Riparian planting programmes will be complete by mid-October. The later finish to the riparian programme is deliberate so that the likelihood of frost damage is minimised.

Akura Conservation Centre is trading very well, with a particularly high sales component occurring on Saturday mornings. Trading hours on Saturday mornings have been extended to noon. This has attracted many clients who have completed their Saturday morning sporting commitments.

2.6 Soil Plan Harvest Inspections

In the last month inspections of two of the Region's largest forest owners have taken place. Visits have been made to the Juken Nissho forest in the Wairarapa and to the Council's own forest at Puketiro. The focus of the inspections is to look at recently harvested areas and to assess likely issues in areas designated for harvest over the next twelve months.

Issues discussed at both forests, included the provision for increased riparian management after the current cycle of harvest, road locations to minimise soil disturbance, siting of skid sites to minimise tree drag through water courses, and increasing the level of communication between forest managers and Consents staff.

Juken Nissho has adopted an internationally accredited Environmental Management System and, in conjunction with Consents staff, is looking to incorporate this document into the consent process. While the Environmental Management System will not preclude the need for resource consent, components of the document can be included in the resource consent conditions and checked against an independent annual audit of the EMS.

3.3 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Review

Phil Wallace (Engineering Consultant) is making excellent progress with the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme computer model. When completed the model will include the Ruamahanga River channel, the floodway system, Lakes Onoke and Wairarapa, and the Barrage Gates. The main purpose of the modelling is to determine

how the current Scheme performs, and to identify opportunities for Scheme optimisation or upgrade.

3.4 Winter Works Programme

The winter to early spring willow pole planting, lopping, and bank protection programme is behind schedule due to a combination of unusually wet ground conditions and high river levels. Contractors are being employed to help the Council Riverhands catch up with this work.

3.5 Te Whiti Stopbank Upgrade

A draft Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) has been prepared for the Te Whiti Stopbank upgrade work planned over the coming summer. This draft AEE will be circulated to the affected parties for comment prior to an application for Resource Consent being lodged.

3.6 Henley Lake Protection Work

Erosion of the Ruamahanga River bank seriously threatened the Henley Lake Reserve and outfall structure. A \$42,000 project consisting of channel realignment and willow bank protection is near completion. This work will be jointly funded by the Masterton District Council and Wellington Regional Council, within the framework of the new Upper Ruamahanga Te Ore Ore River Management Scheme.

3.7 Technical Services Activities

- Edits completed on Lower Valley flood hazard maps, updates to Tauherenikau and Lower Ruamahanga Rivers – maps produced and WRC digital flood photos supplied to Carterton District Council.
- Coastal photo plots produced for South Wairarapa District Council
- Continued work on converting Wairarapa GIS Data to Corporate data sets
- Work on Te Whiti stopbank upgrade, rework stopbank volumes
- Work on Powerpoint presentation for Planning & Policy
- Survey completed around Maori cemetery at SH2 for Engineering Section
- Old Wairarapa maps converted into Arcview coverages for Planning & Policy Section
- GPS survey completed for Resource & Investigations Section for study of bore levels in Rathkeale area
- Work started on building up a 1940s photo database in Arcview
- Gravel Licence System – processing of gravel returns and new licences for 2002/03 year and inspections undertaken at Huangarua River
- Completion of stopbank survey at Fullers Bend to check stopbank heights
- Completion of a rail iron coverage in Wairarapa rivers

- 6 monthly beach surveys completed for Riversdale and Castlepoint
- Training in new 12D surveying software, major upgrade and learning curve to become familiar with program
- Stopbank survey (GPS) completed for Engineering upstream of Barrage Gates for proposed new stopbank
- Survey (GPS) completed at Garrod's on Waipoua River for flooding investigation
- Survey of additional x-sections at Te Whiti for stopbank upgrade project
- Farm, Sustainability and SUBS mapping completed for Soil Conservation Section
- Work on new information for Irrigation Study
- ESRI Users Group GIS conference in Wellington, attended by Des & Tim
- Mapping work for Fish & Game, Lake Wairarapa Project
- R&R process completed for Technical Services Section for 2001/2002 year
- Various external customer enquiries for maps and information.
- Scanning of photos for Pest Animals publicity database
- Flood levels collected in Lower Valley for Engineering Section
- 6 monthly resurvey of gravel extraction reach on Waingawa River
- Large number of posters and farm maps produced for BvTb operation at Mangaroa-Kaitoke.

4. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

4.1 Boneseed

A contract to clear Boneseed infestations at Ngawi and Lake Ferry has been arranged, with the work due to be completed by 26th September. Under the Regional Pest Management Strategy, Boneseed is classified as a Containment species. Council is responsible for control in areas outside of the containment zones.

The Wairarapa is outside the Containment zone. The other major area of Boneseed infestation in the Wairarapa is at Riversdale where scattered plants can be found throughout the settlement. During the current year it is intended to clear infestations on public reserves at Riversdale with the work on private land to commence in 2003/04.

4.2 Hornwort

It had been decided to obtain further expert advice before proceeding with herbicide control of Hornwort in Forest Lake at Otaki. The Department of Conservation agreed to fund an inspection of the lake by scientists from NIWA. This was carried out in late August with underwater transits dived throughout the lake. This inspection revealed

that the infestation level is much lower than indicated from earlier surface inspections. The lake was originally to be sprayed with diquat herbicide in three operations. This would have minimised the risk to fish life from the decomposition of large volumes of vegetative material. However, the lower infestation level now may allow for a one off application at a considerable reduced cost. The work may be arranged for early October.

4.3 Pest Plant Accord

MAF AgriQuality has recently supplied a range of publicity material to promote the Pest Plant Accord. The Accord is an agreement between Regional Councils and MAF Biosecurity to manage a list of pest plants that are banned nationally from sale, propagation and distribution. Most of the material is designed for supply to nurseries and plant retail outlets but can also be used for public displays.

4.4 Bovine Tb

(1) Annual Technical Review

On 22 August 2002 the Wellington Region Vector Control and Disease Control Managers presented their annual technical review to the Animal Health Board in Palmerston North. Representing the Council were Wayne O'Donnell and Graeme Butcher, and Gillian Atkinson represented Agri-Quality NZ. The Regional Animal Health Committee Chairman, Peter Gaskin, also attended.

This review summarised control work undertaken during 2001/02 and programmed for 2002/03. However, the main purpose of the review was to present the proposed Bovine Tb management programme for 2003/04.

Indications of management options, including control hectares and costs, for the 2004/05 and 2005/06 years were also submitted.

The AHB was complimentary on the presentation. However, no decisions on the 2003/04 programme will be made until the AHB have completed their reviews with all Regional Vector and Disease Control Managers throughout the country.

(2) 2002/03 Programme

The following vector control programme will be implemented during the 2002/03 year:

		Hectares
Possum Control	-	340,768
Ferret Control	-	<u>22,525</u>
	Total	363,293

Totals anticipated for future years are-

	Hectares
2003/04 -	370,583
2004/05 -	331,770
2005/06 -	323,340

These hectares exclude ferret control and surveys.

(3) 2002/03 Tenders

The first round of vector control tenders have been let and determined for the 2002/03 year. These consisted of 112,004 hectares or 30.8% of this year's programme.

Successful tenderers include:

	Hectares
Bovine Unit	46,118
Gert Vermeer	23,254
Trappersnz	22,041
John McCaslin	<u>20,591</u>
	112,004

Some changes have been made to the scoring of contractors based on results during the 2001/02 year.

We anticipate tendering a further 126,000 ha by the end of September.

(4) Operations Underway

Work has commenced in the Bideford and Kahutara-Pirinoa operations by the WRC Bovine Unit. Work is ongoing in the Mangaroa-Kaitoke-Whitemans Valley operation.

4.4 Mount Bruce-Pukaha Predator Buffer

The Council's predator control operation started on 1st September. The 1800-hectare block has 250 sites each set up with traps and bait stations to target possums, feral cats, mustelids, rats and hedgehogs. The operation has been designed so that initially the most intensive control is adjacent to the Reserve. This approach will better complement the initial stages of the Department of Conservation's control measures.

Harvey Phillips (Biosecurity Officer), who is managing the control operation, reports that all landowners are very co-operative and are assisting with control measures around their homes and sheds. One major landowner has already undertaken to check and maintain all of the fifty bait and trapping sites on his property. It is likely that other occupiers will also physically assist with the operation as part of their day to day activities.

An evening meeting is being held at the National Wildlife Centre on 25th September 2002 to update the Mount Bruce community on the general progress of the restoration programme and to promote the theme of 'working together'. DoC and the Regional Councils will facilitate a 'hands-on' workshop for predator control and traps and bait stations will be made available for lease/purchase to those occupiers not directly involved in the operational zones. Local residents will also be encouraged to participate in a bird-monitoring programme. Council staff have expertise with this and will be providing practical guidance as well as recording material.

As part of the ongoing activities associated with such a project, a meeting was held on 28th August 2002 to;

- enable both Councils and DoC to outline their operational intentions
- review the goals of the Mount Bruce Rural Neighbours Group
- facilitate a short workshop on home and farm planting for native birds.

Biosecurity staff were also invited to attend a function hosted by Rangitaane O Wairarapa, the National Wildlife Trust and DoC on 6th September 2002 to celebrate the completion of over 130 kilometres of service tracks within the Reserve. This now enables DoC to commence their predator control programme in earnest and in time to benefit the spring breeding cycle.

4.5 Rooks

Rook nest counting will be undertaken during early October to assess the current rook population within the Region. A light helicopter will be used to inspect some of the more remote areas of the northern Masterton District where most of the rookeries are located. Liaison is being maintained with both Horizons.mw and Hawkes Bay Regional Council in order to co-ordinate control programmes and maximise any benefits.

It is proposed to undertake rook nest baiting by helicopter again this year in selected rookeries. The contract with Amalgamated Helicopters has been renewed and refresher training in the safe use of the toxin DRC1339 provided to the helicopter crew. The area from Akitio south is being targeted by Horizons.mw this year. This will help stem rook migration from the Tararua District into the Masterton District.

4.6 Possum Problem at Ngawi Village

Possums have been making a nuisance of themselves at the fishing village of Ngawi on the South Wairarapa coast. It is rare to get this type of problem now with the extensive possum control coverage afforded by the Bovine Tb programme. A meeting will be held with local residents and a concerted 'self help' programme encouraged.

The southeast coast is programmed for Bovine Tb vector control next year so this will alleviate possum problems in the future.

4.7 Miramar Peninsula Possum Operation

Intensive programming for this KNE type operation is underway. The major landowners are being approached initially, as they make up the largest portion of the 600 hectares of prime possum habitat. A joint media release with Wellington City Council will herald the operation with a likely start date in late January 2003. The operation will run over several months. Risk management issues have been well considered. Staff are hopeful that a large amount of community support will be engendered and enable possums to be eradicated from the peninsula.

4.8 Red Mistletoe Found

A regionally rare, red-flowered mistletoe (*Peraxilla tetrapetala*) has recently been discovered in Keith George Memorial Reserve at Silverstream. It is probable that the ongoing KNE possum control programme has contributed to this plant being more noticeable following years of possum browse. Biosecurity staff found red-flowered mistletoe last year in the Wi Tako Reserve near Trentham. The two sites are not far apart but are on opposite sides of the Hutt Valley. Other known sites in the region exist at Eastbourne, Kaitoke Regional Park, Rimutaka Forest Park (Orongorongo) and Tararua Forest Park (Holdsworth & Mount Bruce). Some sites have only single plants. The red-flowered mistletoe relies to a large extent on nectar feeding birds such as Tui and Bellbird for pollination.

5. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

5.1 Environmental Incidents

<i>Date</i>	<i>Incident</i>	<i>Details</i>
9/08/2002	Deposition of soil in a watercourse during construction of an earth dam.	Explanation sought from farmer.
20/08/2002	Sewage overflow into water race, Greytown.	District Council disinfected the site, and notified relevant parties. No further action required.
21/08/2002	Report of offensive odour from spray painting premises, Masterton.	Not able to be investigated - complaint made too long after the event.
23/08/2002	Dairy effluent found overflowing into creek, South Wairarapa.	Fixed immediately after the farmer was notified. No further action taken.
26/08/2002	Odour from the spreading of chicken litter, Masterton	Odour not confirmed. Farmer has been written to.
27/08/2002	Neighbour burning noxious material, Carterton	Neighbour has agreed to stop burning treated wood.
28/08/2002	Odour of petroleum / oil from Makoura Stream at rear of property.	Diesel spilled at bus depot. Improvements to drainage being sought.
4/09/2002	Quarry alleged to be not complying with location specified in resource consent	Quarry consented in its current site.
4/09/2002	Dust from nearby industrial area.	Site visit confirmed dust. Offender was informed and required to damp down yard.
5/09/2002	Suspected oil contamination in drain, rural Masterton.	Found to be natural sheen caused by high iron concentrations in groundwater.
9/09/2002	Ammonia-like odour detected in residential area.	Odour could not be detected at time of site visit.
10/09/2002	Suspected dairy effluent in river, reported by kayaker, South Wairarapa	Adjoining farms were inspected, no problems found with effluent. Unable to trace source of complaint.
11/09/2002	Abandoned cars on Waiohine riverbed	Removed by WRC.
12/09/2002	Neighbour concerned about farmer's waste disposal practices, Masterton	Farmer has agreed to stop burning baleage wrap.
12/09/2002	Elemental mercury spilled from medical equipment, Masterton	Disposed of by WRC staff.
13/09/2002	Quarry operating without resource consents, Carterton	Under investigation.
16/09/2002	Suspected sewage in pond, rural Masterton	Under investigation.
18/09/2002	Watercourse blocked by farmer, Masterton	Under investigation

5.2 Enforcement

Abatement and Infringement Notices

- An infringement notice was issued for unconsented gravel extraction from the Waingawa River.
- An abatement notice was issued requiring upgrade and cessation of septic tank discharge from commercial premises to a stream.

Waingawa Chemical Spill

The joint prosecution is now with the Environment Court with scheduling to be advised.

5.3 Notified Consents

Carterton - Kaipatangata Water Take	Submissions closed 23 May 2002. Applicants have met with DoC and Fish and Game.
Featherston Sewage – Discharge	AEE completed. Consultation proceeding. Application expected soon.
Masterton Sewage – Discharge	Application received and notified. 3 day hearing set from 30 September.
Balance Agri-Nutrients – Discharge to land	Application withdrawn.
East Coast Abalone, Tora – Coastal permit	Consent granted without appeal.
Water Races - 6 Masterton, Carterton, and South Wairarapa District Councils	Applications received for all races. All awaiting further information.

5.4 Waste Management Wairarapa (WMW)

Steady progress is being made towards improved solid waste management in the Wairarapa. The WMW Group presented a background information paper to the recent Combined Councils meeting setting out the following “generally agreed objectives”:

- *The three Councils commit to regional management of the Wairarapa waste stream*
- *WMW be charged with the management of waste diversion and disposal in compliance with the Local Government Act and the NZ Waste Strategy (March 2002)*
- *The Councils have collectively committed to take steps towards establishment of a new regional landfill*
- *Future operating costs of transport and disposal are treated as a regional cost.*
- *In the interim period prior to establishment of a regional landfill, disposal charges at all existing Landfills and Transfer facilities will be brought into alignment.*

Significant progress has been made in the last two meetings towards “firming up” the appropriate governance and committee status for Waste Management Wairarapa, and developing the process to secure a suitable Wairarapa regional landfill site.

5.5 Coastal Strategy

Completion of the eight technical reports and associated maps has been the major focus with some very good work being done. Development of the public consultation programme and the accompanying Issues and Options paper is proceeding. The issues and options paper will draw on the issues that have come from consultation with Key Stakeholders and matters identified in the Technical Reports.

The public consultation phase is timed for mid-summer going from mid January until mid March. A range of consultation methods are being developed.

5.6 Water Allocation Plans

The project team has set the programme for the coming summer and have recommended a moratorium on the Kahutara aquifer (reported separately). The Mangatarere Plan is under preparation and guidelines for water allocation in small streams are to be developed. This work is a key requirement for issuing sustainable water take consents.

5.7 Water Meters

Irrigators in stressed underground water zones were advised of the requirement to install water meters prior to the current irrigation season. This will provide a far better knowledge of water takes and their effects on aquifers. Reminder notices have been sent and will be followed up by inspections after the completion date of 30 September 2002.

5.8 Riversdale Sewage

The consultants have reported to the Steering Committee with their recommendations for a community scheme. A public meeting is planned for Labour Weekend to inform residents of progress and outcomes.

5.9 Hydrology

Rainfall

Rainfall figures for August were down from July and below average for all three stations. The trend seems to be one of drying out. The southerlies experienced in the previous couple of months seem to have eased off although there were a couple of good ‘dumps’ of snow in the Tararua Ranges.

The tables below are for 3 representative rainfall sites showing rainfall figures for August and also July for comparison.

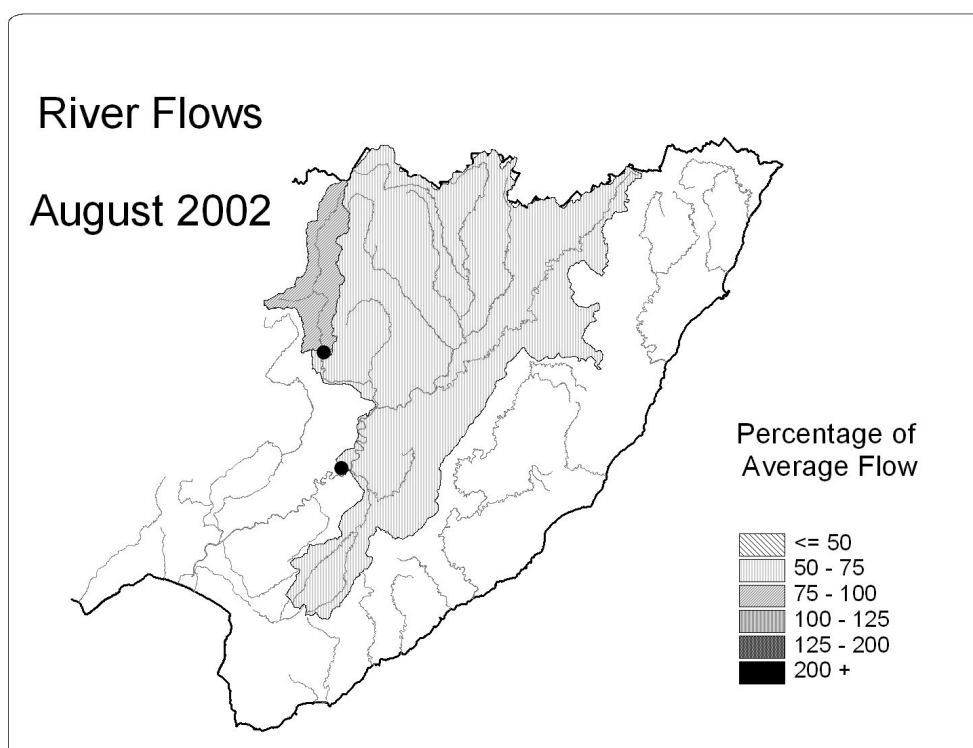
Site	Location	August		(July)		August	July
		mm					
			average		average		
Angle Knob	Tararua Ranges	530	687	677	633	77	107
Alloa	Middle Valley	60.4	106	133	117	58	115
Tanawa Hut	Eastern Hills	113.5	135	215.5	168	84	128

Rivers

River flows fell significantly during August.

The table below contains both August flow statistics for 2 representative sites and July's data to show comparisons. The figure is a map of the Wairarapa with the catchments for the two sites shaded to represent their percentage of monthly flows for the month.

Site	August		(July)		August	July
	m^3/s					
	actual	average	actual	average		
Waiohine	23.3	28.5	40.1	29.5	82	136
Waihenga	94.1	128.3	173	141	73	123



Floodwarning

	August	Financial Year to Date	Previous Year to Date
No. of events	0	2	2
No of Lists Issued	0	7	12

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa