



**Report** 03.453  
**Date** 11 August 2003  
**File** Y/21/1

**Committee** Rural Services and Wairarapa  
**Author** 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 8 July 2003.

### 2. Divisional Matters

#### 2.1 Last Financial Year

Information on the 2002/03 financial year for the Annual Report has now been assembled. Whilst there were variations within departments, the operating expenditure for the Division overall was within \$87,000 of budget out of a total expenditure of nearly \$18 million. All performance indicators in the Annual Plan were achieved.

#### 2.2 Aerial 1080 Operations

Two major aerial 1080 possum control operations have been undertaken in the period since the last Committee meeting. These operations included the water supply catchments for the Te Marua Water Treatment Plant and the towns of Masterton, Carterton, Greytown and Featherston. It is very pleasing to report that both operations proceeded smoothly and that all the planning and risk management provisions were appropriate for the circumstances. The staff involved are to be congratulated.

#### 2.3 Temperature Control Units

The Council's property budget for the current year allows for the installation of temperature control units in the main Masterton office similar to those installed in the Committee Room. Tenders are currently being sought and, when operating, these units will eliminate the extremes of temperature that occur in the office with the variable Wairarapa climate.

## **2.4 September Council Meeting**

The Council has resolved to hold its 16 September meeting in the Masterton office. Following this meeting there will be a conducted tour of the National Wildlife Centre at Mt Bruce where the Council has been working closely with DoC, the Horizons Regional Council, Rangitaane, and local residents on extensive pest control to allow the release into the wild of kokako and kiwi.

## **2.3 Staffing Issues**

Due to health reasons, Roger Wood, Senior Land Management Officer (Forestry), has been off full duties since 23 June, but has been working part time for the last three weeks. In the interim Land Management staff have been able to cope with the extra workload. Temporary assistance has been found to liaise with Roger's clients and to assist with the field inspections. In the coming weeks, staff from the Conservation Forestry Section will assist with pole deliveries and bundling for helicopter schedules.

Michael Hewison, Investigations & Design Engineer, suffered a heart attack on 5 August. He is currently making a good recovery in Masterton Hospital. Once the asset management plan reviews have been completed, River Management staff consider they should cope with the workload in the short term. Andy Duncan, a local consultant engineer, has indicated he is available to assist if there is an unexpected increase in workloads.

Interviews have been held for Laura Watts replacement in the Consents & Compliance Section.

Tim Baker is on a short term contract assisting with resource investigations field work.

Graham Sevicke-Jones, Section Leader, Resource Investigations, attended a 10 day Management Training Course.

### **3. Land & River Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)**

#### **3.1 Planting Programme Update**

Rainfall at Tanawa Hut in the northern end of the Tinui Valley has not exceeded the monthly average since February 2003. In the five months since then rainfall has been 58% of normal, with July recording 40% of its annual rainfall.

This abnormally dry period has not curtailed seedling planting and the programme is well advanced. The middle of August should see most jobs completed. Pole planting on the other hand has been slow to get underway because of the dry conditions. Work has commenced in the Castlepoint, Tinui, and Bideford areas where soil moistures are higher. Approximately 25% of the pole planting programme has been completed.

If no significant rain falls in the next month, particularly in the Taueru, Westmere, Ponatahi, and Pirinoa areas then serious consideration will need to be given to cancelling the planned work for these areas.

#### **3.2 Akura Conservation Centre**

The Centre has been open since early June. Sales of all lines of seedlings have been very good. Pole sales are slow because of the dry soil conditions. Allocation of poles for gate sales, and sales to other Council's have been increased to compensate for the likely reduction in soil conservation plantings.

#### **3.3 Road Access to Tauanui Reserve**

Culverts have been installed in the access road and fences and gates have been completed to create the lane way through Didsburys. A heavy duty forestry gate has been installed on the boundary of Pirinoa Blocks 8A & 8B. At the request of the 8B Trustees gates have been locked to reduce unauthorised access.

Discussions with South Wairarapa District Council have resulted in some short and some longer term works being identified to improve Whakatomotomo Road for the anticipated logging traffic. A meeting onsite with concerned local residents is scheduled for 12 August.

A meeting with Bawden & Associates, our harvesting contractors, has shown that good prices are being paid by the domestic market for the predominant log grades. Market demand and contractor availability indicate that logging could start late September or early October.

#### **3.4 Silviculture**

A small programme of silviculture (28 hectares of thinning in Stoney Creek and 3 hectares of pruning in Hiwinui second rotation) has been completed during July.

### **3.5 Technical Services**

Activities completed include -

- Work on AMM Geoscan project, a digital terrain model for the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Review
- Collected flood level information around Tawaha floodway
- Completion of coastal surveys at Castlepoint and Riversdale
- Lower Valley reclassification work, supply of information to consultants
- Digitise fairway options for Waipoua, Waiohine, Tauherenikau and Waingawa Rivers
- Large number of external customer enquires for maps and information
- Changes to Upper Ruamahanga and Waipoua rating classifications

### **3.6 Upper Ruamahanga River Scheme – Te Ore Ore to Wardells Bridge**

During the last financial year extensive river works were completed adjacent to Henley Lake. These involved changing the alignment of the river, widening the section, re-battering the riverbank, placement of rock groynes and planting poles. The original design could not be constructed in year one because of costs, e.g. additional rock groynes. The works have coped well with the floods of the past year. The scheme was keen to see the whole reach receive protection so we programmed the establishment of four rock groynes and three boulder groynes. The work has been completed at a cost of \$42,000. Fish & Game approved the work in spite of the construction occurring in the spawning season. The boulders and rock had to be transported across the river.

### **3.7 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Review**

The first meeting of the review steering committee was held on 30 July. Cr Tony Draper (South Wairarapa District Council) will chair this committee. The review is timetabled to be completed with a new rating classification in place from 1 July 2005.

Background information on the Scheme was presented by Gary Williams (Consultant), David Bulman (Classifier), and Ranjan Cyril (Engineer).

The staff review committee is pursuing the creation of a digital terrain model. The existing classification is based on the impact of flood events in 1947 and the early 1950's. It is considered that the development of a model to show a "full banks down" scenario will be the most appropriate way to establish the impact of flooding today in the Lower Valley.

Other important decisions will be deciding where the boundary of the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme should be and how should the Tauherenikau River be managed and funded.

#### **4. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)**

##### **Pest Animals:**

##### **4.1 Magpie Research Trial**

The magpie research trial, replicated in five study areas within New Zealand, is coming to a close. The trial, which commenced in late 1999, was to test the hypothesis that other birds become more conspicuous in the absence of magpies.

An early interpretation of results indicates that:

- People who have reported seeing more tui and kereru after magpie control may be correct. The trial shows that increases were small on a whole-farm scale, but at any one place these birds may have changed from absent to present.
- Magpies chase other birds 50 – 100 metres, but rarely kill them.
- Magpies are not important nest predators.
- Native forest birds are generally limited by pest mammals, which are secretive, nocturnal, silent, arboreal and therefore unobserved.
- Large-scale control of magpies is expensive, re-invasion is constant and control is best focused at particular sites where native birds feed.
- There were definite increases in five introduced species in response to magpie control. These were songthrush, myna, starling, blackbird and skylark.
- Removal of territorial magpies will stop attacks on native birds (and people).

The research trial consisted of five replicate pairs of study areas situated in Southland, Wairarapa, Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Northland. The magpies were controlled by various means in one block of each pair and all birds (not just natives) were counted with five-minute counts in all ten blocks. All blocks were first counted before any magpies were controlled. Final pest control counts were made in December 2002. On average, 540 magpies (range 33 – 1355) were removed from each 900 hectare study area each year; a total of 8,105 birds.

Interpretation of the results is being finalised by Landcare Research NZ Ltd in association with Waikato University. The final scientific view is some months away and will be the subject of a contract report to the seven participating regional councils. As part of the overall research program, a detailed study into magpie behaviour and interactions with other species is being concluded by PhD student researcher, Dai Morgan.

The preliminary interpretation of the research supports the aims, objectives and means of achievement for magpies listed as a Site-Led pest in Greater Wellington's Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002 – 2022.

## 4.2 Mt Bruce (Pukaha) Restoration Programme

The Department of Conservation is keen to develop a management strategy for the Pukaha Project incorporating pest control, species re-introduction, forest restoration, education and interpretation opportunities, promotion and publicity, visitors, tourism, iwi skills development, research and funding.

The involvement of the local community, neighbours, regional and district councils is seen as essential to the success of the restoration project. To this end, a Strategic Plan hui was held at the Mt Bruce Wildlife Centre on 28 July 2003.

The themes of the meeting centred on four broad categories:

- Restoration and biodiversity
- Tourism, public awareness
- Education, community participation
- Tikanga / 'Te Ao Maori', skills development.

Some of the vision for the next 10 years included:

- Exceedingly low pest numbers
- Thriving kokako and kiwi populations
- A visitor experience that attracts both national and international visitors
- A sense of pride and ownership from the community toward Pukaha
- Pukaha as an 'outdoor classroom'
- Pukaha is acknowledged as the premier eco-tourism destination in New Zealand
- Significant economic benefits are achieved for the region(s).

The next stage of the process is to include more participants. These include Horizons Regional Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Department of Conservation, National Wildlife Centre Trust, neighbours, Rangitaane o Wairarapa, Ngati Kahungunu, Landcare Trust, Tourism agencies, District Council public relations representatives, Federated Farmers, Forest and Bird, Eastern and Central Community Trust and Ducks Unlimited.

The next steps are to prepare a summary of the vision and objectives, prepare a draft format for a strategy document and circulate this to the above groups and individuals. A workshop will then be scheduled to further define the vision and objectives and to identify teams to work on a major section of the proposed strategy.

This is a significant and unique opportunity for Greater Wellington to help facilitate a truly integrated long-term biodiversity project. As Mt Bruce (Pukaha) is situated at one of the main gateways to the Wellington Region, we are being given a rare opportunity to promote the region to national and international visitors.

### **4.3 Rook Control**

A meeting was held at Dannevirke on 23 July 2002 between Hawkes Bay, Horizons and Greater Wellington Regional Councils to discuss past and present control programmes.

Following consistent success, all three Councils now rely primarily on helicopter rook nest baiting. The opportunity was taken to analyse strengths and weaknesses and to generally exchange experiences with the method. It was agreed to meet again in December at the same venue to provide a debrief of the control undertaken during the rook breeding season of September to November.

The Councils have undertaken to pursue management of rooks within their region that complements their neighbouring Councils containment or control programmes. This is implicit in each Council's Regional Pest Management Strategy.

### **4.4 Eastern and Western Hutt Catchment Aerial Possum Control Operation**

This operation finally got underway last month. It was postponed last year pending the outcome of the Mangaroa-Kaitoke Bovine Tb aerial works following a prolonged period of anti-1080 lobbying in the area. Then it was postponed again because of the recent power crisis. The supply of alternative water supplies from the Wainuiomata Plant or Hutt aquifer would have entailed the substantial use of additional pumping equipment.

The aerial prefeed (sown at a rate of 2 kg/hectare) over the 8,750 hectares of steep mountainous terrain took place on 23 July 2003. The toxic application was also sown at 2kg/hectare and took place five days later on 28 July. Two helicopters were used on each occasion to ensure, as far as possible, that each bait application would be completed within the same day. It was important to make the best of any opportunity for good flying conditions. On this occasion the weather could not have been better and the toxic application was followed by several days of fine weather.

The degradation of bait is being monitored regularly as are sample possum carcasses. The toxin reduction in the bait and carcasses will be the basis that helps determine when water from the catchment will be available again for supply through the Te Marua Treatment Station. The water itself is also being regularly monitored.

As part of the many areas of risk management associated with this type of operation, all tracks and main routes accessing the area were inspected to remove any bait that may have fallen on them. This is a significantly labour intensive operation in this type of terrain.

Council staff are constantly measuring rainfall in case there is a significant flood event that could wash possum carcasses down the river and therefore pose a danger to dogs. If there is heavy rain the sides of the river will be

searched for carcasses. If any are found, warning signs will be posted and the public will be alerted through announcements in the local media.

This operation was undertaken by the Biosecurity Department under contract to the Parks and Forests Department.

## **Bovine Tb:**

### **4.5 2002/03 Programme**

Almost all work carried over from the 2002/03 year has been completed. Three operations remain to be completed, including:

	<b>Hectares</b>
Te Wharau	2,325 (1 strata)
Holdsworth-Carterton	2,952 (2 strata)
Mangaroa-Kaitoke	<u>4,046</u> (1 strata)
	9,323

This work is being completed by four individual contractors.

## **Aerial Control**

The following aerial control operations have recently been completed:

- Featherston to Waiorongomai Crown, (approx 5,400 ha). Monitoring data to date indicates an RTC of approximately 1.0 – 1.2 %. This area was treated with 1080 pellets, with an application rate of 1.5kg/ha.
- Holdsworth to Woodside Crown. (approx 11,000 ha). This operation was treated 5 August with an application rate of 1.5kg/ha. Performance monitoring will occur late August. No public concerns have been raised in this high use area which receives many visitors.

### **4.6 2003/04 Programme**

The approved programme for the 2003/04 year includes the following:

	<b>Hectares</b>
Possum control	321,668
Ferret control	<u>31,645</u>
	353,313

## **Surveys**

Ferret and possum surveys will be carried out in the following operations:

	<b>Hectares</b>
Featherston	5,742
Kahutara-Pirinoa	5,367
Mataikona	2,000
Ponatahi-Longbush	6,100
Waingawa	1,878
Whangaehu-Mauriceville	<u>8,938</u>
	30,025



Pig surveys will be carried out in the following operations:

	<b>Hectares</b>
Otaki	5,000
Tinui	<u>5,000</u>
	10,000

#### **4.7 Contracts Let 2003/04**

The following operational contracts have been let for the 2003/04 year to date:

<b>Operation</b>	<b>Hectares</b>	<b>Operator</b>
Bideford	1,830	J McCaslin
Homewood-Riversdale	30,217	GW Bovine Unit
Kahutara-Pirinoa	18,432	GW Bovine Unit
Mataikona	6,781	Professional Guiding Services
Stronvar	5,842	GW Bovine Unit
Stronvar	5,723	J McCaslin
Te Wharau	1,089	GW Bovine Unit
Tinui	3,847	J McCaslin
Kahutara-Pirinoa Ferret	10,169	GW Bovine Unit

#### **Successful Contractors**

Work commitments to date include:

	<b>Hectares</b>
GW Bovine Unit	65,749
Professional Guiding Services	6,781
J McCaslin	<u>11,400</u>
	83,930

#### **4.8 Proposed Contracts**

Staff are currently preparing tender documents within the following operations to be let before the end of August. These areas total approximately 64,000 hectares.

	<b>Area</b>
South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	15,642
Whangaehu	15,004
Ponatahi-Longbush	4,756
Bideford	6,306
Castlehill	2,486
Taueru-Maungaraki	<u>20,000</u>
	64,194

#### **4.9 High Risk Strata**

High Risk strata are programmed for annual control with an RTC performance target of 2.0% or less. However, at the end of July 2003 there was approximately 109,000 hectares of high risk strata which had recent

RTC performance monitors lower than RTC 2.0%. A large part of this area is actually below RTC 1.0%.

These areas will be reviewed, in conjunction with AHB and disease management staff, to determine how intensive control should be implemented (if at all) in the 2003/04 year.

## **Pest Plants:**

### **4.10 Eradication and Containment Plants**

A contract has been arranged to clear infestations of Smilax on four properties in the Ponatahi Martinborough area. This contract covers the initial clearance in August and two maintenance spray applications in October and May. At one of the rural sites the infestation is scattered over approximately 4 hectares.

Tenders are currently being called for the control of Boneseed at three Wairarapa coastal settlements. One is for additional work at Ngawi and Lake Ferry, where approximately 70 properties were cleared of Boneseed at around this time last year. The second contract is for initial work at Riversdale Beach. This first stage of a three-year programme will focus on Blue Pacific Parade where 91 property owners have agreed to have control work carried out. Several public areas will also be cleared.

### **4.11 Registrations of Interest**

Advertisements seeking registrations from suitably qualified contractors prepared to tender for work controlling pest plants for the Biosecurity Department resulted in 12 applications. One company is based in Auckland, another in Christchurch and one from Levin. The remaining 9 are all situated in the Wellington Region with the majority of these having previously carried out work for the Department.

### **4.12 Annual Activities Report**

Staff are currently assessing data gathered during the 2002/03 year to include in the Annual Regional Pest Management Strategy Operational Report. In accordance with the Biosecurity Act 1993, the Annual Report must be presented for Council approval within five months of the close of the financial year.

## 5. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

### 5.1 Environmental Incidents

<b>Date</b>	<b>Complaint</b>	<b>Summary</b>
14 July	Very black smoke reported from outdoor fire, Masterton	Found to be tyres used as accelerant in outdoor fire. Person responsible put it out on request from Council staff.
24 July	Report of dumping of timber treatment sludge at site in Masterton.	Abatement notice served. Investigations continuing.
31 July	Complaint of bad smoke pollution, rural Carterton	Found to be farmer burning green clippings on a large scale. Fire left to burn its course, but farmer asked to wait until rest of material is dry before burning three other piles.
4 August	Complaint of severe smoke pollution, rural Masterton.	Found to be farmer burning tyres and baleage wrap. Left to burn its course. Staff wish to publicise the fact that this is not an acceptable practice.
8 August	Complaint of plastic being burned, urban Masterton	Staff investigated – unable to determine which house it was coming from. No further action taken.

### 5.2 Enforcement

One notice has been issued requiring: the stopping of dumping of contaminated timber treatment residue onto land by the Waingawa River; proper disposal of accumulated contaminated material; and investigation, and if proved necessary; remediation of the site.

### 5.3 Notified Consents

<b>Consent Application</b>	<b>Status</b>
Opaki and Te Ore Ore Water Races – Masterton District	Submissions closed 12/2/03. On hold at applicants request to allow negotiation with submitters.
Henley Lake take and discharge – Masterton District	Submissions closed. Pre hearing meeting held.
Sewage discharge. Application for variation – Carterton District	Submissions closed on 19/12/02. Application on hold at applicants request.
Water Races -Carterton District (2)	Awaiting further information from applicant's consultant.
Water Races - South Wairarapa District (2)	Submissions closed and pre hearing meeting held. On hold at applicant's request to allow review of Code of Practice.
Featherston Sewage – discharge	No further progress advised.
Water take – Waingawa River – Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre	Operative. No appeals lodged.

## 5.4 Appeals

<i>Appellant</i>	<i>Nature of Appeal</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Current Status</i>
J Barton	Additional charges on withdrawn stopbank access application	Mediation declined	Court has advised they hold no valid appeal. Further time given for Mr Barton to provide Court with information. This was not forthcoming and recovery is now to be sought through the District Court.
J Barton	Requirement for “up front” payment of estimated consent processing costs	Mediation declined	Memorandum to be lodged with Court by 14 August. Hearing waited.
I Alexander	Appeal of abatement notice requiring irrigation to cease	Interest registered with Court.	Evidence prepared. Hearing waited. Appellant has appointed new counsel.

## 5.5 Masterton Sewage Consent

Masterton District Council is up to schedule with the requirements of the interim consent in terms of both actions and reporting. This has included a newsletter to ratepayers. Comment has been provided and a discussion held with the Manager Assets and Operations on the forthcoming review of the integrity of the existing three ponds.

## 5.6 Coastal Strategy

The project has been in its analysis and draft strategy development phase with a workshop to be held on 15 August to review the draft strategy and its proposed consultation process. Other activities have been:

- A Group Workshop on 19 May where Special Qualities Issues and Goals were agreed.
- A Staff Workshop on 18 July with District Council staff where methods were developed.
- Meetings with main landowners to discuss the process and hear their concerns.

The project is on course for completion in December.

## 5.7 Laboratory Tenders

Considerable laboratory analysis is associated with the water quality monitoring undertaken by Greater Wellington. The opportunity has been

taken to improve efficiency, quality standards, and ensure consistency across the region by tendering this work.

Eleven tenders were received and the work awarded five laboratories, including Greater Wellington’s laboratory. Based on the previous programmes, considerable cost savings and other benefits have been achieved. Contracts expire in June 2006.

## 5.8 Mangatarere Stream Water Allocation

The draft plan is close to completion, which will then be made available for public consultation. This river can become very stressed and was dry in its mid reaches last summer.

## 5.9 Hydrology

### *Rainfall*

Rainfall figures in the Wairarapa for July were below the long-term averages for the three representative sites.

For the Tararua site at Angle Knob there has been a big swing from a near record total in June (997mm) to 393mm in July - only 62% of the July long term average total. A southerly early in the month left snow on the Tararuas, which remained throughout the rest of the month, despite a warmer northwesterly front on 17 July. There was very little rainfall in the Tararuas for the rest of the month following this front.

In the Lower Valley at Alloa there was only 79mm in total for July. At only 68% of the long term average total, this is consistent with the below average totals recorded here over most of this year. Alloa has not been above average since June/July last year, averaging only 66% for the last 12 months.

Tanawa Hut in the eastern hill country shows a similar pattern with 68mm recorded in July -only 40% of the long-term average for July.

The table below shows rainfall figures for July for three representative sites. June’s figures are given for comparison.

Site	Location	July		June		July	June
		mm	Average	mm	Average	% of average	
Angle Knob	Tararua Ranges	393	632	997	657	62	152
Alloa	Middle Valley	79	116	103	112	68	92
Tanawa Hut	Eastern Hills	68	170	107	146	40	73

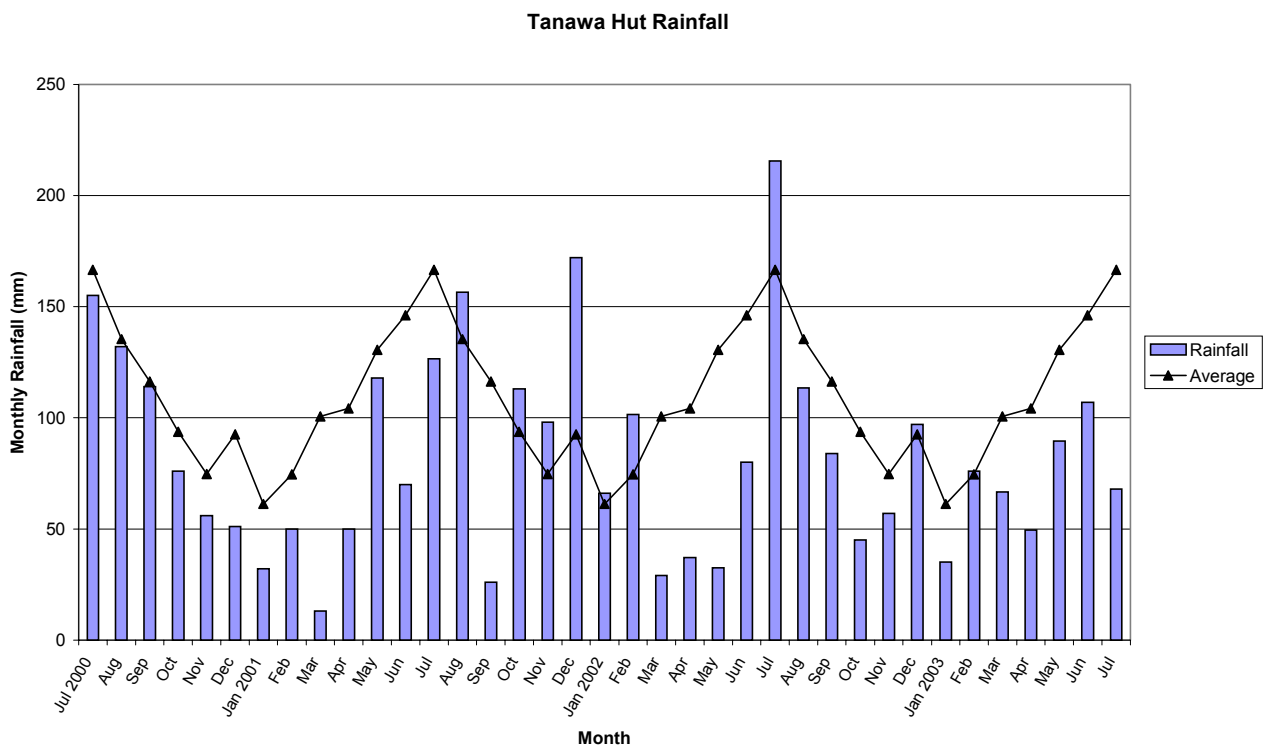
It is worth noting on the following graph that July 2002 rainfall was well above the average at Tanawa Hut. This is not the case this winter. If we get another dry spring like last year soil moisture will be well in deficit. NIWA’s July “Climate Update” gives an Outlook for July to September, which includes the following:

*“A mild late winter is expected, with above average temperatures in all districts”*

*“Normal or below normal rainfall is expected in the east of the North Island”*

*“Soil moisture levels and river flows predicted to be normal of below normal in the east of both islands”*

The figures below show the monthly rainfall totals at Tanawa Hut (Eastern hill country) since July 2000 plotted against the long-term average for each month. It can be seen that for most of the last year the monthly totals have been below average.



### **Rivers**

Mean river flows for both the Tararuas and the lower valley (Waiohine at Gorge & Ruamahanga at Waihenga) dropped back from well above average in June to below average in July.

There was only one minor flood from the Tararua catchments on the 17 July arising from a northwesterly rain front. This resulted in floodwarnings being issued for the Waiohine River and for the Ruamahanga River at both Wardells and Waihenga.

The table below shows July flows for two representative sites. June’s data is given for comparison.

Site	July		June		July	June
	m3/sec	Average	m3/sec	Average	% of average	
Waiohine	22.9	29.4	37.3	27.3	78	136
Waihenga	83.5	139.5	121.6	111.7	60	109

### ***Floodwarnings***

	July	Financial Year to date	Previous Year to Date
No. of events	1	1	2
No of Lists Issued	8	8	7

River levels in the upper reaches of the Ruamahanga & Waiohine Rivers recorded minor flood levels. The lower reaches of the Ruamahanga River at Waihenga recorded a moderate flood level of 4.2 metres. High seas blocked the Lake Onoke opening once during the month.

### ***Groundwater***

Water levels in the Parkvale aquifer continue to be at the level of the Long Term Minimum. Water levels are still 1.2m lower than this time last year, an improvement over last month when levels were 1.5 to 2 metres lower. This is an aquifer that is replenished by rainfall. New surface and groundwater takes in the area are subject to a moratorium.

### ***General***

- Hydrologists from the Marlborough District Council visited to observe the Hydrotel system and Barrage Gate operation.
- Repairs and maintenance was carried out at Angle Knob raingauge, which also included a tidy up of the cabling ducts and replacing the aerial cable. This had been damaged in the large snowfall recently, and the site was off the air for sometime.

## **5.10 Publicity**

A feature was published in Midweek on tsunami hazards.

## **6. Recommendation**

*That the report be received and its contents noted.*

Colin Wright  
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa