

Flood Protection Manager's report for period ending 9 September 2005

1. Manager's comments

1.1 General

My time over the last month has been dominated by the work required to steer the Waiwhetu Stream investigation and preparing for the 29 August Advisory Committee meeting. The meeting was very successful and officers now feel they have the time and mandate to get on and make a good job of the study. I have now handed the management of this project to John Eyles.

Considerable work has also gone into preparation for the new 2006-16 LTCCP. Committee members will be well aware of the pressure to speed up our capital improvement and investigations work programmes. Hopefully one further workshop session with Councillors will complete the guidance needed to begin the detailed financial modelling phase.

We are also well through planning the upcoming years work programme. It is very busy on all fronts, including the need to complete the January 2005 flood damage repairs. A very good start was made with Council approving tenders for the Alicetown stopbank reconstruction and the Jim Cooke Park realignment works.

1.2 Staffing

We are in the process of recruiting a replacement for Susan Borrer. Young, smart, recently graduated engineers, are proving difficult to find.

2. Waikanae River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]

2.1 Jim Cooke Park

We expect to have let the contract for the construction of the Jim Cooke Park realignment works prior to the Committee's meeting. Council approved accepting the tender from John Ray Ltd (Report PE 05.422) on 30 August 2005. The resource consent for the work was granted on 31 August 2005.

Access to parts of the immediate river corridor will need to be restricted during construction. A meeting will be held with John Ray Ltd to ensure that the necessary signs and fencing is put in place when required.

2.2 Friends of the Waikanae River

The Friends of the Waikanae River are continuing with the implementation of their care group project. An inspection of some of the south bank plantings undertaken by the group was made by Councillors on 1 August 2005.

2.3 Otaihanga house raising

Good progress has been made at 15 Toroa Road with the house raised and back on its new foundations. The finishing work is underway.

Prices for the stopbank/floodwall around the McLachlan property at 21 Makora Road have been received and are within budget. Drafts of the necessary agreements for the work to proceed (includes an agreement KCDC as part of the stopbank is on KCDC reserve) have been prepared. The draft agreements will be forwarded to the McLachlan's as soon as they are ready for release.

3. Otaki River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]

3.1 Friends of the Otaki River

The Otaki Friends main activity has been the construction of the nursery at the Otaki Depot. The nursery is essentially complete and in use.

3.2 Winstones walkway

Chris Wootton, Belmont Park Ranger, inspected the walkway past the Winstone Aggregates plant to check that the track met the required safety standards. Chris's opinion was that the track was safe for public use.

Further improvements to the walkway have been put on hold as Winstone Aggregates have indicated that they will probably vacate the site over the next 12 – 24 months. We have written to Winstones regarding our expectations for cleaning up the stopbank and adjacent stockpile area.

3.3 KCDC Flood Hazard information plan change

A meeting was held with KCDC to progress this matter. It appears the hearings will now be programmed for September 2005 and we will work with KCDC to meet this programme.

3.4 Chrystalls extended stopbank

The preferred stopbank alignment has been plotted over the property plans, using the latest LIDAR survey data and we are now proceeding to set up meetings with the affected land owners regarding the works. The programme is to have the land negotiations well under way, designs completed and consents applied for this financial year.

3.5 South Waitohu stopbank

A decision has been made to resource the bulk of the design, consents and supervision work in-house. Design work is programmed to start in February 2006.

Initial discussions have been held with the Otaki and Porirua Trust Board, the only landowner involved, about the proposed works. We see no major impediments in progressing this work as there are benefits to the Trust land, as well as to Rangiuru residents and the wider community

4. Hutt River floodplain management [Daya Atapattu]

4.1 Ava to Ewen project

The contract for the reconstruction of the Alicetown stopbank has now been let to Barry Foster Contracting Ltd, Christchurch following Council approval to accept the Barry Foster tender at its meeting on 30 August 2005.

A newsletter will be distributed in September 2005 to the Alicetown Community and other key stakeholders giving key dates for major tasks and contact details. Opus International Consultants Ltd (Opus) will assist us in supervising this contract.

Truebridge Callender Beach Ltd (TCB) has placed orders for the supply of pumps and a slide gate for the Opahu Stream station. Three pumps, each with 3 cumec capacity will be supplied from Sweden. TCB and Opus are currently finalising the design for the pump station civil works and the associated stopbank and channel works. TCB expects to call tenders for the civil works contract in September 2005.

4.2 Belmont improvements

Fabrication of the new Norfolk Street floodgates is substantially complete.

Excell Corporation has been awarded the contract to undertake the civil works required to install the gates. Tenders for the civil works closed on 29 August 2005 with two tenders being received.

4.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank

Wellington Golf Club (WGC) members have now approved the sale of the wineglass area, a key step in the construction of the proposed new floodwall. Unfortunately further changes to the UHCC District Plan are required to enable residential development of the land.

Detailed design for the floodwall will commence once the Golf Club obtains the necessary planning approvals, and the agreement between WGC and GWRC to construct the floodwall has been signed.

A number of encroachments onto the UHCC reserve were identified during the preliminary design of the main stopbank. In conjunction with UHCC officers we are currently working through encroachment issues with six landowners. We aim to resolve these before consulting with wider community on the main stopbank upgrade.

4.4 District plan measures

Hutt City Council officers are currently preparing for the 'hearing' of the plan change proposal, expected to be in late November or early December 2005. We have offered informal meetings to two submitters to discuss their issues. One meeting was held on 26 August 2005.

We are currently reviewing the properties affected by the proposed Upper Hutt plan change in preparation for the pre-notification consultation.

5. Planning and development services [Phillip Purves]

The following table summarises the situation in regard to the number of formal, written requests that have been attended to during July.

	July 2005	YTD
Requests brought forward	12	12
Additional requests received	11	11
Responses provided	12	12
Outstanding requests	11	11

6. Investigations

6.1 Waiwhetu Stream floodplain management study [Geoff Dick]

The second meeting of the Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Committee was held on 29 August 2005. The minutes of this meeting are provided separately in this order paper, attached to a cover report. The cover report addresses the key recommendations made by the Committee.

The meeting was very successful in confirming the June 2007 target date, set out in the scoping report, for the completion of the study. It was also clear that the members wanted the investigations into flood relief measures done thoroughly so that a long term robust solution was achieved.

Management of this project has now transferred to John Eyles following the 29 August meeting.

6.2 Waitohu flood hazard assessment [Geoff Dick]

No further progress has been able to be made on finalising the Waitohu Study summary report. The key focus has been on making some good early progress with the Waiwhetu study.

The aim is to now get the summary report completed and to then present it to the November Landcare Committee meeting.

6.3 Mangaroa River flood hazard assessment [Phillip Purves]

Setting up of the base hydraulic model was completed at the end of July and initial runs were carried out in early August. From the results of these initial runs it became evident that some additional survey data was needed, where extensive overflows were detected. A variation to the contract has been approved for this work. This variation was able to be accommodated within the contingency allowance provided for in the contract. The additional work will probably cause a minor delay in the completion of the project. Calibration and verification work is continuing.

The consultant completed a walkover of the river channel as part of assessing the river morphology, erosion hazard and channel management aspects of the study. Draft reports are expected to be available for Flood Protection comment in mid September.

6.4 Pauatahanui Stream flood hazard assessment [John Eyles]

A meeting was held with Porirua City Council officers to discuss a preliminary report from the consultants, Connell Wagner Ltd, on the condition of the stream channel. Connell Wagner had said that the current flood risk could be reduced by a programme of work to remove overgrown willow trees, gravel deposits and similar obstructions.

A joint inspection by GWRC and PCC officers is proposed to assess the amount of work involved in the clearing, and therefore how it would be best organised and paid for.

7. Operations

7.1 Wellington [Jeff Evans]

Hutt River

The focus over the period has been on our normal winter willow and native planting programmes. Staff have been busy cutting willow poles from our river side nursery stands, cutting back old and dying willow stock and replacing them with new plantings. The native planting programme is also in full swing, with a large amount of re-vegetation work now underway on the river berms and bank edges.

The winter has been mild and settled and it is only the trout spawning season that has preventing us from commencing our big programme of channel works early.

We have also had an opportunity to service and replace all the buoys at the Hutt Mouth that mark out the dredging and deposition area boundaries. These have needed regular ongoing maintenance to keep them serviceable.

Hutt River trail

We have continued to install timber bollards on the Taita berms. These are proving to be very effective in stopping vehicle damage to the grass areas.

Hutt River ranging services

Rubbish dumping and removal of abandoned vehicles remains a frustrating part of the job. The amount of rubbish seems to increase each time tip fees go up, and it is difficult to catch the perpetrators.

We have continued working with local schools on a variety of planting projects on the river berms. This continues to be very rewarding for both the children and staff alike.

A number of casual walking groups have used the trail over the period. We also hosted staff from the Canterbury Regional Council who were keen to a look at our trail and get ideas for their Waimakariri River park.

Watercourses

Clearing runs have been completed in Hulls Creek and on the Waiwhetu Stream.

Work for the other departments

We are in the middle of constructing the site works in preparation for installing an air quality hut and monitoring tower in Savage Park, in Upper Hutt.

7.2 Kapiti [Garry Baker]

General

During the last eight weeks Kapiti has experienced rather “mixed” weather which has resulted in some difficulties in planning the planting programme and associated works in advance. The planting crew has been chased out of the river several times following a sudden burst of rain.

We have now secured an acceptable source of rock to complete the January flood damage repairs in both the Otaki and Waikanae Rivers. However the rock will cost substantially more than budgeted meaning that some of the other programmed work will have to be deferred.

Waikanae River

Willow planting along both bank edges in the lower reaches has been completed, as has the clearing of a riverside walking path along the left bank through the “Topliff reach”. Some larger old crack willows were removed. This track will provide an alternative access for walkers while the lower river gravel extraction takes place during the summer months.

Otaki River

The “mixed” weather has seen many of our willows showing green tinges during mid-July, with some catkins now well in flower, resulting in early bee activity.

The heavy rain periods meant we had to “juggle” our planting programme to suit the river levels, particularly when planting under the “cliffs” along the left bank. However, the majority of our planting in the Otaki is complete, with some 3,500 pre-cut poles and 2,000 rooted stock planted along both banks from Mangahanene Island to “Mansells” Bend. We also planted some new stock in the Otaki “nursery” opposite Chrystals.

The Otaki River mouth was re-located north when the perched outlet, south of the Coastal Plan “trigger point”, caused the twin Rangiuru Stream floodgates to become inoperable. High water levels in the estuary meant that the gates could not open at low tide to maintain normal water levels upstream of the gates, flooding farm land and endangering houses in Rangiuru.

Winstone Aggregates have recommenced gravel extraction from below the bridges, after an almost 4-month absence from the river.

Kapiti watercourses

Waimeha Stream

The Waimeha Stream mouth was realigned late August, after concern was expressed at the height of the vertical face of the sand dunes. Although it is far from desirable to do this work during the whitebait season, a quick look at the tide tables indicated a very favourable time between the moon and tide phases to realign the mouth. Although a 3-4 whitebaiters did voice their disapproval, they were largely happy when the reason for the cut was explained.

7.3 Operations support [Steve Murphy]

Asset management

We have been busy completing year end asset management tasks including:

- The annual field inspections of all Flood Protection's infrastructural assets.
- Compiling the required documentation for the annual asset management report.
- The annual reciprocal peer review undertaken with staff from the Wairarapa office on 19th July. This year's review focussed on maintenance programmes on the Wainuiomata River and Porirua Stream. The reviewers' comments were favourable and are outlined in the separate report "*Western Rivers asset management report 2004/05*".
- Setting the 2005/06 work programme. This financial year looks to be a busy year in terms of asset management with our asset management plans being due for review. This will give us an opportunity to overhaul the current documents, clarifying any ambiguities and overall making them more usable.

Isolated works

We are currently processing a number of isolated works subsidy requests, particularly from the Reikorangi Valley. For the majority of these subsidy requests, Greater Wellington officers have been involved in the job from start to finish and the processing of the subsidy application is one of the final steps in the process, apart from a follow-up site visit upon completion of the works. The recent councillor's tour highlighted the importance of Greater Wellington role, and how our advice is appreciated by affected landowners.

We are also working with a number of residents in Maymorn Road who own properties adjacent to the Mangaroa River. A number of these properties are suffering lateral erosion and have asked Greater Wellington for assistance in the design of works to protect a 3 metre high vertical bank. The solution will not be straight forward. The river channel is very confined leaving little room for the construction of any works.

We are also assisting the Department of Conservation with the design of river management works for the Catchpool Stream to repair major flood damage incurred during the March 2005 flood event. This advice will include concept designs and rough cost estimates.

Waiwhetu Stream

The contract with Excell Corporation Ltd to manually clear nuisance weeds from the Waiwhetu Stream channel has been extended until December 2005. Over the previous 18 months of this contract, approximately 1,600 hours was spent clearing the stream with nearly 41 tonnes of cut weed and rubbish sent to landfill. Excell Corporation Ltd has performed well in what at times is not a pleasant job.

Gravel extraction

Gravel extraction figures to the end of July 2005 are set out below.

River	Area	Contractor	Period Year 2005/06 (cubic metres)		Year 2004/05 (cubic metres)
			Period	Year	Full Year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	4,284	4,284	50,105
	River	Horokiwi	0	0	30,717
Otaki	River	Winstones	0	0	35,366
Waikanae	Above Greenaway Road	Various	0	0	2,790
	Below Greenaway Road	Gary Holland Earthmoving	0	0	10,828
TOTALS			4,284	4,284	129,806

Geoff Dick
Manager, Flood Protection

Parks and Forests Manager's report

For period ending 2 September 2005

1. Manager's comments

The slower winter months signal a time for doing maintenance work in the parks that is unable to be done at other times during the year when the parks are busier. It also signals the time for planning larger projects that will happen during the year such as the summer Regional Outdoors Programme. While this work is not "sexy", it is important to start the year well. The more background work we do now, the easier things will be later on.

2. Planning and policy [Dr Philippa Crisp]

2.1 Capital works

The contractor started work on the Queen Elizabeth Park Ranger's office on 22 August. The office is expected to be completed by early November. Two toilets are due for replacement at the Paekakariki picnic area of the park. It is planned to replace these small older blocks with one centrally located, large toilet building (six cubicles plus one disability accessible unit). The architect has started work on the design of the new toilet block and its construction is programmed for early 2006.

2.2 Asset management

The GIS and asset management plan data is being updated and field inspections of all the assets in each park and forest are being progressively completed. Graham Laws has recently finished field work in Battle Hill and is currently working on assets in Belmont Regional Park. Consulting engineers have inspected vehicle bridges in Queen Elizabeth Park.

2.3 Planning and policy

The submissions on the draft Queen Elizabeth Park plan closed on 31st July. A total of 420 submissions were received, of which 308 were in favour of motorsport in the park, with 87 opposed. A summary of these submissions will be presented to Council in the coming weeks. Fiona Shaw attended a recent Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park meeting and spoke about the management planning process.

2.4 Pest control operations

The Wainuiomata/Orongorongo 1080 possum control operation was completed on 3rd August. A long bout of fine weather following the operation has meant that it is likely that the operation will be successful in lowering possum numbers. A post-operational monitor is being planned for September. The Kaitoke West/Akatarawa Saddle 1080 operation was completed on 19 August.

Goat hunting has begun in Pakuratahi Forest, with 50 animals being culled to date. The Environmental Ranger, Jaap Knegtman, has sent out a newsletter to all adjoining landowners to inform them about the culling operation on their boundaries.

2.5 Pest plant control operations

Pest plant control contracts for all the parks and three of the forests have been finalised and the contractors selected.

Some boneseed infestations beyond Burdan's Gate at the Lakes Block of East Harbour Regional Park have been controlled to prevent this infestation from spreading towards the lakes. Further abseiling work will be required in the next couple of months.

2.6 Monitoring

Rata digital photography of selected trees in the current water collection areas has been completed. The trees appear to be in good condition and their foliage density has been maintained. Hinau fruitfall data recently assessed shows that the number of fruit eaten by possums reflects possum densities (77% in Wainuiomata/Orongorongo WCA and 37% in the Hutt water collection area).

2.7 Hutt River trail relay maps

Graham Laws has prepared Hutt River Trail and Rimutaka Rail Trail maps for the proposed Rotary Centennial Relay in October 2005. The event is planned for secondary school teams to run from Petone to Harcourt Park and mountain bike from Cross Creek to Harcourt Park.

3. Marketing & design [Amanda Cox]

3.1 Brochures

The new brochure for Belmont Regional Park is well under way. Given the size of the park and the complexity of the landscape we are increasing the size of the brochure. This will ensure the map and associated information are as easy as possible to read.

We are now drafting the brochure for the Pakuratahi Forest, which includes Tunnel Gully and the Rimutaka Rail Trail. All going well it should be ready for the unveiling of the new interpretation trail at the end of October.

Recently we have been taking advantage of our individual park image strips and corporate design templates, to produce leaflets for the Celebrate Life Totara Grove, Pencarrow Lakes Open Day and common Wetland Plants (that can be given out during planting days). Digital printing enables us to do short runs economically and to test demand. Quantities can be expanded at a later date if required.

3.2 Signs

The new entrance signs currently being designed for Belmont Regional Park have been altered to take account of the pending changes in land ownership. These should be installed very soon.

We have developed interpretation signs for 10 key positions along the Rimutaka Rail Trail from Kaitoke to Summit. Interpretation topics range from the story of Haunui and the naming of the Rimutaka Range, to the building of the ventilation shaft for the current railway tunnel. This will complement the work done by DoC from Summit to Cross Creek and provide visitors with a fascinating insight into the history of the area. Together with DoC we are planning an unveiling of the interpretation trail to be held at Cross Creek on Saturday 29 October. This will coincide with the 50th anniversary of the closing of the

historic line and the opening of the new Rimutaka Tunnel. The *Friends of the Fell Society* are holding a 50th Anniversary Reunion for up to 200 people, and many of their attendees are expected to visit Cross Creek that day.

3.3 Summer in the parks

Planning is under way for the three-month Regional Outdoors summer programme of events which begins on Saturday 7 January 2006. Penelope Evison is discussing programme options with rangers, staff, volunteers, partner organisations and other departments. The programme will be finalised at the beginning of November.

Ross Jackson took Allison Roe out to look at the options available on the Hutt River Trail and Trentham Memorial Park for a large scale walk/run event she is planning for early 2006.

3.4 Promoting the parks

We are currently studying promotional displays for the parks and forests in venues around the region. The display systems will be designed to promote multiple GW departments in our corporate image.

3.5 Friends of the parks

During the last period the *Friends of Belmont Regional Park* held their first monthly meeting following their AGM and are busy sorting out activities for the upcoming year. Management plans and the impending sale of Landcorp land are still to the forefront of their agenda.

The *Friends of Maara Roa* held their AGM in July. At the meeting they were also addressed by Dr Hugh Robertson who is coordinating the national *Save the Kiwi* programme. The committee remained largely the same and their main thrust will continue to be ongoing planting till spring as well as pest control and guided walks in the summer.

Staff also attended our regular three monthly meeting with ARAC and discussed plans for the rebuilding of the Orange Hut. This is likely to involve extensive concrete block work to minimise fire risk, with some orange cladding to retain its traditional identity.

3.6 Volunteer planting days

Several planting days have been held at Queen Elizabeth Park with the *Friends* on the banks of the newly reshaped Whareroa stream. URS New Zealand, an engineering and environment management firm, also planted an area around the recently excavated wetland at the park entrance. They wish to adopt this area and have regular working bees with their families. We are keen to encourage groups or companies such as this to have planting days and to “adopt” areas.

Some staff also participated in the annual school plantings on the Hutt River berms.

3.7 MacKay's Crossing entrance improvements

Upgrading of the drainage system is currently underway to better cope with storm situations at the MacKays Crossing entrance. This work is part of the larger wetland restoration project with Transit NZ and the work is being carried out by Fulton Hogan.

We are also working on a detailed landscape plan for the MacKays Crossing entrance, including the area north of Whareroa Road.

3.8 Conservation week

On Saturday 6 August the Pencarrow Lakes Open Day was held at Lakes Kohangapiripiri and Kohangatera in East Harbour Regional Park. Run in partnership with the Department of Conservation and with the support of MIRO, the event was held in brilliant weather and ranged over almost all the lakes block. 150 participants were either bussed or cycled down Pencarrow Coast Road and then taken on a series of walks and 4WD rides around the area. Following a sausage sizzle and hot drinks, they could then choose from more activities before finishing around 3pm. Feedback was excellent with everyone appearing delighted with the day and keen for such an event to be held again.

Displays were also put up in the Cathedral for the week and in Parliament for the annual Conservation awards, during which GW was acknowledged in several of the presentations.

4. Eastern Sector [Fraser Oliver]

4.1 Kaitoke Regional Park

Work continues on flood protection work on the Pakuratahi River near the Waterworks Road entrance. Willow wands have been planted and extensive planting of flax and Toetoe continues.

The relationship between the Police Youth Aid Section, Department of Corrections and Greater Wellington continues to strengthen. There are currently seven young offenders completing community service projects under Ranger supervision in the Park. Typical work undertaken includes planting natives and site restoration, drain and track clearing and painting of structures. The work being done by young offenders is often mundane but frees our work crews to do more value added projects.

A group of ten *Youth for Christ* sponsored, Conservation Corp workers spent ten days in the park working on two native forest restoration projects. Over 500 seedlings were planted and an area of weeds next to the Hutt River at Te Marua was cleared then 300 Kowhai were planted. Whilst in the park the group recreated on most of the tracks and were given several talks and tours by park staff.

4.2 East Harbour Regional Park

Following on from the earlier work on the Mackenzie track, the maintenance team has now upgraded the lower short section of the track to the steps on Mackenzie Road. It is now wider, more accessible and provides a good route into the park from the Eastbourne town centre.

All the routed timber signs for the park have been finished. Installation will start in the coming weeks.

An arboriculture contractor has completed the first stage of exotic pine removal in the lower Korimako Road track area. Some of the trees were large specimens and were a constant threat to local dwellings so it's a relief to see these out of the way. Stage one of log extraction by Hutt City Council on the lower Ferry Road track has also been completed and the track has now been re-opened.

4.3 Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo catchments

All preparation for the mainland island has been completed. All bait stations have been put out at 100 metre intervals. Stoat traps have been secured in place around the boundary and along Long Ridge, Drummond Ridge, Skull Gully valley and Wainuiomata West river valley. Possum kill traps have been placed at 150 meter intervals along the northern and eastern boundary to prevent reinvasion from neighbouring properties. The work has been completed in good time to coincide with the 1080 poison operation which will significantly reduce possum numbers. Ongoing maintenance and monitoring of the mainland island over the coming years will ensure a predator proof area for native birds to flourish.

Big House Productions have been filming on site in the recreation area. Cloud 9 have continued filming for a number of days in and around the Morton Dam. Early hiccups have been sorted out with the production managers to minimise impacts on the area.

Dates have been organised for the next period of Catchment Tours. A newspaper advertisement has been printed inviting people to participate by booking a place on one of the available Sundays. Dates have also been planned for next year's balloted roar hunting period. A total of 18 guided walks are planned for this coming year.

4.4 Akatarawa/ Pakuratahi Forests

Prison inmates continue to assist with road maintenance, vegetation control and digging holes for bollards etc. Their attendance is sporadic at the moment due to prison staff shortages. This will hopefully improve. Maintenance work to the planted areas in Tunnel Gully has been completed by our own horticultural team. This has included re-mulching all the garden areas and the re-metaling of several car parking areas.

A large portion of the ranger's time has been spent operating the digger in several areas mainly the Rimutaka Incline Walkway and Tunnel Gully Reserve. This work has involved maintaining water tables in several cuttings on the Rimutaka Incline formation and also the installation of cut off drains along the entrance portion as ponding water has been continually creating potholes.

The new carpark at the entrance to the Rimutaka Incline Walkway has now been metalled and water tables surrounding the carpark have been cleared. The final stage will be to plant the mounded soil which is situated at the back of the carpark and install a couple of gardens/timber beams to prevent it from being damaged.

The Pakuratahi Forest continues to be popular with walkers and mountain bikers and this is very evident especially on fine days. All feedback regarding the area has been positive.

5. Western Sector – Matt Ballantine

5.1 Belmont Regional Park

Staff have been catching up on track maintenance including surface metalling of tracks such as the Rahui track in lower Cornish Street, Korokoro. We have also been working to provide an easy access walking track next to the Dry Creek car park. Although this will be a short (five minute) walk from the car park area alongside the stream, it is one of the few sites in the park with an easy flat grade and will permit a much wider variety of people to access the area. Staff have also been putting the finishing touches to walkways on lands now controlled and managed as part of Belmont Regional Park. One of these tracks gives access from Cottle Park Drive, Normandale to Stratton Street and allows walkers and mountain bikers the ability to bypass local roads.

The Hutt Valley mountain bike club carried out voluntary maintenance on the Danzig Mountain Biking track over the period, metalling parts of the track using material supplied by Greater Wellington.

As usual for this time of the year, Waitangirua Farm has been closed temporarily for lambing. We have signposted all the entrances to the farm to warn people of the closure and stay in touch with the farm manager to respond to any concerns about public access over this period.

It was interesting to receive a reliable report from a resident in Korokoro of Kaka flying into the Korokoro Valley. Great to get this local feedback about the diversity of wildlife observed in the region.

The Take Action programme utilised the Stratton St classroom for a number of days over the period. Schools attending included Fergusson Intermediate from Upper Hutt. Weta shelters have been added to the stream walk alongside the classroom, giving an added dimension for visitors to the area. It only took three weeks before the first itinerant weta took up the accommodation offer!

At Cannons Creek we assisted the Friends of Maara Roa with getting plants and hare nets onto site for the remainder of their planting days. Overall the project looks tidy and is progressing well.

We have been working with Big House productions filming a TV production at Stratton St and Dry Creek.

5.2 Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

The park has now closed for lambing and will re-open to the public on 15 September. The front paddocks, bush reserve and Battle Hill paddock remain open for walkers only and an access way through the farm to the forest has been kept open for all. This is the third year this system has run and has had a very appreciative response from park users.

Lambs have started arriving and the education sheep have been kept close to the front paddocks where children visiting the farm can see new born lambs up close. They are proving to be a real hit.

Recently John Bissell had an email request from a woman for more information about the possibility of a wedding being held at Battle Hill. She had got the information from the Greater Wellington web site. They discussed options and then she asked John where the park was and whether it was near the 'turnpike'. John had no idea where that was and further questioning revealed that she was looking at wedding sites in Wellington, Florida. Seems our web site is being read by more than just Kiwis.

Students and staff from St Bernards College have been busy pruning the trees in the St Bernards woodlot. This woodlot is jointly owned by St Bernards and Greater Wellington and is proving a great hands-on learning experience each year for the students. Greater Wellington has provided the land and the students carry out all the work as part of their horticulture classes. Following harvesting the net profits will be split 50/50.

Tracks have been trimmed and paths sprayed. Entrance ways into the park have been tidied up and weeds removed. All re-vegetation plots on the park have been released and block planting carried out.

It is thistle season again and the ranger has been busy spraying and grubbing thistles throughout the farm. This is a good time of year to hit the thistles as they are still quite small and require very little chemical to kill them. Most work is now done on foot to reduce the amount of chemical used on the farm as part of our Environmental Management System objectives.

Feracol possum and rat baits have been laid throughout the bush reserve to reduce pest numbers to very low levels prior to the bird nesting season. Traps have been set throughout the farm and possum numbers are very low throughout the entire property.

5.3 Queen Elizabeth Park

With Nikki La Monica (the ranger) being new to the job, she has spent a great deal of time meeting with a number of the stakeholders of the park, particularly the licensees, to introduce herself and talk about any concerns they may have. She is also meeting and introducing herself to park users during regular patrols.

The culvert and drainage work at Mackays Crossing is completed and everything is flowing along nicely. We have had a several planting days, not only with various community groups but also with our own GWRC Finance department. All have been well attended and quite productive. Unfortunately we have had some minor problems in the park; “tagging” on the toilet blocks, boy/girl racers ripping up grass, motorbikes in the picnic areas, and a great deal of rubbish. The ranger has met with the Kapiti Police to discuss ways of preventing these activities in the future.

The construction and landscape teams have been incredibly busy at Queen Elizabeth Park.

- The bridge at Wainui stream has been lifted.
- We are constructing a boardwalk in the wetland.
- The building at Tilley Road has been upgraded.
- Concrete pads for an additional ten picnic tables have been made. A number of signs have been put up at the Whareroa carpark.
- We’ve hosted several planting days working in the streamside, wetland and dune habitats.
- The Raumati entrance and Rainbow court entrances have been planted.
- Plantings for the drainage works at Mackays Crossing are all well underway.
- Weed controls are continuing.
- Rodent monitoring is being conducted.

Murray Waititi
Manager Parks and Forests