

## Biosecurity Manager's Report Wayne O'Donnell

For period ending 9 June 2006

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### 1. Pest Animals:

#### 1.1 East Harbour Regional Park Possum Monitoring

A possum residual trap-catch (RTC) monitor was carried out within this 2,375 hectare management area during May this year. The result was a creditable 1.8% RTC. One of the reasons that this result is so pleasing is that much of the area is being controlled by the volunteer group Mainland Island Restoration Operation (MIRO). MIRO has been active in controlling possums and rats in the area for more than 6 years and have adapted well to their increased control area and levels of responsibility. Their ongoing commitment and levels of competency are to be commended.

The East Harbour programme also incorporates areas of private land and suburbs of Hutt City. It is funded primarily through GW Parks and Forests and managed jointly with the Biosecurity Dept (Pest Animals Section). East Harbour is one of the largest public reserves of native forest close to Wellington and provides an opportunity for the public to experience New Zealand's natural environment first hand.

#### 1.2 Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) Maintenance and Contract Auditing

KNE maintenance was undertaken at ten sites in the Wairarapa during May. Of note was the observance of large numbers of Californian quail at the 2,700ha Morisons Bush site. Although they are not native birds, this situation does strongly suggest that other ground nesting birds are thriving (as well as native lizards) due to the constant culling of predators such as rats, mustelids and cats.

Random auditing of both the Sulphur Wells and Waihora sites has been completed with only minor issues needing attention. Audits are unannounced and check that the contracts are being complied with. Audit reports for these two sites were prepared and submitted to the contractor for his attention.

A random audit of the Pukaha Buffer operation has disclosed areas of concern and these issues will be addressed with the contractor.

Maintenance has recommenced at the 25 KNE sites within Wellington City after some servicing being delayed because of funding and resource issues. The programme is now back on track. No significant adverse ecological outcomes are expected because of the delays.

One of the first signs of maintenance slipping outside the three-monthly servicing regime is an increase in rats. A lift in rat numbers was reported at Trelissick Park. This area has been given priority treatment.

### **1.3 Best Practice Guidelines**

Biosecurity staff have been involved in the development of best practice guidelines for the following:

- Vertebrate Toxic Agents – safe use and handling
- Rabbit Management
- Rook Management

These substantial documents were commissioned by the National Possum Control Agencies with input from most regional councils. The guidelines are expected to be approved by the NPCA in June.

## **2. Pest Plants:**

### **2.1 Eradication Species**

#### **Survey work**

Staff have continued to undertake survey work around current known sites of eradication species.

Several new sites of blue passion flower, climbing spindleberry, madeira vine, moth plant and eelgrass have been located during this period. A disturbing trend has been the number of infestations of these species being located in rural areas.

#### **Perennial nettle**

A new site of perennial nettle has been located at the Masterton landfill. Control has occurred.

### **2.2 Biological Control**

Three releases of scotch thistle gall fly and one of Californian thistle gall fly were received from Landcare Research Ltd. The scotch thistle agents were released in the Hutt and Porirua areas and the Californian thistle agents were released in the Wairarapa.

### **2.3 Publicity**

A copy of GW's Chinese translated letter, concerning the use of the Eradication species madeira vine for cooking, has been sent to Weedbusters who intend producing a national press release for Chinese community newspapers.

## 2.4 Regional Weedbusters Awards

Weedbusters is an inter-agency weeds awareness and education programme designed to protect NZ against the spread of invasive weeds. The Weedbuster awards recognise the dedication and commitment of 'local heroes' who volunteer their time to enhance the environment and raise awareness of weed issues within the community.

Seven nominations were received for the awards. Of these, five received awards for varying categories, as follows:

- Award for Overall Excellence: Trelissick Park Working Group (Wellington City);
- Public Land Award: Joint winners – Eddie Bannister (Wairarapa) and Lawson Robertson (Wellington City);
- Private Land Award: Peter & Adrienne Dale (Kapiti Coast)
- Education Award: Silverstream School (Upper Hutt)

This was the first year that the awards have been organised across NZ. Cr Greig was involved in the judging.

## 3. Bovine Tb:

### 3.1 2004/05 Programme

Only the following operation from the 2004/05 programme remains uncompleted as at 8 May 2006.

Operation	Strata	Area	Current Progress	Operator
South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	HR 1	1,114	Rework underway	BioWorks

### 3.2 2005/06 Programme

#### 3.2.1 The approved 2005/06 programme includes:

- 420,860 ha possum control
- 56,114 ha of ferret and possum surveys
- 75,135 ha of pig surveys

Pig surveys are underway over a wide area with samples provided by contractors, preferred supplier hunters and occupiers.

#### 3.2.2 The following table summarises the areas let to date for the 2005/06 year. This table also includes 41,029 ha with a completion date of 30 August 2006, which has been deferred by AHB request due to funding limitations.

	<b>Possum (ha)</b>	<b>Ferret (ha)</b>	<b>Survey (ha)</b>	<b>Total</b>
GWRC BioWorks (tender)	98,088	0	10,319	108,407
GWRC BioWorks (preferred supply)	119,243	0	22,812	142,055
Target Pest Control	59,619	0	0	59,619
Professional Guiding	66,084	0	17,624	83,708
J McCaslin	3,346	0	5,389	8,735
To Determine (Sth East Wai Stg 3)	21,717	0	0	21,717
Carry Forward	9,881	0	0	9,881
Remove Control	42,882	0	0	42,882
<b>Totals</b>	<b>420,860</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56,144</b>	<b>477,004</b>

**3.2.3** The following table details areas of the 2005/06 programme which have been completed. These areas have been assessed by performance monitor or audit of feral survey. Completed areas are 73% of the contracted programme (finishing date of 30 June). However, contractors consider they have completed 81% of the programme, with many areas not yet ready for monitoring.

	<b>Possum (ha)</b>	<b>Ferret (ha)</b>	<b>Survey (ha)</b>	<b>Total</b>
GWRC BioWorks (tender)	55,927		10,319	66,246
GWRC BioWorks (preferred supply)	57,687		22,812	80,499
Target Pest Control	48,480			48,480
Professional Guiding	49,981		10,459	60,440
J McCaslin	3,346		5,389	8,735
Carry Forward	9,881			9,881
Remove Control	42,882			42,882
<b>Totals</b>	<b>268,184</b>		<b>48,979</b>	<b>317,163</b>

### **3.3 Issues**

#### **3.3.1 South East Wairarapa – Stage 3 (33,180 ha)**

Approximately 11,463 ha of aerial and ground control has been let to BioWorks. 7,309 hectares has successfully been completed, including 2,028 ha of aerial control and 5,281ha of ground control. Approximately 21,717 ha is still to be let, including the Aorangi Forest Park.

AHB had requested that this operation be completed by 30 June 2006. This is not considered achievable, particularly as there have been numerous operational adjustments made by the AHB in recent weeks. It is also the time of year that the contractor undertaking the 1080 carrot (with deer repellent additive) operations is busy with numerous other aerial operations.

The following contract will be let for this operation:

- 15,533 ha aerial 1080 carrot baits with deer repellent
- 1,018 ha aerial 1080 carrot baits without deer repellent

- 1,365 ha aerial 1080 pellet baits without deer repellent
- 3,853 ha ground control to be treated in 6 blocks

Aerial control is expected to commence once all statutory approvals has been gained and contracts awarded. Contract documents are expected to be let to contractors in mid June.

### 3.3.2 Completion of 2005/06 Programme

All contractors have reported that they expect to complete their 2005/06 programmes by 30 June 2006. However, given the slower than expected progress by some contractors, performance failures and the risk of more failures, there is a strong possibility that the programme will not be completed as predicted.

The AHB has been advised that an estimated 46,100 hectares will not be completed by 30 June. Delays are expected in 17 strata. This will also cause delays to subsequent performance monitoring. It is expected that 5 trend monitors will not be completed by the year end.

### 3.3.4 2006/07 Programme

The AHB has approved a control programme for the 2006/07 year with an approximate value of \$4.4M which includes the following:

- 263,853 ha possum control
- 57,952 ha surveys
- Performance and trend monitoring.

Tenders for a total of 18,801 hectares of the 2006/07 programme close 23 June 2006. This should enable contractors to plan for a July start, maximising the opportunities for an uninterrupted work programme across the financial years.

Additional tender parcels will be scheduled as further trend monitoring data becomes available. Unfortunately, there will be delays in securing this information if performance monitoring has to be rescheduled, due to late completion of 2005/06 vector control contracts.



**Wayne O'Donnell**  
Manager, Biosecurity

## Land & River Operations Manager's Report Ian Gunn

For period ending 9 June 2006

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### 1. Land Management

#### 1.1 Akura Conservation Centre

Akura Conservation Centre opened on 1<sup>st</sup> June. It will trade through to the end of September. Pole cutting has commenced and the first poles should be planted around the end of June.

On the back of heavy rainfall events over the last two years and ongoing successes with pole planting, demand for poles exceeds supply from Akura and Mangapakeha nurseries. In response to this ongoing demand external sources of poplar and willow have been sought. A supply of 10,000 poles has been secured from Aokautere nursery near Palmerston North.

A number of planting programmes have begun, in particular the riparian planting within the Otaki and Waitohu catchments. This work was won at tender by the Bioworks unit.

Tree stocks from various suppliers are building up, including the increased numbers of eco-sourced native plants. The objective for Akura is to have all native plants eco-sourced for the 2007 trading season.

#### 1.2 Streams Alive Programme

The Streams Alive programme is entering its third planting season. The programme targets 12 selected catchments throughout the region, with the aim of working with landowners on the establishment of riparian margins. Greater Wellington provides advice, suitable plants, contract labour and maintains the sites for the first two years. Landowners provide the land and are required to erect all fencing.

The demand for this service has grown very steadily over the last twelve months. \$30,000 was spent in 2004/05. The budget for 2005/06 and 2006/07 is \$75,000. The limiting factor for this programme is staff resources. The present level of activity has been achieved without significant publicity and is indicative of the interest being shown in the establishment of riparian margins. Many of the clients are lifestyle farm owners, however a number of larger properties have entered the programme this year. These larger properties include both dairy, and sheep and beef farms.

### **1.3 Farm Environment Awards**

A very successful field day was held at Ata Rangi Vineyard and Winery. Attendance was smaller than previous years, however the quality of the presentation and information was exceptional. The morning was spent discussing all aspects of the vineyard and winery business. The afternoon session incorporated a visit to the Waihora bush block. This was a highlight for most.

The organising committee have met to debrief this years awards and spent considerable time on promotion, and the all important aspect of increasing the number of entrants.

It has been decided to split the Judging Co-ordinators role into two parts. A designated person will be solely focussed on promoting the Awards through a range of methods, including farm visits, cold calling, attendance at field days and discussion groups, and networking with a range of agri-business personnel. A second person will run the judging process along very similar lines to current practice.

## **2. River Management**

### **2.1 Scheme Reviews**

Despite good progress being made neither the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme (LWVDS) rating reclassification nor the Kopuaranga River Enhancement project will be adopted for this coming financial year. The LWVDS Advisory Committee has already approved a rate increase based on the old rating classification of 11.5%. The various components of the proposed rating classification have been identified. Debate continues on who are the beneficiaries of the scheme and whether or not there could be "cross-subsidisation" within the scheme. The proposed changes are complicated by the fact the existing classification has been in place since the early 1960's and there are a number of anomalies. The Review Committee has been expanded to ensure that the proposed rating classification has been rigorously debated.

As indicated at the previous meeting the Kopuaranga River Enhancement Committee wished staff to check the river flooding map being used for the basis of the rating classification. This work is under way. The Isolated Works project is now complete. The \$60,000 budget has been spent. All of the landowners involved in the isolated works project have been very pleased with the work undertaken. Significant sections of the river downstream of McKenzies have been cleared. Most land owners have observed changes to the river following completion of the clearing. Staff are close to developing a programme of works for the Enhancement Project which will include helicopter spraying, mechanical clearing and the planting of appropriate riparian species.

### **2.2 River and Drainage Schemes**

All bulldozer work has now ceased for the trout spawning season. For the first time for a number of years bulldozers have completed works as far upstream in the

Ruamahanga River as the Te Ore Ore Bridge. The works have included ripping which have removed buried logs which have been influential in the establishment of breaches in the flowing river channel. Boulder rock groynes were also established in the vicinity of the Masterton land fill. These will reduce the risk of erosion of the river bank.

Spraying will be completed shortly for this year in the drainage schemes.

### **2.3 Staff Training**

A number of the River Hands attended a fencing course at the East Taratahi Training establishment. Opportunities for training in fencing are few and far between these days.

## **3. Conservation Forestry**

### **3.1 Tauanui**

Road maintenance including water table cleaning, slip removal and drop out repair has been completed. Additional metal has been spread on several muddy sections. Grading will complete maintenance in preparation for logging.

A further 100 tonnes of Pinus nigra has been extracted for posts in conjunction with the harvesting of the adjoining Pirinoa 8B.

### **3.2 Rough Hill Fence**

A meeting has been held with Department of Conservation staff to provide them with background information and discuss the proposed Wairangi/Rough Hill boundary fencing proposal. A formal response is yet to be received.

Some urgency has gone from this situation now that Mr Franks has inspected that back part of his property and appreciates the lack of grazing potential in this area.

### **3.3 Stoney Creek**

A meeting was held with Stoney Creek neighbour, Mr Bruce Cutfield, to discuss the possibility of upgrading the access through his property if the development of a Wind Farm on Stoney Creek central ridge was pursued. He was agreeable to this and could see that this would provide improved access to his airstrip. The Wind Farm concept is the subject of a separate report prepared by Murray Kennedy.



**Ian Gunn**  
Land & River Operations Manager



## Acting Manager, Planning & Resources Report Ted Taylor

For period ending 9 June 2006

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### 1. Resource Investigations

#### 1.1 Rainfall

Rainfall in May was below average in the Tararuas but above average in the Valley. Slightly below average rainfall was recorded in the eastern hills.

The table below shows rainfall statistics for 3 representative rainfall sites.

##### Rainfall Totals

	May	
	mm	% of average
Angle Knob (Tararuas)	464	77
Alloa (middle valley)	116	121
Tanawa Hut (eastern hills)	120	92

#### 1.2 Rivers

River flows in May were slightly above average reflecting the general pattern of rainfall over both April and May.

The table below shows river flow statistics for the two representative sites.

##### River flows

	February	
	m <sup>3</sup> /s	% of average
Waiohine	24.4	106
Waihenga	86.9	110

#### 1.3 Floodwarning

No flood events occurred in May.

#### 1.4 Wairarapa Regional Irrigation Project

The Wairarapa Regional Irrigation Project has reached the point where it is proposed to establish a Trust to provide leadership and to drive the project forward. The trust would enter a partnership agreement with Meridian Energy Limited with Meridian owning the infrastructure and supplying water on a commercial basis. A meeting to discuss the formation of the Trust is being held on the 26 May.

The current proposal is for a large storage structure at the top of the valley with release of water to existing waterways as the demand requires.

Greater Wellington has no formal role in this project but has been asked to provide technical services on a commercial basis by carrying out stream flow monitoring at the storage site.

Geoff Copps of Go Wairarapa has indicated that he would be happy to provide a status report to the Committee at some future meeting. A copy of a recent presentation he gave is attached to this report - (Attachment 2).

## **2. Policy and Planning:**

### **2.1 Regional Policy Statement Review**

The *'Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region'* became operative in May 1995 and Greater Wellington is now required to review it. The review began with *'Measuring Up 2005'*, Greater Wellington's state of environment report. This reported on how well the objectives in the Regional Policy Statement had been achieved.

The current phase of the review has included the release of the discussion document *'Our region- their future'*. This document provides an assessment of the success of the Regional Policy Statement, identifies current and possible future issues, seeks feedback on whether the right issues have been identified and poses a number of questions about future management.

This discussion document was released for public consultation on 22 May. Supporting information and a feedback form was launched on Greater Wellington's website on the same day. In addition, a two page spread about the review was advertised in the six community newspapers in the region on the week commencing 29 May. Feedback is sought through to 30 June 2006.

Councillors Ian Buchanan and Sally Baber, along with staff, have attended meetings of the Porirua City Council, Hutt City Council and Wellington City Council to give short presentations on the Regional Policy Statement review process, and some of the main points from *Measuring up 2005*. Meetings are also scheduled with the Kapiti Coast District Council and Upper Hutt City Council, and Cr Buchanan has met with the three Wairarapa territorial authorities.

### **2.2 District Plans**

Statutory resource management work is the subject of a separate report to the Committee. Subdivision activity in the Wairarapa continues to provide a steady work load for the Policy and Planning section.

The combined district plan is scheduled for notification at the end of June.

## 2.3 Appeals

### **Martinborough Coastal Developments Ltd**

No further progress on the Martinborough Coastal Developments Ltd Tora subdivision appeal since the last committee meeting.

### **Pinehaven Orchard**

We have been party to an appeal against a decision by South Wairarapa District Council to decline an application known as the Pinehaven Orchard subdivision. This appeal has been heard and we are awaiting the decision.

## 3. Consents and Compliance:

### 3.1 Consent statistics

Application numbers for the financial year to date (211) are similar to last year (196). 170 consents have been granted this financial year compared with 180 for the last.

A summary of non-notified consents issued since the last Committee meeting is included as a separate report. The median time for processing non-notified consents (excluding s37 requests) is 10 working days.

Applications that have been notified are detailed below:

- N & E Reid: An application to renew consents for the discharge of piggery effluent to land and odours to air. The application is on hold pending further information. Aqualink consultants are evaluating the capacity of the soils within the proposed effluent irrigation areas to sustainably accept the nutrient load.
- Masterton District Council: An application for consents to manage the closure of the Masterton Landfill and provide for ongoing waste management related activities on the site. The application is on hold pending further information.

### 3.2 Appeals

#### **Masterton District Council**

Masterton District Council's proposed stage two of the Castlepoint seawall. No further progress on this appeal since the last committee meeting.

#### **LARO – Scadden's Stopbank**

John Barton has appealed this decision. No further progress on this appeal since the last committee meeting.

#### **Martinborough Coastal Developments**

No further progress on this appeal since the last committee meeting.

**A E & S W Benton Partnership**

This application to take groundwater in the Battersea area was declined. This decision has been appealed by the applicant. Three of the submitters who opposed the application have joined as parties to the appeal. Mediation is being held on 19 June.

**3.3 Compliance**

**Prosecutions**

The prosecution against Lansdowne Development Ltd and Bruce Buchanan Ltd in regards to an unauthorised discharge of silt laden water in March 2005 is scheduled to take place in the Environment Court in Wellington on 18 and 19 July.

**Infringement Notices**

No infringement notices were served in the period.

**Abatement Notices**

No abatement notices were served in the period.

**Incidents**

The following list records incidents reported and dealt with to 30 April.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Complaint</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
3 May	Discoloured water race west of Carterton reported.	No direct discharge found. Assumed to be stock crossing stream.
5 May	Complaint about ponding of water on property arising from neighbours consented construction activities near Masterton.	Minor remedial action requested by staff to neighbour. Final assessment of compliance with resource consent to be completed.
18 May	Complaint about management of truckwash and deposition of spoil material in South Wairarapa	Still under investigation
22 May	Discoloured water in Ruamahanga River reported.	Staff investigated but could not find source of discolouration.
26 May	Complaint about odour from farm west of Carterton.	No odour detected at time of incident. No further action required.
26 May	Smoke nuisance from industrial site at Waingawa discovered by staff.	Person responsible put fire out. No further action taken

**Ted Taylor**  
Acting Manager, Planning & Resources