

Environment Management Division update

For period ending 31 July 2007

1. Environmental Monitoring and Investigations (Ted Taylor)

1.1 Groundwater

Monitoring in a deep rainfall-recharged aquifer, showed groundwater levels below the long-term mean but above the long-term minimum.

Groundwater levels in an unconfined/semi-confined aquifer were well below the long term mean to around the long-term minimum levels. This was a reflection of high irrigation demand, low river levels and low rainfall.

1.2 Air Quality

No exceedances of the National Environmental Standard for Air Quality (NESAQ) occurred in the period.

1.3 Rainfall

June 2007, was dominated by cold southwesterlies. In these conditions the Wellington region is relatively sheltered from rainfall, and therefore most of the region had below average rainfall for the month. Following months of below-average rainfall, some parts of eastern Wairarapa received about or above average rainfall during June. The 'drought' in the eastern hills eased by rain events on 12, 16 and 17 June.

Rainfall at representative monitoring stations for June 2007 and 2007 to date, compared to average

	June 2007 rainfall (mm)	Long-term average for June (mm)	2007 to date (mm)	Average year to end June (mm)	Percentage of long-term average for year to date
Angle Knob (Tararua Range)	629.5	667	2398	3056	78%
Alloa (Featherston)	74.4	112	264	503	52%
Tanawa Hut (East Wairarapa)	188	145	328	624	53%

1.4 Rivers

Due to the below-average rainfall in June in most of the region, river flows remained well below average for the month.

June 2007 river flows at selected monitoring stations

	Average flow June 2007	Long-term average for June	Percentage of long- term average
Waiohine River at Gorge	20.8 m ³ /s	28.9 m ³ /s	72%
Ruamahanga River at Waihenga	54.8 m ³ /s	115.9 m ³ /s	47%

1.5 Water quality in the Motuwaireka Stream

Water quality in the Motuwaireka Stream, particularly in the lower reaches and the estuarine zone known as the Riversdale lagoon, has long been a concern to local residents. Studies have previously shown that groundwater and surface waters are impacted by septic tanks although the impact on surface waters have been ameliorated by the installation of consented on-site waste water disposal systems serving multiple use properties such as camping ground

As a result of the overall impact of wastewater disposal at Riversdale, including potential health risks, the Masterton District Council initiated a project to develop a community wastewater scheme. This project is at the final planning stages.

In the interim the community, with the assistance of Greater Wellington, has cleaned sludge from the lagoon and planted riparian margins along some of the lower reach of the Motuwaireka and a minor tributary. However, given the land use in the catchment and stream bacterial quality, the lagoon is still deemed unsuitable as a bathing site.

The wastewater project has refocused the community on water quality issues and a meeting was held recently with representatives of the community where a range of issues were discussed. These included the relative responsibility of the two councils, the ways in which Greater Wellington had supported the community to improve water quality and the relationship between the beach community, the total catchment and water quality.

1.6 Flood warning

There were no flood events in the period. The outlet from Lake Onoke was blocked for 15 days in June. The lack of a consistent opening was largely due to the low river flows exacerbated by strong southerly swells. Lack of an opening meant that Lake Wairarapa levels were generally above target levels.

2. Environmental Regulation (AI Cross)

2.1 Consent Statistics

In the period from 28 May to 6 July we have received 41 Wairarapa-based applications, and processed 30 consents.

Our median processing time (excluding s37 extensions) for Wairarapa non-notified consents was 12 working days, the same as the last period.

Details of non-notified consents approved in the period have not been provided in this report, but can be viewed in Report 07.360 to the Environment Committee (21 June 2007).

2.2 Key Notified Consents Update

2.2.1 Fully Notified Applications

Stronvar Properties Ltd

These are applications for a 56-lot subdivision at Stronvar, Masterton involving applications for discharges of wastewater (from a community waste water scheme) and sediment from earthworks, taking water (for communal water supply), and erecting a dam to establish an amenity and stormwater treatment lake.

There have been delays in receiving further information on a range of substantial matters including community wastewater treatment, and the operation and integrity of the proposed lake. The delay is reasonable given the complexity of the matters being considered.

Masterton District Council

Applications for managing the closure of the Masterton Landfill and provide for ongoing waste management related activities has been placed on hold for further information. We understand that information requested is still pending, and once received we will then publicly notify the applications.

Palliser Bay Station

This is a joint application for discharges from a community wastewater scheme associated with a proposed 22-lot subdivision on Cape Palliser Road, South Wairarapa. Submissions have not raised issues relating to wastewater discharges, hence there was no requirement for GW to arrange and participate in a joint hearing. The subdivision application was approved by SWDC, which now gives the applicant the certainty to provide further information to GW so that the wastewater discharge applications can be processed.

Webstar

A pre-hearing on a replacement application from Webstar (Blue Print Group Limited), Masterton, to discharge fine particle matter (PM₁₀) and other contaminants to air from printing and gas-fired boilers, has been completed. The

applicant will investigate issues raised by the single submitter regarding the significance of odours discharged beyond Webstar's boundary further over the next two to three months. A short-term trial of new discharges from new printing equipment assessed will also be extended to tie in with revised timeframes. The processing of this application will consider air quality within the Masterton air shed, which sometimes exceeds NES for Air thresholds for PM₁₀ of 50 ug/m³.

MDC - Masterton Wastewater Treatment Plant

Replacement applications for Masterton Wastewater Plant were lodged in early May and following preliminary assessment, the applications were notified on 4 July. Submissions close on 1 August.

These applications are to discharge treated effluent to Ruamahanga River at Homebush, and to land in the general vicinity of Masterton waste water treatment plant.

2.2.2 Limited Notified Applications

M B & H F Herrick

These are replacement applications for two groundwater takes at Taumata Island, Carterton. Submissions were received from neighbouring landowners and organisations concerns about the effects on surrounding wetland areas. The applications have been placed on hold since October 2006. Further information based on monitoring undertaken over the past irrigation season will be submitted shortly. As previously discussed, opposing submitters are concerned about potential effects on nearby takes and Taumata Ox-bow reserve wetland.

K R & S M Shaw

This application is for diverting water from a small tributary of the Mangatarere Stream for the hydro-electricity generation purposes. One submission was received from a neighbouring landowner. We are currently asking the applicant if they wish GW to conduct a pre-hearing meeting or go straight to a hearing.

Kintyre Trust

This application is for setting up a small rendering plant at an existing abattoir at Gladstone. Notice of the application has been served on 8 parties and submissions close on 27 July.

2.3 Appeals and Objections

A E & S W Benton Partnership

This appeal relates to a declined application to take groundwater from the Kahutara aquifer, which is affected by a moratorium not to 'accept' further applications¹.

¹ The moratorium highlights GW's intention to not approve further applications, unless applicant's can clearly demonstrate their activity to be sustainable.

Mediation continues with the Court recently extending the period for all parties to sign a consent order. GW has consulted extensively with all parties to get to this point. We now wait to see whether the parties agree with the consent order.

Prema Investments Ltd

This relates to a decision granting consent for Prema Investment's joint applications to discharge communal wastewater to land from a 6-lot subdivision at Whangaimoana, South Wairarapa, which was appealed by the applicant. Following discussions with staff from both GW and SWDC, the appellant has now withdrawn their appeal.

The appeal cited a condition on the subdivision consent requiring one lot (a possible additional disposal field) to be set aside until three-years of groundwater monitoring has been completed establishing whether there is a connection with the proposed disposal field. GW had joined the appeal as a (section 274) party.

Greater Wellington: Land and River Operations Department (LARO) – Scadden's stopbank

No further progress has been made on A J Barton's appeal to the High Court on the Environment Court's decision to uphold GW's decision on LARO's proposal to upgrade an existing stopbank adjacent to the Ruamahanga River. The appeal relates to the status and use of a paper road and implications of the stopbank upgrade.

Masterton District Council

This is an appeal by the applicant against a decision on applications for a coastal protection sea wall at Castlepoint. Stage 1 of the sea wall was approved subject to conditions, and the appeal against some aspects of this part of the project was resolved in 2005 and this part of the sea wall has now been constructed. Stage 2 of the sea wall was declined.

Initially, Court mediation in 2005 determined a course of action where an Integrated Foreshore Management Plan (IFMP) would be developed by interested parties to look into coastal processes in the area where consent was declined. Following a long period where no progress was made, the Court initiated mediation on 30 April where the IFMP process was brought back on track. Following the circulation of agreed objectives for the IFMP process, the appellant has now submitted a revised timetable which requires a draft IFMP to be completed by 31 October 2007.

2.4 Compliance and Enforcement

2.4.1 General

Final end-of-year compliance inspections were completed during the last period, and we are now compiling the results of our work for the year. Overall compliance work was up across the Wairarapa in 2006/07 compared with 2005/06.

2.4.2 Specific Compliance Issues

Carterton District Council – consent requiring effective inspection programme

There are no specific compliance issues to report from this period.

2.4.3 Abatement Notices

No abatement notices were issued in the period since the last Committee meeting.

2.4.4 Infringement notices

No infringement notices were issued in the period since the last Committee meeting.

2.4.5 Prosecution and Enforcement Orders

No prosecutions or enforcement orders have been issued in the period since the last Committee meeting.

2.5 Pollution Control

2.5.1 Significant Incidents

There are no significant incidents to report in the last period.

2.5.2 Prosecution and Enforcement Orders

No prosecutions or enforcement orders have been issued in the period since the last Committee meeting.

3. Environmental Policy (Nicola Shorten)

3.1 Policy and plans

3.1.1 Regional Policy Statement review

The draft provisions of the new Regional Policy Statement were circulated to all city and district councils and a number other key organisations such as the Department of Conservation, Federated Farmers and the Fish and Game Council on 8 June 2007. A number of organisations have also been sent copies during the consultation period.

A second Regional Policy Statement review newsletter has been circulated to organisations and interested people. The newsletter reports on the draft content of the next Regional Policy Statement and seeks feedback through to 13 July. The provisions and information about the review process has also been placed on the Greater Wellington website.

Presentations have been made to city and district councillors at Kapiti Coast District Council, Porirua City Council, Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Masterton District Council, Carterton District Council and South Wairarapa District Council. A presentation to Wellington City Council is scheduled for 31 July.

Eleven submissions have been received to date, with a number of organisations having requested extensions to the submission period (including all of the territorial authorities). A summary of feedback received during the consultation period and an assessment of recommended changes to draft provisions will occur during July and August. This will then be reported to Council at the end of August, or early September. Approval will be sought from Council on 27 September to release the proposed Regional Policy Statement in October.

3.1.2 Plan Change 3 to the Regional Freshwater Plan

Plan change 3 to the Regional Freshwater Plan was publicly notified on 26 May 2007 following approval by the Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee. This plan change limits the taking of additional water from three groundwater zones and eight streams in the Wairarapa. The plan change was advertised in newspapers and sent to affected consent holders and other interested people. The closing date for submissions was 27 June 2007 and four submissions were received.

3.1.3 Reporting on the effectiveness of regional plans

Three plans are being evaluated for their effectiveness – the Regional Soil Plan, Regional Coastal Plan and Regional Air Quality Management Plan. Five yearly reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of plans are required by the Resource Management Act 1991. All three reviews are underway incorporating assessments of the consents issued under these plans and feedback on how well the rules are working from staff processing resource consents and responding to pollution incidents.

3.2 Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan

Hearings have commenced for the combined Wairarapa District Plan, and staff, have presented evidence at five hearings to date. Topics have included natural hazards, freshwater, contaminated sites, heritage, coastal environment and landscape. Further involvement in the hearing will occur at the end of July and in early August.

3.3 Resource consent submissions

Resource consent applications received by territorial authorities and Greater Wellington's responses are set out below:

3.3.1 Carterton District Council

Notified	Action
MA Yarrall	3 lot subdivision, Cnr of Waihakeke and Riversdale Rds. Submission on water supply and effluent disposal
Stolte Dairy Farm Ltd #1	3 lot subdivision, Wiltons Road. Submission about surface water management zone and fault line.
Stolte Dairy Farm Ltd #2	3 lot subdivision, Wiltons Road. Submission about surface water management zone, water supply and fault line.

Non Notified	Action
M A Wither	2 lot subdivision, 3 Hughes Line. Email with comments.
A & L Cameron	2 lot subdivision, Mangatarere Valley Rd. Letter with comments on flooding and effluent disposal.
D Saywell	2 lot subdivision, Waihakeke Rd. Comments on flooding, effluent disposal and surface water management.
J Mathews	4 lot subdivision, Mt Holdsworth Rd. Letter with comments on flooding potential and effluent disposal.
R & C Hunt Ptnership	2 lot subdivision, Admiral Rd. Letter with comments on effluent disposal and surface water management zone.

3.3.2 Masterton District Council

Notified	Action
Kilmory Trust	10 lot subdivision, Southey Rd. No submission.

3.3.3 South Wairarapa District Council

Notified	Action
G & P Fridge	2 lot subdivision, SH 53 Featherston. Submission on water supply issues.
Greytown Motors Ltd	Land use (used car sales) and relocation of building, 264 Main St Greytown. In progress.
R & T Ingham Trust	2 lot subdivision, 90 Kuratawhiti St, Greytown. No submission.
Non Notified	Action
Sustainable Produce NZ Ltd	4 lot subdivision, Martinborough-Awhea & Fraters Road, Martinborough. Letter re flooding potential.
Wellington Pool Services	Land use consent, 2410 State Highway 2 Greytown. Letter with comments on flooding potential and mitigation.