

Catchment Management Division

Departmental Managers' Update
for period ending 7 March 2008

Biosecurity (Wayne O'Donnell)

1. Pest Animals: (Ray Clarey)

1.1 Evaluation of the Key Native Ecosystem Management Programme

A review of the Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) management programme has commenced. An initial meeting between the senior staff of the Department has taken place to set up the framework for an evaluation of the KNE programme.

This review will look at all components of the KNE programme, including metadata, resources, data-bases, goal setting and priorities, people involvement, historical processes, and future objectives. The evaluation should form the driver for refocusing and improving the existing programme, ensure adequate resource allocation and create improved strategic approaches. Such a review should feed into the LTCCP by helping define where needs are the greatest. Resourcing has not yet been defined. There is no special funding for this evaluation.

The first branded KNE programmes got underway in 1996 and were almost solely focussed on possum control in TLA reserves such as Otari-Wiltons (WCC) and Porirua Scenic (PCC). The programme developed to include more and more sites (including areas of private land) and became more diverse in an attempt to include other pest species in a larger range of natural habitats and ecosystems such as wetlands and coastal escarpments. In 2000, the Department determined that in order to more effectively deliver the KNE programme, a more robust prioritisation process was required. The aim then was the same as it is now, to have a strategic, targeted and pro-active approach.

This early review coincided with the release of the NZ Biodiversity Strategy (February 2000), a published review of Department of Conservation mainland restoration projects (May 2000), the publication from the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment titled "Caught in the Headlights: New Zealanders' Reflections on Possums, Control Options and Genetic Engineering" and a Greater Wellington Biodiversity Workshop (16-17 October 2000).

The GW workshop looked at the multi-faceted role it had and in a brief context tried to determine how it could best do justice to the various regulations and statutes it had responsibility for as well as deliver a proficient co-ordinated service to the public. This resulted in the formation of the GW Biodiversity Co-ordinating Group which today provides the framework for ecosystem and biodiversity management. The Biosecurity KNE programme is predominantly 'land' focussed, and is one of several GW ecosystem management programmes. Others include environmental education, wetlands, marine and riparian action plans.

The 2000 review also coincided with the availability of a satellite imagery system that allowed land cover classification. This was used to determine 7,280 individual forest or scrub remnants larger than one hectare. Each site was given a priority score based on a range of factors such as forest/vegetation class, size, natural character, distinctiveness and importance. The priority scores provided an ability to rank sites and created a focus of work programming to try and include the top sites. This became the 'Top 100' programme which has never been fulfilled due to resource limitations. The current evaluation will reconsider this issue as well plot a proposed course for the next five years.

1.2 KNE Branding Review

In July 1999 KNE imagery branding was introduced to enhance public awareness of the valuable native ecosystems within our region. The kereru, or wood pigeon, was chosen as being a representative icon. Perched on a branch leading out from a 'K' laden with berries the whole image conveyed the flora and fauna that together make up our valuable ecosystems. The KNE branding has not been used to its full capacity for some years and became out of date with the rebranding of the regional council to Greater Wellington. The KNE branding and applications for use is in need of review. This will be undertaken through the Corporate Communications Department.

1.3 Key Native Ecosystem Programme – Pest Animals Section

The programme for 2007-2008 is similar to the previous financial year as outlined in the following table.

Possum and predator management 2007 – 2008

LTA	Number of TA Sites	Private Sites	Total Sites	Hectares	Budgeted Cost to Greater Wellington \$
Wellington City	29	3	32	4,345	91,325
Hutt City	4	0	4	979	49,850
Upper Hutt City	5	2	7	503	5,815
Porirua City	8	7	15	1,414	37,940
Kapiti Coast District Council	6	8	14	556	11,061
Masterton District Council	2	2	4	4,116	48,500
Carterton District Council	0	4	4	223	8,350
South Wairarapa District Council	1	7	8	6,040	69,050
Totals	55	33	88	18,176	321,891

New initiatives are mostly created by the establishment of projects generated by funding from QEII Trust and /or the Biodiversity Condition Fund supported by the landowner. These are the covenants of Carter (Reikorangi), Warren (Makara), Flux (Moonshine UH), Sargeant (Akatarawa), Brown (Te Horo) and Long Gully Nature Heritage Trust. There are additional

new projects to be commenced for Kapiti District (Waikanae River Bush Blocks), Wellington City (Outer Town Belt Tops) and Porirua City (Bothamely Park). The Outer Town Belt and Bothamley Park projects are being fully funded by the respective city councils. There are no new projects in the Wairarapa this year.

Planning is also being undertaken for a 450ha operation based on the Southern Landfill and adjacent land at Happy Valley. The initial programme for this operation will be fully funded by WCC and conducted in the 2008/09 financial year.

The Western Zone programme is behind schedule by four months and will not realistically be back on the 3-monthly servicing regime until July this year. The seven contracts incorporating 27 sites previously held by BioWorks are now being serviced by two additional permanent pest animals staff employed specifically for this purpose. There was a capacity issue during the early part of the financial year whilst priorities, restructuring and recruitment issues were resolved. Every effort is being made to get back on track including allocating short term contracts to preferred suppliers.

1.4 Parks and Forests Pest Control Programme for December-February

The Pest Animals Section manages and carries out a variety of forest health programmes for the Parks Department. The following sites have been worked in the three months ending 29 February 2008.

- Pakuratahi Forest: (Tunnel Gully)
- Speedy's Reserve
- Korokoro
- East Harbour
- Whitireia Park

The annual 'photo-point' image was taken during February and shows a significant increase in the bush regeneration over the past three years. *See the photo series as Attachment 2 to this report.*

- Wainuiomata Mainland Island
- Cannons Point
- Dry Creek

1.5 Rabbits

Wild rabbits are once again going to be sampled on a region-wide basis to test the calicivirus immunity levels. This will occur at optimum times throughout March and April and generally blood samples will be taken at the same sites used in previous years. This will allow a closer comparison to be made of RCD trends on a localised basis. The blood samples will be forwarded to a registered laboratory in Palmerston North for analysis. The laboratory technician analyses all such samples for NZ. The last region-wide sample was in 2006 and disclosed immunity levels of 23% for the Western Zone and 48% for the Wairarapa.

1.6 Cat Desexing Campaign

The Department is planning to organise and support another cat desexing campaign during April and May. The format is similar to the past three years successful programmes when 300 plus domestic cats were either spayed or neutered on each occasion. The target this year is for in excess of 600 desexed cats.

The overall aim for GW's involvement is to encourage families to be responsible cat owners, to enjoy having a pet, to reduce neighbourhood problems and to reduce the number of cats that are abandoned. Abandoned cats are a threat to our native birds and lizards and left uncontrolled impact adversely on GW's biodiversity enhancement programmes. They also spread disease.

This year's programme will be run in partnership with the Wairarapa SPCA and supporting Wairarapa veterinary businesses, Vetcare Ltd, Wellington City Council, selected veterinary businesses in the Wellington City area and possibly Porirua City Council.

2. Pest Plants: (Richard Grimmett)

2.1 Regional Surveillance Plant Survey

New sites have been found during surveillance inspections. One extended area of Bomeria was reported in the lower Belmont hills. Six other sites have been found. Three new sites will be treated as trials to assess control methods. The current species being trialled are Bomeria, Purple Loosestrife, Asiatic Knotweed and Senegal Tea.

Staff are developing a response process in line with current incursion protocols that will trigger the appropriate response from GW in a timely and methodical manner. Cost benefit modelling and external scientific knowledge will continue to be used to assess pest species before they establish in our region and have a response pre-planned.

2.2 NPPA Inspections

Four market places were inspected over the last two months. Only one NPPA species was identified at Otaki (Japanese spindle tree). The plant was removed and destroyed.

2.3 Total Control Species

Continued focus and pressure on these species is showing gradual gains. The increase in site visit frequency has resulted in a visible decrease in plants maturing in an effort to reduce seed set. The ongoing delimiting surveys continue to find species on properties adjacent to infected sites at a rate of around 4%.

Staff are trialling different chemicals to determine effectiveness across a range of species.

Staff recently attended a two day workshop in Northland on controlling Manchurian wild rice. This species is one of the 11 National Priority Pests managed in conjunction with MAF Biosecurity. Northland is the worse infected province in NZ. Some very useful knowledge was gained around managing this plant.

At the regional level, a contractor has completed spraying the infestations of MWR near Waikanae. It took only two days to complete the task. The contractor attributes this reduction in time to control down to, firstly, the large reduction in overall infestation levels and, secondly, the creation of access tracks by a digger operator last year. MAF Biosecurity is funding all operations.

The Perennial nettle infestation at Sommes / Matiu Island was sprayed by GW and DoC staff on 29 January. The infestation density was considerably less than last year, but this may have been the result of the very dry summer. The DOC Ranger on the island has since reported that the spraying was very successful and no further plants have been sighted since the control work was completed.

2.4 Containment Species

The Boneseed biocontrol leaf roller released in October is already showing signs of good establishment and activity on plants in the eight release sites in Wellington and Porirua.

The Hornwort trial site near Lake Wairarapa was viewed recently. Unfortunately, the control area is actively recovering. Future trial work proposals are being assessed to design projects that will offer control decisions for a variety of waterbodies and site factors.

2.5 Site Led & Boundary Control species

Boundary complaints continue to occur on a regular basis. Most are dealt with by the affected owners. Five new Notices of Direction (NOD) were issued. One of these may proceed to enforcement action based on the current response of the owner. Two longstanding debts, following enforcement action, are scheduled to be registered against the property titles

In the Hutt Valley, staff have received a number of complaints regarding Gorse over the past six weeks, mostly due to the hot weather creating a perception of increased fire risk.

Old mans beard complaints have been noticeable in both the Hutt Valley and Wellington over the past six weeks. Two new NOD requiring boundary clearances were issued in the Hutt. Work has been actioned in both cases.

In Wellington, fifteen new boundary complaints were actioned. Of these complaints, three have been on Wellington City Council land and one was on Toll rail corridor land. All four have been controlled by the responsible agency. Two NOD were issued for private land.

2.6 KNE

Activity continues on twenty sites with work mostly involving ongoing weed control prior to annual planting or natural regeneration.

A very dry season has all KNE Care Groups facing large mortality of plantings.

2.7 Biological control

Landcare Research Ltd recently completed a two day workshop for GW staff. The purpose of the first day was to introduce and upskill staff on the subject.

The second day was spent with a small group focusing on developing a decision model to enhance biocontrol management in the region. A project involving three pilot studies was considered to get an understanding of the requirements and resources required to compare agent activity with weed suppression. Results will assist with future cost benefit work for the various agents

2.8 Didymo Communication Programme

Three students were employed under fixed term contracts for January and February to enhance the public's understanding of the threats posed by Didymo. The students completed a large amount of work contacting the public on site visits to rivers, clubs, and accommodation providers. A considerable amount of signage was erected at public notice boards in TA libraries, transport shelters, shopping malls, river access points, and at various public shows and events. Close liaison was maintained with DoC and joint efforts undertaken at specific events (e.g. Karapoti Classic). The Parks Department were also fully committed to the campaign with Rangers promoting advertising and personally communicating information to the public. Funding for the students work was mainly provided by MAF Biosecurity.

3. Bovine Tb: (Graeme Butcher and Grant Crawford)

3.1 Vector Control Programme - 2007/08

The original AHB approved vector control programme for the 2007/08 year, with an approximate value of \$4.5M, included the following:

- 270,353 ha possum control
- 966 ha ferret control
- 26,817 ha of possum and ferret surveys
- 126,187 ha of pig surveys
- trend and performance monitoring.

The programme was reviewed in the first quarter of 2007 and again in December 2007 to determine if it remained suitable to achieve Bovine Tb targets. These reviews identified that a number of operations did not require control due to low monitoring results, and that some unplanned work needed to be implemented due to higher than expected trend monitoring results.

Following the reviews, the revised programme for the 2007/08 year now includes (1st quarter review totals in brackets):

- 207,916 ha possum control (220,961ha)
- 2,116 ha ferret control (unchanged)
- 24,767 ha of possum and ferret surveys (26,275 ha)
- 152,806 ha of pig surveys (unchanged)
- trend and performance monitoring (reduced due to less control ha).

3.1.1 The table below summarises the areas contracted for the 2007/08 year

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks	77,353	0	23,907	0	101,260
J G McCaslin	24,294	0	860	0	25,154
Professional Guiding	97,138	2,116	0	0	99,254
T Oakly	0	0	0	152,806*	152,806
To Let	9,131	0	0	0	9,131
Totals	207,916	2,116	24,767	152,806	387,605

* completed using a range of providers but mainly via casual hunters

3.1.2 The following table details areas of the 2007/08 control programme which have been completed as of mid February 2008. Of the total contracted programme (excluding pig surveys), only 53,856 ha (25.6%) has been completed and assessed by either performance monitor or audit.

All pig surveys have a completion date of 30 June.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks	5,788	0	9,776	0	15,564
J G McCaslin	12,425	0	860	0	13,285
Professional Guiding	22,891	2,116	0	0	25,007
T Oakly	0	0	0	23,108	23,108
Totals	41,104	2,116	10,636	23,108	76,964

3.2 Monitoring

During the 2007/08 year, 97 trend monitors and 67 performance monitors are required.

To date, 58 monitors (including carry forwards) have been completed.

The following projects have failed the first and or subsequent performance monitors.

Operation	Strata	Area (ha)	Contractor	RTC target	Failed RTC result	Passed RTC result
Wairongomai	HMR 1	3,585	Professional Guiding	2.0%	2.1%	0.9%
South East Wairarapa Stg 1	HMR 1	6,699	Professional Guiding	1.5%	1.7%	0.3%

3.3 Pig surveys

The following table details Pig Surveys which are being undertaken from throughout the Region. Some laboratory analysis is still to be completed so Bovine Tb may be detected despite no visible gross lesions.

Operation	Area (ha)	Progress	Samples collected to date	Tb Presence
Akatarawa	20,539	In progress	14	1 m-bovis cultured
Bideford	39,023	In progress	5	No gross lesions
Castlehill	4,529	complete	33	No gross lesions
East Alfredton	4,888	complete	9	No gross lesions
Kapiti	22,487	In progress	24	No gross lesions
Mataikona	6,781	complete	34	No gross lesions
Moonshine	6,036	In progress	16	1 m-bovis cultured 1 suspicious lesion to be cultured
Mt Bruce Waipoua	860	In progress	0	No samples
Otaki Crown	5,070	In progress	9	1 m-bovis cultured
Pakowhai	6,910	complete	67	No lesions detected
Tinui	35,683	In progress	129	No gross lesions
Totals	152,806		340	

3.3.1 Orongorongo Station Pig surveys

The Game Manager of Orongorongo station has funded the post mortem of pig heads from the station to determine the Tb status of these animals. To date 5 of the 7 pigs supplied had gross lesions.

3.4 Proposed Aerial Control Projects

The Holdsworth to Woodside Crown area has returned an RTC range over three strata between 3.6% and 5.5%. This operation will not be proposed for control in the 2008/09 year due to notification from AHB that a reduced budget will apply to the Wellington Region. However, a further trend monitor will be planned around January 2009. It is envisaged that control will be required in the 2009/10 year. This area last received control in the 2002/03 year.

In August 2007, the northern Haurangi Crown operation was proposed to AHB for treatment in the 2007/08 year. This recommendation was made following trend monitoring results of 7.5% RTC in December 2006. The proposal was rejected. Further trend monitoring of this area occurred in January 2008 and has produced RTC results of 12.4%. The area will be proposed for the 2008/09 programme. This area last received control in the 2002/03 year.

3.5 2006/07 Programme

The following project has been carried forward from the 2006/07 year and is still to be completed by BioWorks. This project is due for completion in late summer 2008 in conjunction with adjoining 2007/08 tendered strata.

- South East Wairarapa Stg 3 HR 5 3,658 ha

3.6 Feral Cattle – South East Wairarapa

On 9 February another feral cattle hunting episode occurred on Timbrel and an adjacent property belonging to R Thomas. A further 13 cattle were shot over several hours using two helicopters. No observed cattle were missed. A further half hour search did not reveal any additional cattle. It is now considered that all feral cattle on Timbrel and the R Thomas properties have been removed. However, the occupiers of both properties will continue to remain vigilant. An additional inspection on nearby Te Munga is planned to verify that all feral cattle have been removed.

3.7 Contractor Capacity – 2007/08

The Vector Management (VM) team has, for a number of years, highlighted in our Regional Plans concerns about contractor capacity in the Wellington Region.

Since the commencement of the 2007/08 year, the VM and the AHB have been discussing options to improve contractor capacity. The aim has been to either attract new contractors into the region and or provide an opportunity for currently registered contractors to grow their business in the Region.

Following a Registration for Proposal (RFP) process, a decision was made to offer three parcels of work to contractors. Further preferred supplier work (for 2008/09) will be available upon successful completion of the 2007/08 program and the negotiation of satisfactory prices for the second years work.

Part of this process allowed for vector control to be awarded in 2007/08 and the lower priority work to be completed in the 2008/09 year.

Upon conclusion of this process the following contractors have been awarded work.

- Professional Guiding Services 50,261 ha
- BioWorks 51,371 ha

Stratford Pest Control from Motueka will be awarded 9,131 hectares once they supply all relevant information which ensures compliance with the AHB Vector Control Contracting Procedures.

3.8 2007/08 Carry Forward

The tables in 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 above include operations which are not expected to be completed in the 2007/08 year. These include:

- Mangaroa Kaitoke HR 1 1,770 ha
- Masterton Flats HR 1 1,482 ha
- Mt Bruce Waipoua HR 3 1,799 ha
- Taueru Maungaraki Ext HR 1 4,216 ha
- Taueru Maungaraki Ext MR 1 4,072 ha

These projects have been let to BioWorks who advised through the RFP process that they did not have capacity to complete them by 30 June 2008. They all have an interim completion date of 15 August 2008. These projects make up approximately 13% of the BioWorks programme. All are expected to commence within this financial year.

3.9 2008 – 2011 Plans

The VM team have completed the three year plans covering the 2008/09 to 2010/11 period. The plans include –

- Local Programme Plan
- Contract Management Plan
- Contract Capacity Plan
- Local Environment (Communications) Management Plan

The plans have been submitted to the AHB for approval. It is worth noting that the contractor capacity issues that have been raised in previous plans do not now appear to be a problem for the Wellington region. This is due to the steadily reducing budget that the AHB has approved for vector control work within the region.

Some years ago, the planned budgets devised for this region were of the order of \$6.5 – 7.0M per annum for this period. However, our approved budgets for the past two years have only been \$4.5M and are set to reduce further to \$4.2M in 2008/09.

4. Monitoring & Investigations: (Murray Hudson)

4.1 Biodiversity Monitoring Management Plan for Rewanui

Rewanui is a partly retired farm block purchased by the Trimble Foundation. The Foundation objectives for Rewanui are broad and include providing recreational opportunities in a park-like setting, providing a source of income through production forestry, providing trial areas for production forests of native species, continuing with some farmland grazing and fencing off some of the larger tracts of native bush for biodiversity enhancement.

This project presents a unique opportunity for the Department to develop a holistic biodiversity and performance based monitoring plan for a single KNE site. Our initial interest is in the native forest ecosystem, the current health status of this system and the change in biodiversity over time. The threats to the site have been mainly covered through the pest plants and animals sections of the site management plan. Monitoring would likely

take a number of different threads including developing base line data, monitoring for specific indicator species, defining the changes to forest condition over time and detecting the effectiveness of any operations or activities.

Staff have been actively researching monitoring options and have provided a provisional plan and costing to the Foundation's management representative. A meeting is to be held on 20th March for presentation to the Trimble Foundation. Monitoring methods for consideration include birds, lizards, invertebrates, vegetation, rodents, possums and other pest animals. Estimated costs for initiating, set-up, and undertaking the first years monitoring are in the vicinity of \$57K. Ongoing costs are likely to be around \$27K. There is no current funding provision for this within either agencies budget. Foundation representatives are considering options to reduce the costs. The Committee will be updated on how this proposal progresses.

Flood Protection (Graeme Campbell)

1. Manager's comments

Progress on completion of this year's major capital works is excellent. All of the main projects are either at or near substantial completion. The maintenance works are also on or ahead of programme due to the good summer weather. This is considered an excellent achievement as this year's capital works programme is one of the largest ever completed by Council on flood protection works. The South Waitohu Stopbank, which had fallen behind due to difficulties with securing landowner approval, is now back on track with detailed design and resource consent applications progressing.

The Department is however behind on the investigation programme. The delay is due in part to the focussing of resources on the capital works programme and in part due to a shortage of staff resources.

The two investigations currently delayed are the Waingawa Scheme Review and the review of the Waikanae Floodplain Management Plan. These two investigations will have to be pushed back into next financial year. We are currently considering options for resourcing these investigations along with the Otaki FMP review, commencement of the Greytown stopbank design and the Pinehaven Flood hazard review currently programmed for next year.

The Department has 3 vacant positions which it has had difficulty filling. A recent round of advertising has however presented a number of potential candidates for the positions. We also engaged 4 undergraduate engineering students over the summer which we hope may lead to the employment of a graduate shortly. We are promoting the opportunity to work for a progressive organisation and in range of fields including flood hazard management, water supply and transportation.

2. Western FMP's [Daya Atapattu]

2.1 Ava to Ewen project

The Ava Rail stopbank reconstruction and waterway upgrade contract works are now substantially complete. The contractor is working on the foot paths, grassing and other tidying up works. All works in this contract will be completed by the end of March 2008. The next item in Stage 3 of the Ava to Ewen project is the establishment of an inanga spawning habitat in the Opahu Stream outlet channel. We are now preparing the design for recontouring and planting of the Opahu Stream banks.

We have also started finalising the tender documents for the Strand Park stopbank reconstruction contract, which is the last stage of the Ava to Ewen project. We expect to complete the tendering process for this contract by June 2008.

2.2 Boulcott/Hutt stopbank project

The investigations on the Boulcott Alternative alignment are complete and the stakeholder consultation is due to be completed on 4 March 2008. A number of meetings were held

with the relevant committees of the two golf clubs while developing the alternative option. A presentation to the full membership of the Boulcott Golf Club is scheduled for 3 March 2008 and a meeting with the adjacent property owners is scheduled for 4 March 2008.

We will report on the outcomes from this investigation to the Hutt River Advisory Subcommittee (HRAS) on 13 March 2008.

2.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank

The contractor has made good progress on Stage 2 works since commencing works in late December 2007. The 200 metre section of the stopbank and the drainage works on the St Patrick's land boundary are substantially complete and the contractor has now commenced works on the Mawaihakona Stream section. We expect the Stage 2 works to be completed by the end of May 2008.

Stage 1 site filling requires resource consents from UHCC to remove four trees in the fill area. The consent application is ready. However, we have difficulties in getting approval from five residents affected from tree removal. We are now working with the residents, the Wellington Golf Club and the developer to find a solution acceptable to all affected parties.

2.4 Maoribank investigations

Possible failure scenarios were confirmed at a workshop held on 8 February 2008. We have now started assessing the consequences for each failure scenario and the repair costs. This information will form the basis for determining the priorities for remedial works.

2.5 Kapiti floodplain management

2.5.1 Waikanae River

KCDC have requested GW investigate and recommend preferred site(s) for the footbridge. Two sites near Jim Cooke Park have been selected and site surveys have been completed.

A workshop on the draft Waikanae River Environmental Strategy (WRES) was held at El Rancho on 20 February 2008. Councillors Aitken and Wilson, officers representing GWRC, KCDC and DOC, Friends of the Waikanae River and other interested groups attended the meeting. There was a healthy discussion on a wide range of issues including establishing a vision for the river, ecology, planting, vegetation management, recreation use, public access paths, interpretation, land ownership and flood protection issues to be incorporated in the strategy.

2.5.2 Otaki River

Chrystalls Extended Stopbank

The majority of tidy up works are complete, except for grass seeding which will need to wait until April/May.

Work is continuing on the walkway from SH1 to Chrystalls Bend which will include a new footbridge over the Waimanu Stream near Chrystalls Lagoon. It is expected that the walkway and footbridge will be completed and opened to the public in May.

Friends of the Otaki River (FOOR)

FOOR held a working bee on 16 February, attended by approximately 30 people. Several hundred young native trees in the Chrystalls Lagoon area were released and restaked.

3. Western Operations [Jeff Evans]

3.1 Hutt River

Channel realignment to reduce gravel build up is still in progress in the Kennedy Good Bridge area. Rock line and groyne maintenance has been under taken at Avalon, Stokes Valley and Manor Park. Flood gate and survey maintenance is also being carried out as required.

3.2 Hutt River Ranging Services

The month began with official confirmation of toxic algae in both the Hutt and Waikanae Rivers, however subsequent high river flows flushed much of this clean. Unfortunately due to the hot weather the algae soon returned.

It has also been a busy period with the Hutt and Otaki Gravel Grabs attracting record numbers of people, and the recent bike the trail on the Hutt River attracting more than 2,000 participants.

3.3 Otaki River

Channel alignment has been undertaken in the upper Taylor's area of the river, as the active channel had moved in against the cliff faces. 400 tonne of rock has been used to repair a hole in the Stresscrete rock wall and some minor groyne repairs have been undertaken on the two Leithbridge rock groynes.

3.4 Waikanae River

A number of small rock repairs have been undertaken on numerous sites along the river following the January floods. Some channel alignment work has also been undertaken to protect eroding bank edges.

3.5 Watercourses

Stream runs are being undertaken on the Porirua Stream, Kenepuru Stream, Taupo Stream, Te Mome Stream and the Waikato Cut. A significant flood event in the Waitohu Stream in January caused extensive bank erosion. We are in the process of applying for a resource consent to enable us to carry out the flood damage repairs over 4000m of channel which is well beyond the scope of our standing consent conditions.

3.6 Gravel extraction

Gravel extraction figures to the end of January 2008 are set out below.

River	Area	Contractor	Period Year 2007/08 (cubic metres)		Year 2006/07 (cubic metres)
			Period	Year	Full Year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	3,087	27,783	46,100
	River	Horokiwi	3,210	24,333	46,890
Otaki	River	Winstones	936	28,876	40,929
Waikanae	Above Greenaway Road	Various	0	0	3,330
	Below Greenaway Road	Gary Holland Earthmoving	0	0	5,360
Waitohu	River	Mills Albert	0	2,502	2,500
TOTALS			7,233	83,494	145,109

4. Wairarapa Operations [Mike Longworth]

4.1 Wairarapa River Schemes

4.1.1 General

The long period of fine weather over the spring and summer has enabled the work programmes in the northern Wairarapa rivers to progress to the point where they are 80 to 90% complete for the year. Construction work involved with the annual works programme and development programme in the lower valley is in full swing with five different contractors involved, in addition to both northern and southern work gangs. In the lower valley approximately 50% of the annual works programme is completed. Boulder protective works for bank erosion sites and stopbank realignment work are underway and will continue over the next three to four months. Spraying for vegetation control in the rivers is now largely completed.

The Cliffs heavy protection work involving rock groynes to prevent erosion of the Ruamahanga River bank adjacent Daikens Road for Carterton District Council is now underway.

In the Kopuaranga scheme 90% of the mechanical willow clearing work for the year has been completed. Spraying of willow re-growth and aerial willow spraying has been completed.

The annual advisory committee meetings for the nine river schemes are scheduled from 21 April to 12 May.

4.2 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme

4.2.1 New Rating Classification

The special consultative procedure to adopt the proposed new rating classification for the LWVD Scheme is close to being completed. A hearing to consider submissions on the proposed new classification was held in December. The Hearing Commissioners requested

further information on a number of points raised and will meet on 4 March to consider this information. A recommendation on the new classification is expected to be available for Council in March.

4.3 Development Work LWVDS

The development work budgeted at \$870,000 for this year is approximately 40% complete. Work under way includes shifting the Mahaki stopbank back from the river, extending the Butchers rock berm protection, placing stone rip rap wave erosion protection at Macklans farm, constructing boulder groynes at Devenport and clearing trees and vegetation back from the stopbanks in the lower Tauherenikau River.

4.4 Investigations

4.4.1 Private Stopbanks around Lake Wairarapa Study

The study to investigate the state of private stopbanks and other private structures associated with preventing flooding around Lake Wairarapa has commenced with the site inspections and assessments largely completed. Options for Council's involvement, if any, are still to be developed and reported to Council.

4.4.2 Waingawa River Scheme Review

Preliminary work on the review has been done such as developing a hydraulic model and carrying out some analysis of the river cross sections but the work is behind schedule at this point of time.

4.4.3 Wairarapa Combined District Plan

The Wairarapa Combined District Plan hearings committee heard submissions on the Designations associated with the stopbanks and flood ways in the Wairarapa on 8 and 13 November 2007. Subsequent to the hearing the Hearings Committee requested further information concerning the Te Whiti stopbank particularly associated with its height and level of protection provided. The Hearings Committee will reconvene on 29 February.

4.5 Drainage Schemes

The lower than normal rainfall over winter has meant lower power costs for the pumped drainage schemes than has been the case in recent years. Aside from a significant electrical repair to the Papatahi pump electrics the maintenance costs have not been excessive for the schemes. In all, the budgets for the drainage schemes are on track to recover the reserve balances that had been depleted in the previous year. As part of the recovery of the reserves, the Onoke pump scheme has elected to increase rates by 78% in the new financial year and the Pouawha scheme will increase its rates by 70%.

5. Investigations and Assets [John Eyles]

5.1 Waiwhetu Stream floodplain management study

The scope of this project has changed. The completion of the floodplain management plan will be delayed while the clean up of contaminated sediments in the lower reaches of the Waiwhetu Stream is advanced.

The remediation trial commenced on 18 February, at the start of the worst contamination just below the Bell Road bridge. Contractors Brian Perry Civil have established on site and begun to drive the first two sheet pile walls.

The technique involves blocking off the stream with 3 sheetpile walls and in the process creating two working cells. The stream flow will be pumped around the cells. The upstream cell will be dewatered (as far as practicable) into the second cell and the contaminated material excavated and transported in sealed trucks to the Silverstream landfill. This is the first time this innovative clean up methodology has been used in New Zealand and is based on a successful clean up of a contaminated river in Ohio USA.

A site visit was held on 25 March and attended by Ministers Trevor Mallard and Nanaia Mahuta, GW deputy Chair Peter Glensor and Hutt City Mayor David Ogden. Local media interest in the clean up trial continues to be high.

A site visit for the WSAS is planned for Thursday 6 March.

The trial jointly funded by GW, the MfE and Hutt City is expected to cost about \$500,000 and will be completed by the end of March.

5.2 Asset management

Students have completed a project to create an up to date and user friendly GIS layer incorporating all flood protection assets. This involved checking that each asset recorded on the asset register corresponded with an identifiable GIS feature that can be overlain on an aerial map for example. This project is seen as an important step in migrating asset information to any new AMIS adopted by Greater Wellington. The challenge now is to ensure that new and changed assets are reflected in the asset register and the GIS layer.

Planning is underway for the annual asset management inspections and peer review by Horizons Regional Council.

6. Strategy & Technical Support [Sharyn Westlake]

The following table summarises the number of formal, written requests attended to from 19 January 2008 – 29 February 2008. These include information requests from the public, local authorities and also Flood Protection comment on resource consent applications to Greater Wellington.

	19 Jan - 29 Feb 2008	YTD
Requests brought forward	1	3
Additional requests received	19	131
Responses provided	14	128
Outstanding requests	6	6

Over this period Flood Protection has submitted comment on the Draft New Zealand Standard for Flood Risk Management to Standards New Zealand, and participated in Greater Wellington’s response to the Ministry for the Environment on a National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

We have also provided input to Porirua City Council policy development for the Porirua Development Framework and District Plan Change 9 - Duck Creek Flood Management and Comprehensive Development Policy Area.

Land Management (Dave Cameron)

1. Manager's comments

1.1 Drought Declaration

A drought was officially declared on 4 March 2008. This coincided with the formation of a Wairarapa Drought Response Committee chaired by Anders Crofoot of Wairarapa Federated Farmers. Rainfall at Tanawa, north of Tinui for the last two months has totalled 100mm. Similar rainfall was experienced at Stoney Creek, however the central area of the Wairarapa where the drought is impacting most severely received around 50mm. This represents less than 50% of the average rainfall for January and February.

1.2 Hill Country Erosion Fund

The Hill Country Erosion Fund application was sent to MAF on 8 February. To date no response to the Stage 1 application has been received.

The Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative (WRECI) is seeking \$1.5M from the Fund as the government's share of a \$2.5M project. Details of the application are contained in a separate report to the Committee.

1.3 Afforestation Grant Scheme

The Afforestation Grant Scheme proposal was sent to MAF on 28 February 2008. The proposal is seeking to secure \$25M to be set aside for use by a consortium of regional councils acting as regional agents on behalf of the government. The funds are available over the next five years and will target up to 25,000 hectares of new forest.

Authors of the proposal are meeting with MAF staff on 13 March to discuss the proposal with a view to drafting a Heads of Agreement so that the implementation of the grant scheme can begin in the new financial year.

1.4 Health and Safety Audit

Preparation of Health and Safety Management Plans in readiness for the ACC audit in June has highlighted the need for a review of traffic management at Akura Conservation Centre. The major issue is the present congestion caused by customer's cars, delivery vehicles, nursery operations and staff parking.

The review is to look at redesigning the layout that would allow better separation of these activities. It is hopeful that this can be achieved with a small expansion of the sealed area and minimum destruction of pole stocks to the north of the existing compound. Many of the improvements will be achieved through increased signage and road markings.

1.5 Catchment Schemes

Catchment Scheme expenditure for the first eight months totals \$62,300. This represents 68% of the \$91,000 annual budget. River training works are scheduled for the Kaiwhata River and repairs to a gully control structure at Homewood have been completed. River

clearance work in the Whareama River has been completed and repairs to the Bushgrove drop structure will be completed by the end of the month.

1.6 Consultation – Silviculture Programme

Silviculture is continuing in the Reserve forests but is still really slow on the Farm Plan properties due to cash flow constraints associated with the drought and poor stock prices

In reserves forests we have completed 58.1 ha of pruning, 4.3 ha of thinning and 35kms of track spraying.

1.7 Team Building Session

An extremely effective team building session was held recently at Castlepoint. Combining work related sessions with a range of outdoor challenges, mainly of the sporting variety provided an ideal opportunity for all staff to interact and work together. This was particularly important with a large number of recent changes to personnel.

2. Farm Plans (Don Bell)

2.1 Delegated Approvals - New Plans, Reviews and Annual Programmes

Approvals	New Plans, Reviews	Annual Plan Target	Total 10 Year Expenditure	
New Sustainability Plans	0	3	\$0	
New Conservation Plans	2	2	\$76,882	
Ten Year Reviews	5	20	\$129,735	
Programme delivery	Annual Programmes Undertaken	Annual Plan Target	Expenditure to date	Annual Plan Budget
Annual Programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability plans • Conservation plans • Shelter plans 	132	130	\$512,600	\$550,000
Isolated works	10		\$9,800	\$10,000

2.2 Comment

Land use capability mapping was completed on five properties during February 2008 as part of their 10-year review. The programme is being managed by Dr Doug Hicks on a consultancy basis, assisted by Land Management staff.

Katie Jones (GW) and Margaret Brown (AgResearch) have completed the focus group meetings as part of the review of the Wind Erosion Control Scheme. A total of 34 landowners attended the two sessions and provided a wide range of well-informed comment on the future of environmental plans in the dairy/arable sector. Feedback is currently being collated into a report containing recommendations of a likely product to provide for landowners in the future.

Focus group meetings are also being held as part of the Streams Alive Review. These will be held in Otaki and Upper Hutt over the next two weeks and will be used to assess the effectiveness of the current approach and seek ways in which landowner engagement can be approved.

3. Akura Conservation Centre (Stan Braaksma)

3.1 Nursery Operations

The lack of rainfall continues to affect soil moisture levels. Irrigation continues with no respite from the dry conditions. Rainfall for the first two months of this year is 57mm representing about 50% of normal rainfall. Poplar rust has appeared in the last three weeks and will affect growth rates in the latter part of the season. A further spray is scheduled for this week.

Despite the dry conditions growth rates have been good, however leaf fall is expected to arrive early and this will signal an end to the growth season. Stump pruning should be completed by the end of March.

Discussions with the Manawatu nursery supplying poles for this winter are to be held shortly. Supply will be down on previous years but will be compensated by slightly higher production from GW's nurseries.

A new section of boundary fence has been erected at Mangapakeha by the forestry company involved with harvesting operations on a neighbouring property.

3.2 Trading

The six monthly stocktake has been completed. The trading surplus of \$68,900 is very good for this time of year, ensuring the unit will meet its annual budget targets.

As a result of a recent H&S meeting a number of sites within the compound at Akura are being upgraded. In particular this involves railings on stairs and around mezzanine floors, installation of a new work bench, and the relocation of some plant and machinery away from the public areas. The chemical shed has also been relocated to a site within the centre of the yard and away from the administration area.

3.3 Budget

The Akura Business Unit is showing a good result for the first eight months of the financial year. The operating surplus has risen by \$15,000 since the last report with receipt of the final revenue from log sales at Mangapakeha. An additional \$37,000 has been received and will be earmarked for projects at the next meeting of the Akura Board. Likely projects include

implementation of the new traffic management plan and development of an improved irrigation system.

Activity	Budget 2007/08 – Operating Surplus	February Operating Surplus 2007/08
Nurseries	21,100	(21,100)
Trading	(58,200)	(68,900)
Total	(37,100)	(90,000)

4. Biodiversity (Megan Banks)

Megan Banks has recently accepted a position within the Biosecurity Department. Megan has worked on the Streams Alive project for the last 12 months while Michelle Bird is on maternity leave. Michelle will be returning to work shortly and will be involved in the Streams Alive programme on the Kapiti coast, working 2 days per week. A FTE replacement for Megan will cover the rest of the region under the Streams Alive programme as well as new biodiversity work in the southern part of the Wairarapa.

The Ohariu biodiversity research project is making good progress. Discussions have been held with the programme facilitator on the work programme for 2008 and a consideration of future projects within the region. A number of community events have been scheduled for this year including Arbor Day.

5. Operations (Kevin Burdan)

Silviculture is continuing in the reserve forests but is still very slow on the Farm Plan properties (total 6 properties to date) due to cash flow constraints associated with the drought and poor stock prices. In total 54.2 hectares of silviculture (thinning and pruning) has been completed out of a target of 250 hectares.

Work in the Reserve Forests continues with a total of 83.7 hectares of pruning and 8.6 hectares of thinning completed in the last two months.

Staff have also been involved in pole audits, willow clearing in the Whareama River, the construction of a retaining wall at Whangaimoana, and the construction of the Tuturumuri stopbank.

Integrated Catchment Management (Ian Gunn)

1.1 TCM Concept

Managers within the CM Division have met to discuss the TCM concept. A key benefit of a change to the TCM approach is for all parties to get a better understanding of the various projects occurring within a specific catchment.

1.2 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme

The Hearings Committee considering the proposed new rating classification met on 4th March. It has decided on its recommendations. These will be presented at the May meeting.

Some staff attended a hui at the Kohunui marae, Pirinoa, convened by the Wellington Conservancy Board of DoC. It was an opportunity to discuss with the Board the results and programmes undertaken by GW within the Lake Wairarapa area. A number of the Lake Wairarapa Coordinating Committee members also made presentations as did Ngati Kahungunu.

John Barton of Ongaha has discontinued his appeal to the High Court regarding access along the top of a stopbank which is aligned on a paper road. This has been an issue for staff for nearly ten years. Previously resource consents to complete the works had been declined by both GW and the Environment Court.