
Water Supply, Parks and Forests

November/December 2008

Parks

Review of operations for the period ended 31 December 2008

1. Manager's comments

1.1 General

We are now in the heart of summer and, as usual, visitation is up substantially this time of year. It is pleasing to see that the upward trend in visitation numbers in our parks is continuing. With last year being an exceptional summer, I was expecting visitor numbers to decline this year, with this year having an average summer so far. Compared to last year's excellent summer, there has only been a drop in visitors at Queen Elizabeth Park. I suspect this has been to do with fairly windy conditions so far this summer, making a beach experience less appealing. However, the rest of the parks' network has either equalled or surpassed last year's visits year to date.

Operationally, everything is going according to plan. The usual "New Year's Eve" problems in the campgrounds at the parks were well managed and very few behaviour incidents had to be dealt with.



A Gray's beaked whale was reported beached at Queen Elizabeth Park late on Wednesday afternoon. The Department of Conservation (DoC) responded and asked for assistance in moving the mammal. It measured about 5 m long and weighed over a tonne. We assisted DoC in removing the whale from the beach and locating a suitable site for it to be buried at Queen Elizabeth Park. Ngati Toa iwi gave a blessing to the mammal before it was buried in the park. Experts from Te Papa were able to identify the whale as a mature female. The opportunity to examine a fresh beaked whale specimen is quite rare, as

usually most whales reported to DoC are well decomposed. As far as I know, the species is not uncommon around New Zealand. They feed mainly on squid. Whale strandings at Queen Elizabeth Park are rare. The last recorded whale washed up was a larger sperm whale, which had to be disposed of in the park. This was about five years ago.

1.2 Parks Network Strategy

We have engaged Peter Glen Research to develop the survey questionnaires to use with both the general public and park and community groups. To help develop the questionnaires, Peter has interviewed park users as a trial to gain insight into the issues that should be explored through the survey. Peter intends to develop the draft general public survey by the end of January and will carry out the survey during Feb and March. Regarding regional community input into the process, I hope to start engaging the Government, park and community groups by mid-February, once Peter Glen has developed a set of generic questionnaires that are tailor-made for these groups.

I will bring an update to the March Committee meeting.

1.3 Lake Wairarapa

The Establishment Group held a strategy development day in October 2008 as a first attempt to develop a strategic direction for the project. The feedback gathered during the day has been compiled and a draft set of project vision statements and statements of purpose have been developed for the group to adopt. Apart from this, work has continued on trialling ways of eliminating the alder problem at the lake, as well as collecting heritage information. Signs promoting the lake and its entrance points are to be developed and research in to fish and bird species at the lake will be undertaken between now and the end of June. While this is going on, a project management plan will be developed to better define work streams and priorities for implementation.

1.4 Whitireia Park

Ngati Toa is still eager to advance this project. However, it is a lower priority than their Treaty of Waitangi claim settlement. They have discussed the matter at their last runanga meeting and have contacted their lawyers to begin drafting a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council over the ongoing management of the park. I am waiting for a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding to be sent to us.

1.5 Rimutaka toilets and tearooms

The businessman that was to put forward a business plan to run the tearooms has decided not to do so at this point. However, he is open to the idea that he could develop a cafe on the site once the present building is removed.

2. Environmental planning and implementation

2.1. Policy and planning

Submissions on the drafts of the *Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Management Plan* and the *Parks Forests and Reserves Bylaw* close on 2 March. Few submissions have been received to date.

Parks' officers have completed training required for the new Concessions Guidelines and letters have been sent to submitters outlining the changes that have been made to that policy.

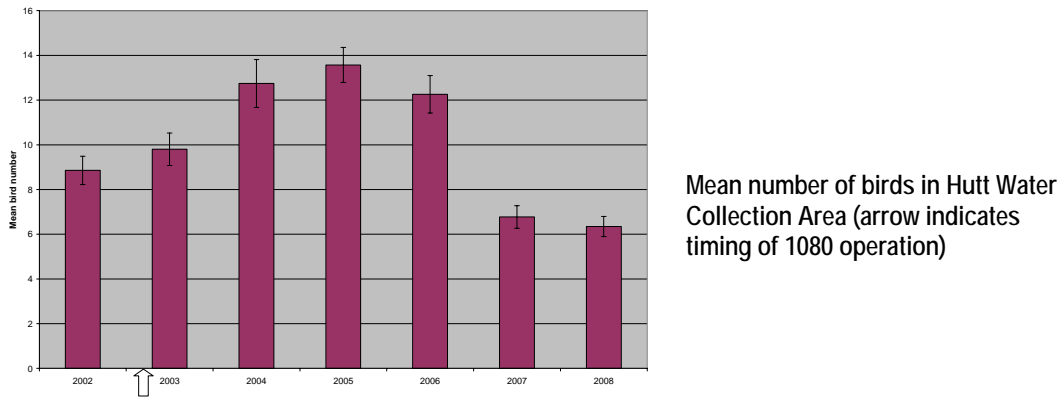
Consultants have started work on the heritage study for Lake Wairarapa and its associated wetlands. A heritage scoping study for the heritage of this area was completed last year. Work has also begun on a sustainable land use plan for Battle Hill Farm Forest Park.

A framework for the Parks Network Strategy is currently being prepared by the planning team.

2.2. Monitoring

The results of the bird monitoring in the Hutt Catchment show that bird numbers have fallen again. The decrease in bird numbers in comparison to

those recorded in 2004, 2005 or 2006 is thought a result of an increase in predators (mainly rats), as it is now six years since the last 1080 operation.



Rodent/mustelid monitoring in November in East Harbour Regional Park indicated that rats are at 8 percent inside the mainland island and at 42 percent outside that intensive control site. Mustelids were present in both areas. In Queen Elizabeth Park no rats or mice were recorded in the tracking tunnels on the dunes.

Parks' officers have started remeasuring the permanent vegetation plots in Akatarawa Forest. These plots provide information about the growth and composition of the native forest.



Remeasurement of an Akatarawa Forest permanent vegetation plot

2.3. Pest control operations

Professional hunters have recently completed pest animal control work in Kaitoke Regional Park and the Hutt and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Areas. A total of 45 goats, 16 deer and 3 pigs were culled.

The “weed team” has sprayed small areas of gorse near the road at the entrance to the Hutt Catchment. This water collection area is practically weed-free, apart from the road and the disturbed area around the weir. A small patch of beggar’s ticks has been removed at Lake Kohangatera in order to keep this pest plant out of the lakes area. The team is now working on old man’s beard, climbing asparagus and holly infestations in Speedy’s Reserve.

The aerial alder control trial at Lake Wairarapa was completed on a very still morning in late December. Monitoring plots have been set up at each of the three trial sites by Department of Conservation and Parks’ staff. It will be

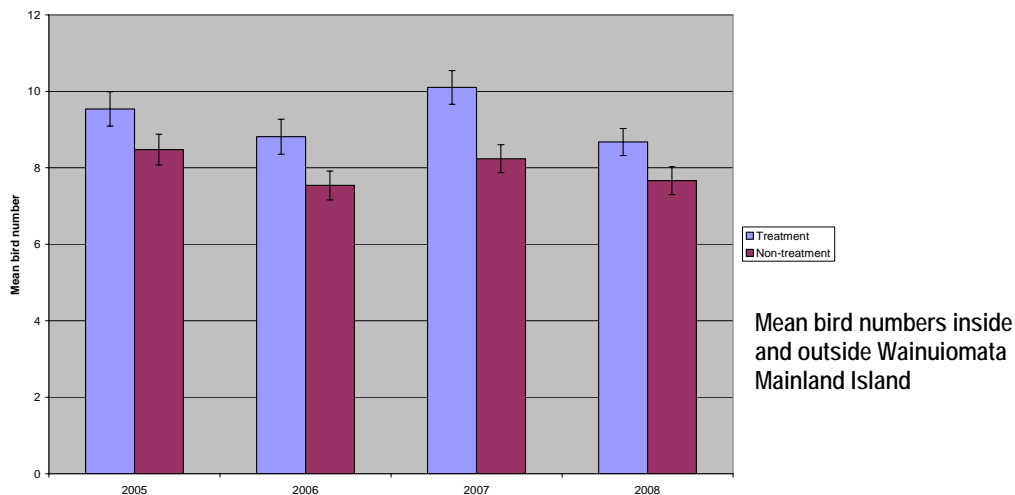
interesting to see the outcome of the trial when the plots are re-measured in a few months time.

2.4. Wainuiomata Mainland Island

Thirteen possums were recorded as trapped in the Mainland Island during the last bait station fill in December. There were over 100 empty bait stations in the intensive control site, which indicates that the rodents have been taking the bait.

An analysis of the bird monitoring completed in November inside and outside Mainland Island showed a drop in bird numbers in both areas. It is unclear why numbers have fallen, considering that Mainland Island has been keeping predator numbers at low levels but the decrease was consistent across both the treatment and non-treatment areas.

Monitoring results from all of our parks and forests do show a decrease in bird numbers this year, so the drop is possibly because of wider environmental factors such as weather during the breeding season. In comparison to the 2007 data, there were fewer silvereye, tomtit and grey warbler and more rifleman and bellbird recorded than in 2008, both inside and outside Mainland Island.



3. Western sector

3.1. Events

Horse events at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park were at a premium, with every weekend having horses galloping around the course. The month started off with Makara Pony Club holding a cross-country and dressage event with 100 riders plus spectators. At the end of the month the Battle Hill Eventing training day attracted 50 riders. In between these events we also hosted the Wellington Area Trail Riding Club with just over 50 competitors riding around the farm and into the Akatarawa Forest to emerge two hours later. This was a timed event, so we had horses everywhere. Battle Hill Eventing also got in a teams event cross country with 40 riders. Wellington Dressage Area Trails was here to pick the Wellington Team and it was very impressive seeing some very good riders in action. Somehow Pauatahanui Pony Club managed to get in two club days.

Capital Multi-sports held a half-marathon running event at Belmont Regional Park, based at Oakleigh Street. This run utilised the Millworkers Track and Mill Stream Track up to Belmont Trig, then back to Oakleigh Street via Stratton Street.

There were three booked picnics and two horse events at Queen Elizabeth Park.

The annual Anything Vintage festival from 27 to 29 December was fortunate to have good weather and a very good turnout. The Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park ran the parking side of the operation and netted about \$3,000. The park was very busy over this period and the event has a good flow-on effect for park visitation with the Whareroa beach area full of visitors.

3.2. Ranging

The local schools must have got together at some stage and decided that Battle Hill Farm Forest Park was the place to go, as December was very busy with large school groups. In some cases the whole school turned up! This creates some logistic issues, especially as most of the schools turn up and do the introductions then walk off and leave 150 eight year olds fair buzzing with excitement. An example of the size of school groups that we have had is Adventure School with 140 children and Hampton Hill with 170 children, and anything in between.

The new campground regulations were implemented at the start of the month and we have been busy with phone calls and educating campers with the changes to camping on where and how we want it done now. The response has been very favourable and positive with family groups seeing the immediate benefits, especially with regard to safety.

At Belmont Regional Park the Ranger assisted the Belmont Hill Road Community Group to clear a “community-developed” route to enter Speedy’s Reserve from Hill Road. The Ranger cut thick blackberry back by scrub-bar to provide the group access to create the track.

A two page article was published in the *Paekakariki Express* introducing the recent changes in ranging staff.

Rabbit numbers have been quite high, so several nights were spent rabbit shooting in the park getting about 10 each time.

Staff took part in an interagency beach patrol *Operation Beach Blitz* focusing on educating members of the public about the rules and regulations on beach use, especially regarding vehicles and dogs. Working with a Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) beach patrol officer, the beach area between Paekakariki and Raumati was patrolled during the afternoon.

A one page introduction to bird life in the park was installed in park notice-boards to inform visitors about the diverse avian fauna of the park. Each features a different bird that can be seen in the park.

3.3. Maintenance

Spraying thistles at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park has been the priority over December, with the South Transmission Gully paddock receiving the most attention. Thistles are a big problem this year, with most of the farm covered in them. Because of the drought the seeds had plenty of cracks in the soil to bed into and the results are going to take a lot of spraying and commitment to bring the farm back to the clean paddocks of two years ago. The walkway to the woolshed had its final coating of organic moss protection to help prevent the ramp from becoming slippery in winter and to make it a lot easier to clean.

The stage 2 realignment of Horokiwi Bridleway Track has been completed at Belmont Regional Park to provide quad access for Biosecurity staff (quad access provided to Baked Beans Bend). The steep sections of the track have been eliminated to improve safety. This track will be used during the possum control operation for this valley scheduled to commence in early 2009.

Contractors and farm staff continue to make progress on the Waitangirua Farm fence asset maintenance/replacement projects.

The Landscape Team has continued upgrade work on the track from Korokoro Dam to Stratton Street, and a new seat was placed on the Mill-workers track at Cornish Street.

Vegetation has been cut back from the edges of the middle Korokoro Stream track at Stratton Street and the Mill-workers track at Cornish Street.

Contractors mowed the upper valley floor twice at Stratton Street.

With the wet spring conditions growth at Queen Elizabeth Park had been excellent, so the main focus during the period has been on releasing plantings (before we lose them) and weed control with a focus on blackberry. All track edges have been cut back.

Our ongoing water supply issues continue with the pump being lifted out by crane then a camera lowered into the casing. A hole was discovered 10 m down the shaft. We are awaiting an engineer's report before deciding what to do next.

Several pine trees were felled in an old blowout site fenced off about 20 years ago. The old logic with sand erosion was to stabilise the area with pine trees. The area is now to be planted with native plants.

Bollards put in to control traffic in a messy area that had been cut up by cars driving in circles.

Poplar Avenue cleanfill site - 10,000 m³ of fill from railways work spread into paddock that is used for horse grazing.

4. Eastern sector

4.1 General

Summer is here, with its associated increase in numbers using the parks and increased demands on rangers. Our *Regional Outdoors Programme* has started and once more we are receiving very favourable comments. Unfortunately we not had much rain lately so the parks are looking a little dry and, of course, the fire danger is increasing. This has also affected the river flows and, while swimming holes are still very popular, the lower levels have resulted in rangers keeping an eye on algae blooms and managing this as required.

4.2 Events

A group of young children from Point Howard Kindergarten were given a basic introduction to native fish by our East Harbour Ranger, Gareth Cooper.

Fergusson Drive Intermediate organised a school tramp from Wainuiomata Hill entrance to East Harbour Regional Park to Korimako track via the main ridge.

Another Wainuiomata Catchment walking tour was held on 7 December, attended by 45 walkers. One walker completed the tour on crutches! The following day students and adults toured the Recreation Area Sledge Track and included a walk to the tunnel and back to the site office.

Good weather has meant an increase in barbecue bookings at Kaitoke Regional Park, with around 11 groups taking advantage of this facility during December.

Two school groups, Westmount and Trentham Schools, were given talks by our ranging team in Kaitoke during December.

4.3 Ranging

A horse riding event at Parangarahu Lakes area held during November caused some concern when it was learned that the permit holder did not use the designated tracks for the event but instead entered the park from an adjoining landowner's property. They then used the Kohangatara Track and exited the park back into the lower area of the landowner's property. All gates have since been locked as a result and it is recommended that this permit holder does not gain further horse riding access into the park.

We have been liaising with the glider club in Rimutaka to formalise access for the logging crews via the glider club road – a GWRC asset. The road is vital for glider club members to tow their gliders up to the airstrip. In the past there have been issues associated with the access road, so we will monitor the situation to ensure that logging operations can co-exist with their access.

We continue to have problems retaining padlocks on gates in Akatarawa Forest, particularly on the Bulls Run Road access via Rallywoods. This access allows public into the operational logging areas and we suspect is a major player in the ongoing vandalism experienced by the logging operator.

Motorcycle access is an ongoing issue with bikes accessing Valley View plantation forest. These issues are extremely hard to address as the

motorcycles have no form of identification and the riders with helmets on are basically impossible to formally recognise, and they are very reluctant to stop!



A stolen car was found stuck on top of bollards near the front gate at Wainuiomata. The incident was reported to Police and the car was removed from the bollards.

In mid-December a man and his partner were sighted standing on the access road near the swing bridge track in Gums Loop. They had driven too fast around a lamp-post and put the back of the car over the road edge. The driver's details were taken and the ranger towed him out.

During the last two weeks of December at least 10 bollards were pulled out and cars driven around on the grass on the access to Reservoir Road, Wainuiomata.

A good summer period has been high volumes of visitors and campers at Kaitoke Regional Park. The park infrastructure appears to be coping with the large numbers well, and the public has been generally well behaved. New Year's Eve went well, with only a few teenagers breaking the liquor ban. One group was evicted for trying to smuggle in alcohol.

A rural fire training exercise was held for ranging staff at Kaitoke Regional Park during December.

4.4 Maintenance

New information signage has been installed at the five entrances for the Parangarahu Lakes Area in East Harbour, this will make route finding easier for visitors.

The New Zealand Historic Places Trust produced four information panels depicting the use of the old Pencarrow Lighthouse. They also mark the 150th anniversary of the lighthouse operating. Parks' staff installed these along the lighthouse track at key points in association with the Trust.



The new information boards for Pencarrow Lighthouse installed by Parks' staff

The prison crew has been valuable over recent months in the Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forest areas. They have assisted with fencing repairs on behalf of an adjoining landowner on the Cannon Point walkway, been involved in maintaining the drainage channels in and around the Twin Lakes water supply area, road maintenance on the Rimutaka Incline, including potholing, clearing of water tables and culverts, and removal of vegetation around the tunnel entrances, and maintenance of the fence lines alongside the logging access in Totara Park.

The Tunnel Gully toilet water supply has required maintenance several times during this period but all have been minor issues. Modifications to the intake are planned for in March.

During a routine assessment of roads in the Wainuiomata Catchment the Ranger and Manager, Forestry identified a hole in a water table on a section of tar seal road from George Creek. It was found that an old tunnel (most likely a test tunnel for the Morton Dam) was exposed at the entrance. The hole was filled with large rocks found on-site and backfilled.

Routine maintenance continued with cutbacks on tracks in most parks using staff and with use of hydro-mowers on roads, mowing and spraying of the amenity areas

Work has continued in getting the Wainuiomata site office and grounds into shape. Recent work has been painting and the positioning of several old feature pipes from water supply.

Marketing and Design

Review of operations for the period ended 31 December 2008

1. **Manager's comments**

It was pleasing to see the very good results from the spring mulching campaign, noting both improvements in advertising recall and in mulch product sales across participating retailers. Promoting a water conservation related message from the beginning of November also helps to raise general consciousness prior to summer that water in Wellington is a finite resource. The message has been complemented by our joint advertising of water restrictions and significantly more advertising of "base" water restrictions by the four cities than in past years.

Everyone enjoys new landscape projects and it has been exciting to see the Stuart Macaskill Lakes Lookout take shape especially with the recycled pipe "portals" being installed and work getting underway on the interpretation of the area's special features. We are planning for an official "launch" and tree planting there, possibly after the next meeting of the Committee.

Despite somewhat variable weather we have enjoyed very good support for our *Regional Outdoors Programme* events, especially the Kev the Kiwi and buggy walks. Once again it is great to see excellent feedback, including very helpful ideas for improvements.

Visitor surveying in the forests is already turning up valuable information including an under-performing road counter! We have appreciated the assistance of Upper Hutt City Council in recruiting staff for the survey project; always a very time-consuming aspect of this work.

2. **Water Supply**

2.1 **Water supply**

2.1.1 **Water restriction communication review**

Wellington City Council (WCC) agreed in December to change its evening watering times with immediate effect, to bring it into line with the other three city councils. A communications outline was also agreed in relation to the water restriction trigger guidelines project (see below). We subsequently placed a joint advertisement of the basic "odds and evens" watering rules across our supply area in *The Dominion Post* prior to Christmas.

The schedule of water restriction triggers and associated actions has been agreed by representatives from Porirua City and Capacity, on behalf of three cities it represents. The various stages include measures such as councils publicising their annual "base" water use restrictions more actively (as above), the use of patrols to enhance public awareness of the restrictions if tougher supply conditions arise, and approaching commercial water users for voluntary savings if a ban on use of unattended watering (sprinklers, etc.) is considered necessary.

We have requested that each council confirm how it would support the higher restriction level undertakings.

2.1.2 Summer water conservation campaign

Work continued on three main strands of activity, as follows:

Spring mulching campaign

In November 2008 we ran a month long campaign to promote the benefits of mulch and ultimately help to conserve water during summer. We had some pleasing feedback from the retailers involved. One nationwide retailer reported that, nationally, their sales of various mulch products decreased by 7.8 percent, while mulch sales in the Wellington area increased by 28 percent. Another retailer reported increases of 75 percent and 79 percent on their mulch products from the same period in 2007. Unsurprisingly all are very keen to continue their involvement with the campaign.

Our consumer market research (fieldwork December 2008) showed free recall of our mulch advertising at 37 percent (31 percent for the 2007 campaign), with very high recall by those people (at least 98 percent) for specific benefits of mulching that we promoted via the campaign. Total recall (after prompting about our creative executions) was 51 percent; up from 34 percent for the 2007 campaign. Forty-five percent of all people surveyed said they had bought or used mulch on their garden in the three months prior to the survey, with a quarter of those people claiming to have been influenced by the mulch campaign.

Altogether these results indicate the spring mulch campaign had a positive impact on awareness of the benefits of mulching and on mulch sales.

Summer water conservation campaign

Planning for the summer water conservation campaign was completed in December, with a programme of print and radio advertising and associated publicity scheduled to start on 10 January and run at least until the end of February. (Early rain in the New Year has seen its start postponed to 17 January.) We have employed the same strategy - targeting water used for gardening - as was used in the summer of 2008, so the creative material has required only minor changes. We have again used a competition to attract people from our print advertising to GWRC's *Be the Difference* web site, although this year we are offering 10 prizes of water wise watering equipment to try and boost entry levels.

Water efficient fittings promotion

Given information from the Technical Report regarding potential water savings through the uptake of more efficient technology, we have been exploring ways to bring this to Wellington. Over the past several months we have been working with a product manufacturer to develop a promotion offering households a specific water-efficient appliance at a significant discount to its usual retail price. A similar offer has been publicised elsewhere in New Zealand via the use of customer rates notices.

However, our proposal to do so here was rejected by our customers in December and a compromise could not be agreed.

An alternative approach using *Our Region* is being investigated with Corporate Communications but the proposal will require further modification. We aim to present a revised promotion proposal to the manufacturer in February.

2.1.3 *Water Supply Annual Report 2007/08*

The report was adopted by GWRC in early December and subsequently distributed to around 220 stakeholders, including the regional Members of Parliament.

2.1.4 Water treatment plant educational resources

Work has started on the new Stuart Macaskill Lakes lookout just south of the Te Marua Water Treatment Plant front gates.

The lookout is being built to accommodate the needs of the various school groups that visit our water treatment plant. Usually, when a school group visits our treatment plant, the group has to be split into two because of the large numbers. One group then does the tour and the other group is sent down to the park to wait their turn. By building a lookout that includes water supply information boards and features, we hope that the groups who have to wait will use the time to learn more about our water supply.

At the time of writing, an access path has been installed, as well as two “viewports”. The viewports are constructed out of water supply pipes and will each have an interpretation panel attached to them. Work continues on developing the interpretation panels detailing the history and construction of the lakes and highlighting the geographical features of the area. We will also provide the school groups with worksheets about the lookout to assist in their learning.

The Stuart Macaskill rock will be moved up to the lookout from its present site adjacent to the road and two picnic tables (also made out of recycled materials) will be installed.

2.1.5 Outdoor advertising

A Contract was signed at the end of December with I-Site for use of our Kaiwharawhara billboard site. The Contract began on 1 January 2009.

2.2 Parks

2.2.1 *Regional Parks Report 2007/08*

This report was distributed to around 450 decision makers and influencers in and associated with territorial authorities, the Regional EDA, Government (including the newly elected regional Members of Parliament) and non-Government agencies with whom we share some common objectives.

Once again, the publication has been very well received.

2.2.2 Signs

Queen Elizabeth Park Geological Trail

This work arose from provisions made during the resource consent process for the realignment of State Highway 1 at MacKay's Crossing. Transit New Zealand (now New Zealand Transport Agency) made funding available for the construction of signs at Queen Elizabeth Park highlighting the special features of the Whareroa landforms, including the coastal scarp, an alluvial fan (which the highway cuts across), the dunes and wetlands

Information is being compiled for several interpretation panels in the park and illustrations are to be drawn. Four key sites have been identified:

- (1) The Queen Elizabeth Park foredunes from where visitors will look east to the hills and wetlands. We are planning a boat-shaped lookout here that will have room for other information in future on the dunes and the Whareroa pa site.
- (2) The dune ridge on the Wetland Walk near the bush remnant.
- (3) The eastern dunes near the railway line.
- (4) The start of the Wetland Walk at the ranger's office.

3. Events

3.1.1 Regional Outdoors Programme 2009

The programme of around 60 events went live on the GWRC web site on 1 December. Events have also been promoted on Upper Hutt and Hutt City, Wellington City and Kapiti Coast District Council web sites where relevant. Other web sites to feature our events include *nzlive.com* (run by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage) and *eventfinder.co.nz*.

As expected, bookings really heated up once *Our Region* landed in mailboxes and the insert was mailed out to around 1,300 people and organisations on our database in early December. Radio and community newspaper advertising kept momentum going after Christmas. Our booking officer has reported a much busier period than this time last year (which set records in itself).

Attendances have been strong to date, although affected by variable weather. Highlights include the new *Rongoa Maori* medicine walk at Kaitoke (for which we could have booked out another two events), the continued popularity of the "Kev the Kiwi" walks (nearly 400 at Tunnel Gully; nearly 300 at Wainuiomata) and the 8,500 people at the three day Anything Vintage Festival at the end of December. Around a third of respondents completing survey forms had never been to that park before.

Feedback has been very positive about the "new look" *Regional Outdoors Programme* brochure, which is a fresh and appealing update on previous editions. Also, while we have been getting high satisfaction ratings on the various events, once again there have also been some good suggestions for improvements.

3.1.2 Buggy walks

Now in their third year, the buggy walks are proving an excellent means of getting new parents out to the parks and encouraging social interaction. Overcast and windy weather brought 130 parents and babies to Harcourt Park in December for a walk down the Hutt River Trail and back via the Totara Park Bridge. A New Year and sunshine attracted nearly 400 to a combined Kev the Kiwi/Buggy Walk at Tunnel Gully. Now that the Parks' landscape team has "filled in" a large tree root on the upper section of Tane's Track, this walk is much more buggy-friendly with fewer bottle-necks. All parents tackling the walk with double buggies were recognised with spot prizes and much admiration.

3.1.3 Restoration day

Staff attended three meetings with DoC staff to plan for the next Restoration Day. It will be held on 9 May at Porirua and will involve the theme of catchment management. The day will include field trips to three key sites in the Porirua Harbour area.

3.2 Visitor monitoring - Pakuratahi and Akatarawa Forests

This summer we are to implement the Visitor Monitoring Framework in the Pakuratahi and Akatarawa Forests. The objectives here are to:

- Count visits at the various entrances and review the calibration factors applied to the data collected from the vehicle counters. We will also assess the need for counters at selected entrances to the Akatarawa Forest
- Conduct around 100 "intercept" interviews of visitors to each forest, to better understand why they visit, what they do in the forest, what they value about it and what they would like to see improved. We also collect basic demographic information, e.g., age, gender, place of residence

Given that the forest entrances are some distance from Wellington, we have altered our staffing arrangements somewhat to minimise transport requirements and offer employment to local people over the survey period. This has involved working with Upper Hutt City Council to offer their casual staff (who usually work at H2O Extreme and on other recreation programmes) weekend and weekday work at the numerous forest entrances near the city. Surveying is scheduled to start on Saturday, 31 January 2009, and will be carried out on two weekend days and one weekday at most forest entrances.

The Maungakotukutuku-based operators of Kapiti 4x4 already assist GWRC in managing this well used entrance to the Akatarawa Forest. They have agreed to survey the entrance as required, which will be a great help to us.

4. Community liaison

A new issue of *Green Shoots* community newsletter was published in December and mailed to around 1,300 people on our database, along with a copy of the *Regional Outdoors Programme*. It included a summary of our plans regarding the Parks Network Strategy.

During the period staff attended meetings of the Friends of Belmont Regional Park, Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park and the Hutt River Trail Operations Group. The two Friends' meetings were relatively short, focusing on their roles in the *Regional Outdoors Programme* events and then finishing with a Christmas celebration. The Hutt River Trail meeting featured considerable discussion with GWRC Landscape Architect, Barry Straight, who is updating the *Trail Operations Manual*. This will include agreed furniture and signage designs to get more consistency in approach between agencies involved with the trail

Members of the Kapiti community have long been instigators and supporters of environmental restoration at Queen Elizabeth Park, particularly the bush remnant, dunes and wetlands. More recently, a group of GWRC staff and members of the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park have been discussing details of the environmental enhancement projects and several meetings of the group were convened over the period. Staff members have also been visiting key sites with the park rangers and co-ordinating plans for restoration projects, including Honda tree plantings.

GWRC was approached during the period by YHA New Zealand (YHANZ), which was looking for land in the Wellington Region for native tree planting through their Green Footprint Project. Funded by travellers wanting to offset their carbon emissions through purchasing native flora (and by Ministry for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund), this project has been running since 2004 in Canterbury as a partnership between Landcare Research, Selwyn District Council and Waihora Ellesmere Trust. YHANZ sees Wellington as the next step in taking the scheme nationwide.

Through the Green Footprint Project, YHANZ takes donations on-line and through their hostels. All money received is held by YHANZ until they bulk purchase all the native plants, then on a nominated weekend YHANZ branch members, hostel staff and volunteer backpackers plant all the trees and shrubs at an annual planting day. We identified a site adjacent to the Whareroa Stream near the Queen Elizabeth Park stables that would be suitable for such planting activity and are developing a Memorandum of Understanding with YHANZ.

We also showed YHANZ staff the Queen Elizabeth Park plant nursery, which could well serve as the primary plant source.

5. Water usage

Charts detailing water sales for the year are on page 17.

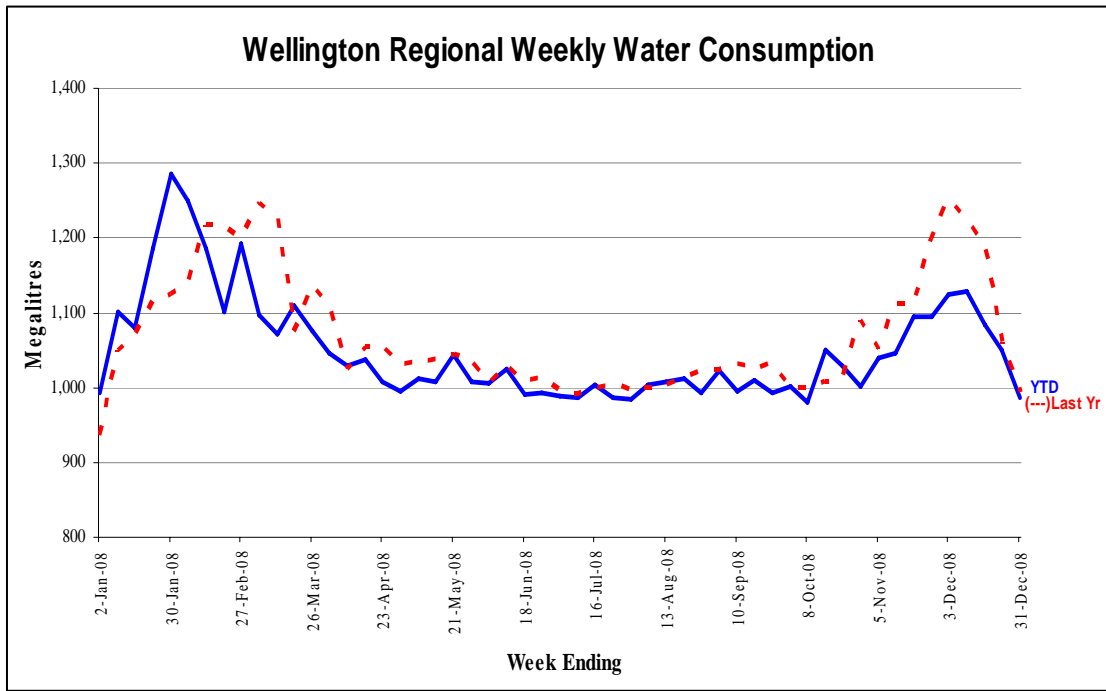


Figure 1 - Water sold over the last 12 months

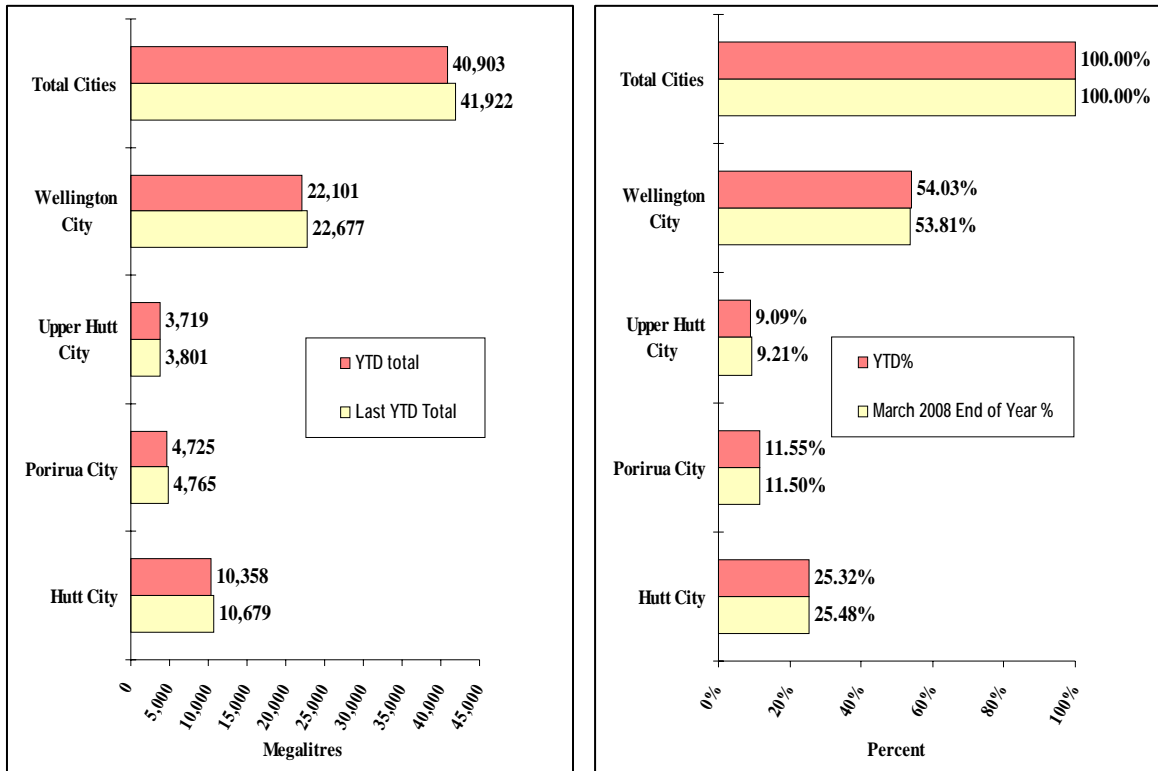


Figure 2 - Water sold during the metering year to date [April 2008 to March 2009]

Forestry

Review of operations for the period ended 31 December 2008

1. Plantation forests (Wellington)

1.1 Log Harvest Contract

This month was marked by general buoyancy in the market with news of price rises in the export market coming thick and fast. As a result, many of the “optional” harvest operations came on-line to share the high prices and the infrastructure proved inadequate. The wharf became full and logs were diverted to both Kaiwharawhara and Seaview. This extended the turnaround time for trucks, especially at Kaiwharawhara where they needed to be weighed at Centreport on the inward and outward trip. This reduced the efficiency of the road cartage operation. In addition, the anticipated log ships all “lost” between one to four days, further adding to growing backlogs. Later, when the logs from Seaview were loaded out, Centreport was closed to all other traffic.

As a consequence of these disruptions, 37.5 loads were sitting on skids at month end. As is described below, the difference in December prices compared to November prices was unprecedented and represented a reduction of \$45,900.

However, December came with price reductions of up to 65 percent as China reacted to the world financial crisis. We were fortunate that Rayonier New Zealand had secured the necessary financial clearances early and, although prices dropped, we were able to ship the product. Other exporters were not so fortunate.

Log 36 has remained at Blowfly working westward along the northern ridge. They are still programmed to complete this block in late January or early February.

When Log 6 completed the setting of Kilometre at the 9 km, they were diverted to an area of wind-throw in Boiler Gully, adjacent to the southern boundary of the block they were in. The area in question would have been 70 percent to 80 percent wind-throw which would not have remained merchantable through the Christmas break

Log 36 harvested 2,011 tonnes for \$78,725 in November and 1,425 tonnes for -\$1,239 in December.

Log 6 harvested 2,613 tonnes for \$105,276 in November and 1,217 tonnes for \$2,354 in December.

Log 5 is a crew harvesting private logs adjacent to our Mangaroa block, with the intention of moving into our block when the private wood is completed. In setting up the harvest they shipped out 58 tonnes of GWRC trees for a return of \$744.

While direct comparisons are difficult because of the sale unit being JAS, examples of the price trends are:

Grade	August	September	October	November	December	Variation from August	Variation November/December
PP	96.06	99.42	115.71	137.99	66.20	-32.1%	-52.0%
A	70.95	83.29	89.75	107.76	60.33	-15.0%	-44.01%
K	71.12	74.55	81.46	92.95	50.94	-28.4%	-45.2%
KI	55.86	69.20	75.01	83.64	40.34	-27.8%	-51.8%
KX	44.77	45.77	43.17	74.63	26.13	-41.6%	-65.0%

In total, November production was 4,624 tonnes for \$184,000 and December was 2,699 tonnes for \$1,861.

The confusion regarding the end of year closedown continued until Thursday, 4 December, at which point it was decided to stop Log 36 on Friday, 5 December, and Log 6 the following Friday, 12 December. In reality, because of the short notice, Log 36 had to work through to Tuesday to pull the trees that had already been felled and the skidder driver remained until Friday, 12 December, to clear the stocks on the skid.

During the following week it was agreed with Rayonier New Zealand that we would move Log 6 to Glider Club in Pakuratahi West and that they could commence felling on 5 January 2009. This decision was driven by the need to provide logs to the domestic mills. Log 36 recommenced on 12 January 2009.

Silviculture Contract

The new Silvicultural Contractors are working satisfactorily.

In November 20.0 ha of silviculture was completed and a further 10 ha in December. Since that time the main Contractor has been assisting with road maintenance.

1.3 Plantation Forestry operations

This period has been marked by an increase in damage to machinery. Prior to and over the Christmas break the following incidents were recorded:

- A skidder was “borrowed” from 9 Kilometre and used to retrieve a bogged vehicle adjacent to the woolshed. There was no damage incurred. .
- Offenders returned again and drained a digger by disconnecting the fuel feed at the bottom of the fuel tank.
- Offenders returned again and broke into the machines and stole the radios, radio mounts and aerials.
- Machines were relocated to Boiler Gully.
- A digger was broken into and the dashboard damaged.
- One machine was relocated to Stockyards.

- Over Christmas diggers at Boiler Gully and Stockyard were damaged by having windows kicked in.
- A car, presumably stolen, was abandoned on Lindsay's Road after being used to destroy the signpost at the intersection of Valley View Road and Airstrip Drive.
- On the following Friday a further signpost at Airstrip Drive and Woolshed Road was found knocked over and then driven over. By the tyre marks, this was done by a 4WD.
- The padlock on the Puketiro gate was broken and thrown away.

Staff members have continued to supervise the Silvicultural Contractors and monitor the quality control plots.

1.4 Millings

When the access road from State Highway 2 into Pakuratahi East was constructed in 1999, it was necessary to ensure that metal was not tracked on to the sealed surface of the State Highway. Millings (recycled asphaltic concrete roadway) were used to seal the first 100 m of the road to ensure this did not occur. These proved very successful and still serve this purpose today.



When logging commenced in Puketiro, GWRC negotiated an arrangement with the partners of Rallywoods to route logging trucks through their land to enable the Totara Park access to be used in preference to Bulls Run /Moonshine Roads or constructing an access through Battle Hill. Very early in its use we encountered difficulties with dust clouds drifting across the river and into the



Upper Hutt residential area. To alleviate this problem and to give improved adhesion on the more difficult corners of the route, we applied millings. These were applied for the first 2.2 km through the Totara Park gate, past the houses in Rallywoods, and on five corners between the 10 and 11 km where a combination of grade a corner radius resulted in excessive road wear.

Of recent time these millings have been very difficult to access, because of their popularity, so when a source was found it was decided to reseal these sections, which were showing signs of deterioration. The work was carried out by contractors who have experience in laying new seal and recycled millings,

and the method used complied with the requirements of Rule 18 of the *Regional Discharges to Land Plan*. The suggestion by a member of the public at the last Council meeting in 2008 that diesel was being spread on the road to reduce dust is unfounded. Diesel is used as part of the process of laying the millings.

1.5 Forest Access

The lack of access into Maungakotukutuku remains.

All main roads are in good order and only minimal maintenance has been required. As mentioned above, the location of a supply of suitable millings prompted us to reseal those areas previously sealed for dust control and adhesion reasons.

Although an early shutdown did occur, uncertainty over the market requirements and volumes precluded any new roading other than the 200 m to a new setting and skid in Blowfly.

As indicated above, vandalism remains a concern.

1.6 Market Trends

With the serious decline in market confidence since the financial downturn, it is proving very difficult to predict the future movements of the markets. Current advice suggests that January and February are likely to show only minor improvements over December and any significant movements will occur from March onwards. Although these changes cannot be quantified, there seems to be agreement within the industry that the markets will return and that reasonable prices are achievable in the medium-term.

1.7 Carbon

With the decision of the new Government to review the Emissions Trading Scheme, we cannot be assured that we will still receive the level of carbon credits set out in the current legislation. It is possible that this review will introduce substitution for deforesting, which will aid the wind farm project.

1.8 Bio-energy

The bio-energy project proposed for Eurocell to supply them, the Upper Hutt Swimming Pool and Upper Hutt City Council Chambers has received initial Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) funding. These funds are to refine and confirm the proposal. The first task is to quantify the volumes of logging waste, together with its drying time and calorific values.

The company collected all the residues from the Log 6 skid for two days in mid-January. This will be repeated several times throughout the year to get a “measured” annual result.

2. Reserve Forests

2.1 Tauanui logging

As with the metro logging crews, the end of the year came rather rapidly with rumours of an early finish becoming fact only a couple of days before the end. Most of this uncertainty came from Rayonier New Zealand endeavouring to match their shipping capacity with their stocks at Centreport as their next ship is not due until February. The crew spent November and December working through the 1967 stand. In November they harvested 1,180 tonnes for \$48,500 at an average of \$41.09 per tonne. By contrast, December was 315 tonnes for \$3,450 at an average of \$10.95 per tonne.

2.2 Silviculture

There was no silviculture carried out in this period.

2.3 Roding maintenance

We were finally able to install the ford in the Tauanui River prior to Christmas. This will allow the harvest operation to move north of the river and, when the harvest reaches the top ridge, consider opening a second harvest site in the next catchment.

Now the ford has been installed the road has been completed from the river through to the first skid site.



Photos of the Tauanui River ford made out of large concrete blocks

2.3 Fire danger

While the fire weather index was building to a level which caused concern leading up to the Christmas break, subsequent rain has mitigated the risk meantime.

Water Supply

Review of operations for the period ended 31 December 2008

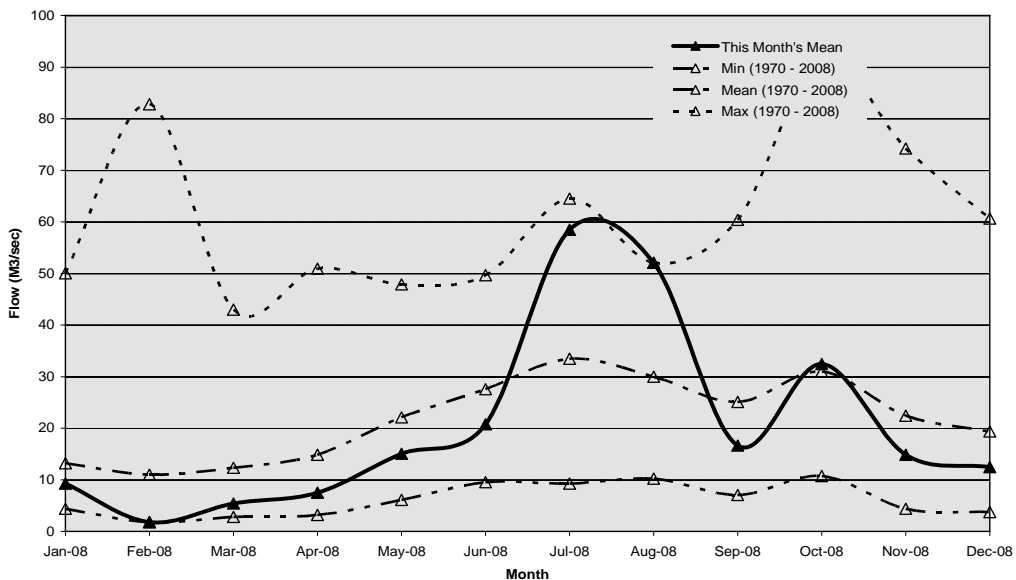
1. Supply situation

1.1 General

The delays in completing the Stuart Macaskill Lake 1 joint seal repairs became a concern as the completion date continued to slip. The work was finished with only minimal time available in which to fill the lake prior to the main summer holiday period. Filling commenced on 24 November and the total lake storage reached 100 percent before the end of December.

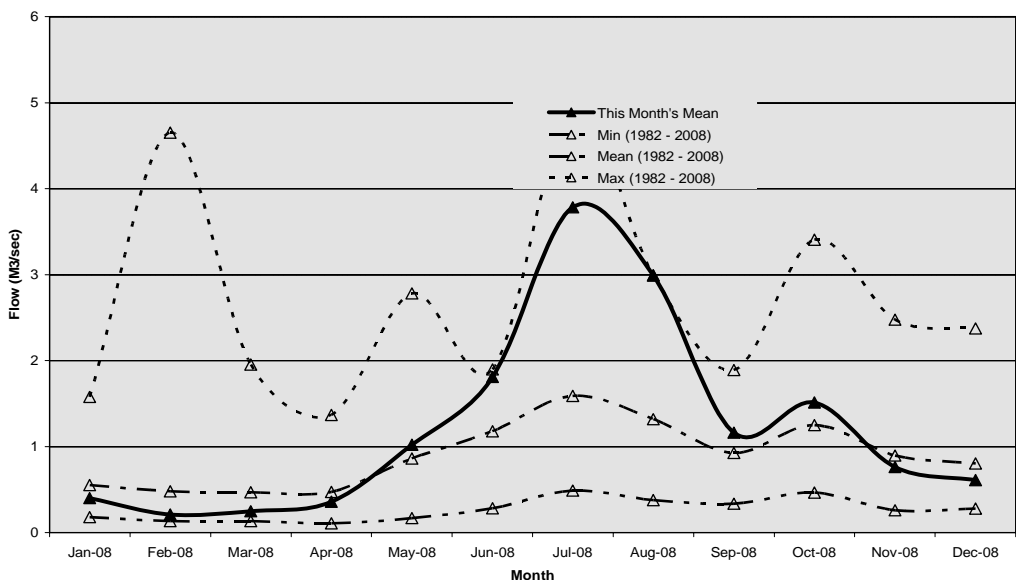
1.2 Hutt River flows

The mean flow for the Hutt River during both November and December 2008 was below average.



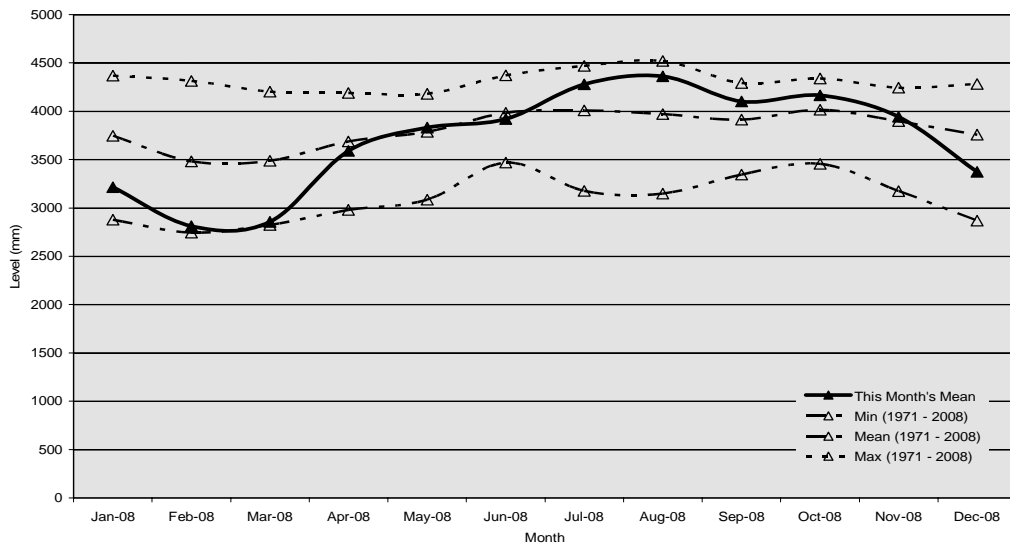
1.3 Wainuiomata River flows

During November and December 2008 the mean flow was just below average.



1.4 Aquifer levels

The water level in the Waiwhetu aquifer was above average during November 2008. During December the water level was below average.



2. Stuart Macaskill Lake 1 apron joints repair

An inspection of the Lake 1 apron joints in April 2008 revealed failure of the flexible seal between the tower base and surrounding concrete apron slabs. The designers of the lake structures developed a replacement joint seal. The new seal has been installed by the Water Supply Department's Mechanical Trade Services Contractor.

3. SAP asset management system

This has been a busy period for the SAP subject matter experts and key operations staff. Despite some delays caused by the external consultants, reasonable progress has been maintained.

The blueprint has been revised signed off and an implementation programme is due by the end of December.

Three staff members have undertaken training on the new system and future resourcing is under review. The proposed "go live" date is April/May but this will be confirmed at the end of January.

3. Public health risk management plans

We have been working with a local consultant in the development of a database tool that will speed up the public health risk management plan workshop process and, more importantly, form the basis of an easily navigable framework of compliance documentation that will provide clear audit trails and improve staff access to operating procedures and reference material.

Two of the planned nine workshops have been held and we hope to have the Waterloo public health risk management plan delivered to the assessors by mid-February

4. Restructuring

All positions were filled and the restructuring exercise is complete. Three new staff members are to start in the New Year. There are seven additional staff members working from the Waterloo Administration Centre, bringing the total number at this office to 26. Total staff numbers now stand at 47, which is the full establishment and less than the proposed 50 originally planned. It should be noted that the performance of GWRC's Human Resources in assisting with the whole process was excellent.

Administrative support is under review at Waterloo. There is a short-term requirement for additional support associated with the implementation of the SAP asset management system and the SafeTsmart system. We expect that one of the benefits of the new systems, particularly in the asset management area, will be an easing of administrative workload. If this proves to be the case, the long-term needs of the increased staff numbers at Waterloo should be able to be met.

5. Kaitoke abstraction

During December, at times of minimum flow over the Kaitoke weir, short duration events occurred resulting in the weir level falling approximately 1-2 mm below the allowable level. These events occur each year during times of prolonged minimum flow and fall within the level of accuracy stated in the consent conditions

6. Pipelines

The Pipelines Team assisted Porirua City Council by providing 300 mm diameter pipework for urgent repairs to one of their reticulation mains. Three pipeline leaks were repaired; one on the 900 mm main in Upper Hutt, one on the 250 mm rising main to Wainuiomata No. 1 Reservoir and one leak on the OK main at Glenmore Street which required a new section of pipe to be installed.

7. Budgets, business plan and LTCCP

More than the usual amount of effort was needed this year as it is an LTCCP round and also the budgets had to be revised to align with the new staff structure.

8. ISO accreditation audit

The external auditors were due to carry out the ISO recertification audit in December and much of the preparatory work had been completed. However, the audit was postponed until 2009 at the request of the auditor.

9. Training and development plans

Team leaders have commenced work on the preparation of training and development plans for all of their staff.

The plans will be completed by June 2009 and will include a prioritised schedule of all training and skill requirements that an individual needs to be deemed competent in their role. In addition, the plans will have future development options for each staff member.

10. Chemical costs

Recent chemical cost increases have had a significant impact on the operations budget. The latest price increases in January 2009 are forecast to have a financial impact of approximately \$25,000 per month over and above current expenditure. Future initiatives are being considered to assist in reducing the ongoing increase in chemical costs.

11. Distribution compliance procedures

Work has been completed on developing new procedures and reporting regimes for the distribution system, and Drinking-Water Standards compliance.

12. Capital projects

The budgeted expenditure on the water supply capital works programme for the 2008/09 financial year is \$5,007,000. At the end of the second quarter actual expenditure was \$1.817 million. The current forecast is an underspend of approximately 3 percent. A separate report reviews the first six months of capital expenditure.

13. Projects

Significant projects carried out by the team include:

- The installation of the new seal for Stuart Macaskill Lake 1 tower/apron joints was completed mid-November allowing the lake to be filled by 31 December 2008.
- Design of a sodium hypochlorite generation and dosing system for Te Marua Water Treatment Plant was completed. The sodium hypochlorite generator has been ordered. The Civil Construction Contract has been tendered and awarded.
- A catchment risk assessment has been carried out for the Waterloo Water Treatment Plant wellfield. This concluded that it will be more effective to install water quality monitoring equipment on the Waterloo wellfield rather than construct monitoring wells further up the valley.
- The Contract to upgrade the diesel storage facilities at the treatment plants was awarded following clarification of the cost of additional work required for the installation of the replacement storage tank at Waterloo Water Treatment Plant.
- Upgrading the Mt Climie telemetry repeater station is being investigated because of continuing problems with interference and loss of signal at this site.

- A drawing detailing the re-routing the pipeline to the Bell Road reservoir at the Karori Sanctuary is being prepared. A vertical dropper pipe to connect with the Raroa Road Tunnel has been installed by the contractor working on the proposed sanctuary visitors' centre.

14. Catchment management

- A road inspection was carried out Wainuiomata in November with no maintenance required.
- A total of 78 people took part in three catchment tours in November. There were a number of “no shows” for the second tour following bad weather forecasts.

Development and Strategy

Review of operations for the period ended 31 December 2008

1. Water Supply Strategy

Feedback on the wholesale water supply development projects has been received from each of our four city council customers. The feedback differs between the councils from support for development of supply, to a preference for demand management initiatives rather than development. There is majority support for the short-term projects and the Whakatikei site for a dam when one is required. Hutt City Council expressed concern over the possible impact on the Hutt River and Waiwhetu aquifer. However, there is also a majority preference by our customers for water supply development decisions to be considered, together with demand management initiatives, or in conjunction with the Regional Water Strategy.

These water supply development projects are included in the capital funding shown in the draft 2009/19 LTCCP. However, the need for the Upper Hutt aquifer and/or the Whakatikei dam could be deferred many years by implementation of demand management options. Feedback on the draft LTCCP and the Regional Water Strategy will be important in making decisions on the timing of these projects.

Feedback on the development projects is the subject of a separate Committee report.

2. Water Supply Development

2.1 Stuart Macaskill Lakes

Consultants are carrying out a risk analysis of the lake embankments under the seismic loads advised by GNS Science for both the existing top water level and the raised water level proposed. This will provide information on the current level of risk of failure from movement of the Wellington Fault; whether raising the level would increase the level of risk; and what treatment would be necessary to mitigate it.

The Consultant has identified critical areas where it is more probable that problems could occur and set up a computer modelling program for dynamic analysis of the lake embankment. Critical and representative sections of the embankment will be individually analysed following calibration of the model. The final report is programmed for the end of March 2009.

2.2 Kaitoke weir consent

A response is being prepared to feedback and comments received on the scientific reports on the environmental impact of the proposed reduction in residual flow in the Hutt River. Feedback has been received from GWRC's Environment Division, Fish and Game New Zealand, Department of Conservation, and preliminary comments have been received from iwi. The

response will be discussed with the key stakeholders. A consultant has been commissioned to provide a cultural impact assessment of the proposed change in the consent conditions.

Hutt City Council has expressed concern that taking additional water at Kaitoke weir and by developing the Upper Hutt aquifer will degrade the water quality of the Hutt River. The city council is particularly concerned about the presence of algae in the river. A presentation has been made to Hutt City Council on both the impact on flows in the Hutt River and the issue of algal blooms to address these concerns.

Our aim is to have addressed all the concerns identified to be in a position to submit the resource consent application for reduced residual flow by the end of this financial year. Access to the additional water could then be available for the summer of 2010 if it is necessary to meet consumption demand.

2.3 Central business district (CBD) Reservoir

Wellington City Council has advised that they are deferring work on the CBD reservoir project until the 2011/12 financial year. The work is being deferred because of concern that construction activity would interfere with the use of the Prince of Wales Park during the Rugby World Cup. Our capital expenditure budget has been adjusted in the draft 2009/19 LTCCP to match the timing advised by Wellington City Council. Preliminary work on the project has stopped.

Capital and Coast District Health Board has confirmed its requirement for 20 million litres storage in the reservoir for emergency purposes but has not yet confirmed its share of the funding.

2.4 Upper Hutt aquifer

Water Supply is planning to model the Hutt River flows with and without abstraction of water from the Upper Hutt aquifer using the Sustainable Yield Model (SYM). This would provide a better understanding of the relationship between the Hutt River and abstraction of water from the Upper Hutt aquifer. Use of the SYM will allow different scenarios of rate of abstraction and duration to be analysed. The SYM has been successfully calibrated against the results from the external model used to analyse the aquifer.

NIWA has been commissioned to update the hydrology dataset for the SYM through to 2008 to allow the effect of last summer's low flow levels to be included in the analysis. This update will be completed in February.

3. Water Supply risk mitigation

Seismic impact modelling

GNS Science is well advanced in their modelling of the impact of a Wellington Fault movement on the wholesale water supply network. Having established the model, the next stage is to estimate repair times for damage to pipes of various type, size and location.

This information will confirm critical areas of the network and the expected time for reinstatement of the water supply to particular areas, with and without the Whakatikei Dam.

When completed, the results will provide input into an assessment of the economic and social benefits of the Whakatikei dam that result from faster reinstatement of the wholesale water supply (particularly to Porirua and Wellington) following movement of the Wellington Fault.

4. Renewable Energy

4.1 Stoney Creek wind farm

Meridian Energy's plan to erect a 30 metre anemometer mast at Stoney Creek has been delayed. Resources are being programmed for erection in February. Consent for erection of the tower has been obtained.

While wind data is being collected over the next 12 months, Meridian Energy also intends to carry out a fatal flaw assessment for the development. The assessment will examine issues such as the logistics of getting turbines and equipment to the site, and consenting.

4.2 Puketiro wind farm

Council resolved at the September 2008 meeting to exclude wind turbines from Battle Hill Farm Forest Park but included an additional ridge in the Akatarawa Forest to the land being made available for wind energy development. At the November 2008 Council meeting a further adjacent ridge was also included for potential wind farm development.

A replacement contract for development of the Puketiro wind farm that covers the changes required by the Council is under discussion with RES New Zealand Ltd. Progress has been made on the substantive issues and the replacement document is expected to be signed in February.

The High Court challenge by the Pauatahanui Futures Society has been withdrawn.