

Report 16.326  
Date 3 August 2016  
File CCAB-10-174

Committee Environment Committee  
Author Wayne O'Donnell, General Manager, Catchment Management  
Nigel Corry, General Manager, Environment Management  
Luke Troy, General Manager, Strategy

## **General Managers' report to the Environment Committee meeting 9 August 2016**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Environment Committee of Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibilities.

### **2. Catchment Management**

#### **2.1 Biosecurity**

##### **2.1.1 Regional Pest Management Plan Review**

A draft consultation document is being prepared for release in September. This document outlines the content of the proposed Regional Pest Management Plan. The vacancy in the Senior Biosecurity Advisor, Policy role may delay the release of the consultation document.

##### **2.1.2 Pest Animals**

The annual rabbit population surveys and rabbit calicivirus disease (RCD) blood sampling is almost complete throughout the region. Day surveys and night counts indicate rabbits are largely at low to moderate levels. Several properties were approaching 5 on the Modified McLean's Scale. These pockets of high numbers have been attributed to an extended favourable breeding season and mild early winter period.

## Goodnature Trap Trials

Biosecurity continues to trial the Goodnature self-resetting traps. An initial possum control trial using the A12 trap has been underway in the HALO area south of Zealandia since May. Although high numbers of possums have been killed, monitoring shows there are possums present which will not engage with the traps. GWRC staff continue to work with Goodnature to improve the kill rate of the trap.



A24 self-setting gas trap with one night of rat captures

## Celium Wireless trap sensors

A trial of Celium wireless sensors will be run in the Pukaha/Mt Bruce predator control operation. Each trap will have a sensor installed that connects it with a centralised satellite hub that feeds information back to a website if the trap has been triggered. This will improve staff efficiency when servicing the traps and allow landowners to become involved in trap servicing.

## Possums

Population trend monitoring for possums has been undertaken in Belmont Regional Park since 1994. The aim of the monitoring is to gain an understanding of possum activity in the absence of a control programme. Last year the average number of possums active over three fine nights decreased dramatically due to TBfree possum control in the wider area. This trend has continued with no possums sighted this year. The dramatic reduction in possum numbers is beneficial to both the TBfree programme and adjacent Belmont Key Native Ecosystems (KNE) site. The future of the site as a monitoring

location will be reassessed if TBfree intends to maintain possums at low levels in the Belmont area.

## Rooks

The Medical Officer of Health approval for DRC1339 nest poisoning has been submitted for the upcoming spring control works. Initial surveys will begin in mid-September, followed by control of any active rookeries.

### 2.1.3 Pest Plants

#### Total Control

All recorded Total control sites were visited at least once during the year and any plants found were controlled. Fifty one new Total Control species sites have been identified over the year, most during recent delimiting and surveillance inspections conducted in the south Wairarapa.

#### Containment

After a considerable wait for suitable weather conditions the Wellington south coast aerial Boneseed spraying was successfully completed in early April. This project concludes the containment species programme for the 2015/16 year.

#### Site-led

The number of Site-led species complaints received has dropped off significantly with the onset of winter.

Work has commenced on an extensive old man's beard infestation on land to the north of Keith George Memorial Park. The landowner, a local contractor and Upper Hutt Forest and Bird are working together to control huge infestations of old man's beard growing along the escarpment above River Road in Upper Hutt. This work will complement the weed control that GWRC and Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) are doing in the park.

All programmed Biodiversity KNE control work has been completed for the 2015/16 year.

## 2.2 National Programmes

### Velvetleaf

A Biosecurity staff member attended the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) Velvetleaf training workshop in Christchurch on 16 June. Meetings with the owners of the two Wairarapa properties known to have velvetleaf took place on 20 June and future management plans for those properties were discussed.

### Pea Weevil

A new insect pest, the pea weevil (*Bruchus pisorum*) has been found in pea seeds grown on eight different properties in the Wairarapa. Testing indicates an established population of the weevil is present in the Wairarapa region. MPI will attempt the eradication of this new to New Zealand unwanted organism by

banning any pea growing (domestic and commercial) within the Wairarapa control area for two years. Pea weevil requires growing pea plants to complete its lifecycle.

MPI is working closely with the affected growers and the industry on this eradication attempt.

### National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA)

Eighty plant outlets across the region were inspected throughout the year under the NPPA agreement. The high level of compliance continues with no banned species found at any of the inspected outlets. Staff conducted a further three inspections on behalf of MPI after auctions offering banned from sale species were identified and removed from the Trade Me website.

## 2.2.1 BioWorks

### 2015/16 TB Free New Zealand Control Programme

BioWorks completed their TBfree programme (27,300ha) within the required timeframe.

BioWorks has submitted a proposal to TBfree NZ regarding the control methods for the Southern Rimutaka possum control operation. It includes a mix of aerial and ground control techniques. TBfree NZ has indicated that BioWorks will be contracted to do the aerial control works. BioWorks will also undertake some of the ground control activities where the land adjoins the aerial blocks.

The Mangaroa-Kaitoke HR1 project (1,770ha) was successfully completed in late June.

### Regional Possum Predator Control Programme (RPPCP)

The 2015/16 RPPCP programme covering approximately 70,000 hectares was completed in late June. Fifteen of the project areas will receive monitoring to determine the result of the work implemented.

To date 11 projects have been monitored, ten of which have a Residual Trap Catch (RTC) result under the targeted 5.0%.

The monitoring results provide valuable information on progress and the level of control intensity needed for the 2016/17 year.

## 2.3 Land Management

### 2.3.1 Porirua Harbour Sediment Management Programme

Soil erosion control programmes are underway in the Porirua catchment with close to 1000 Poplar and Willow poles planted in the Pauatahanui catchment on erodible land. Some of this work will occur on Battle Hill Regional Park and land owned by Porirua City Council. Twenty hectares of pine forest were established through the Afforestation Grant Scheme with Land Management

managing the planting. The next few months will involve forward planning of future erosion control work on properties participating in the programme.

### 2.3.2 Farm Environment Plan (FEP) Programme

A contestable fund framework document was drafted and circulated for internal review. This new approach to funding works through the FEP programme will allow work to be targeted in priority sub-catchments that have been identified in Method 12 of the Proposed Natural Resource Plan. The new framework also makes allowances for other projects to be funded that are outside of these targeted catchments if there is sufficient budget available towards the end of the financial year. The following few months will see the programme continue to target farmers in the Wairarapa Moana Catchment but also in the Parkvale, Kopuaranga and Taueru catchments.

Staff have been working with farmers in the Mangatarere River catchment to identify low risk soils that are suitable to receive irrigated dairy shed effluent. Although dairy farmers are experiencing fiscally tight times there is still a willingness to continue work around stock exclusion and riparian management. Carterton District Council and Daleton farm, where they irrigate treated municipal waste water, have been welcomed into the FEP programme.



Daleton Farm

### 2.3.3 Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative (WRECI)

A very active June saw over 6,000 poplar and willow poles planted on erodible land along with the afforestation and reversion of over 25 hectares. This met all the targets that are required for MPI funding. The winter work programme is continuing into July and August with poplar and willow pole numbers comparable to previous years.

The following table illustrates the actual achievements compared to the budgeted milestones for the 2015/16 WRECI works programme. While overall pole numbers were down slightly, a reduction in the density of planting from

80 stems per hectare (sph) to 70 sph has seen the area of erosion prone land treated through pole planting increase by 32 hectares (10%). 70 sph is still a highly effective planting rate for poplar and willow poles.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Budget 2015/16</b>	<b>Actual 2015/16</b>	<b>% Budget</b>
Erosion prone land under management	<b>357</b>	<b>398.2</b>	<b>111.5</b>
Poles planted (#)	<b>25,000</b>	<b>24,411</b>	<b>96.4</b>
Poles planted (ha.)	<b>312</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>110.2</b>
Land retired via WRECI (Afforestation & reversion, ha)	<b>45</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>120.4</b>

The total annual programme was achieved with an overspend of \$13,516. Landowners contributed 40% of the works programme.

#### 2.3.4 Forestry

The Metro Forestry Right requires the Right holder to negotiate with the Rallywoods Partners a new royalty rate for log cartage across the Rallywoods land (Upper Hutt). This process has started and GWRC was invited to attend the initial meeting. The new agreement will supersede the existing agreement between the Rallywoods Partners and GWRC. While an agreed market rate will eventuate the parties are currently reviewing their initial positions.

#### 2.3.5 Akura Conservation Centre

Staff are currently in the process of assessing tenders from real estate agents interested in marketing the sale of the Mangapakeha Nursery. Three proposals have been forthcoming and it is anticipated that the 16 hectare block will go on the market sometime in mid-August.

June was a very busy month for the nursery. 6,800 3m poles were sent out the gates for the month and a further 70,000 pinus radiata seedlings were sold. 24,000 native seedlings were either ordered or sold with over 16,000 of them sold to the general public. Overall this was a very good month for Akura.

## 2.4 Flood Protection

### 2.4.1 Floodplain Management Plan Implementation

#### Hutt River City Centre Upgrade Project

The preliminary design phase continues to progress and all design service consultants have been appointed to complete components of the design.

Property purchase continues steadily with one further property awaiting settlement. We are on track to appoint property acquisition consultants in the next quarter.



Community design workshops have been developed in conjunction with the Hutt Valley Flood Management Subcommittee and will be held at the start of September. These workshops will involve community members in development of the stopbank, berm and river form with particular focus on recreation and amenity value of these areas and how this may affect the experiences for users of the space and adjacent properties that look out onto the space.

An updated version of the project overview video is in production and will be used as a key tool for reporting progress back to the community.

### **Hutt River Environmental Strategy Review**

Community consultation on the Hutt River Environmental Strategy (HRES) Review began on 22 June 2016. A series of four workshops were carried out with attendance from council officers, utilities operators and community interest groups to seek feedback about what they enjoy about the Hutt River Corridor now and where they see opportunities to improve it into the future. Meetings with school aged pupils in the upper and lower valley are in preparation.

The HRES Review has been introduced to iwi, with a site visit to occur during late July/early August 2016.

The messages coming through the feedback are diverse, however they primarily focus on water quality, facilities, native restoration and discouraging anti-social behaviour. Innovative ideas for the future of the area have also been raised for consideration.

HCC hosted a public lecture titled Shifting Paradigms. GWRC attended this and collected feedback and ideas at this event through the HRES Have Your Say site.

### **Hutt River Flood Management Plan (FMP) Implementation**

Finishing works continue for Ebdentown and Belmont edge protection. Landscaping works will shortly be completed for the Connolly Street/Safeway Storage and Transpower entrance intersection.

### **Otaki FMP Implementation**

Updated Otaki River Trail signage has been designed and is currently going through final approvals before being manufactured and installed. This signage will mark the trail running from Crystals Lagoon to the Otaki River mouth.

It is intended that this signage will be in place before the Otaki River Walkover on 2 September 2016.

### **Waikanae FMP Implementation**

Submissions closed on 18 July 2016 for the Jim Cooke Park consent. Six submissions were received and the project team is working through these with the submitters. We hope to be able to resolve all matters raised through negotiation, without the need to go to a hearing.

Land entry agreements are near completion. The project team intends to go out to tender for construction contract at the end of this quarter.

#### 2.4.2 Operations Delivery

The western works programmes are progressing as planned. Willow and native planting are currently being undertaken. Areas are being cleared to enable replanting with more desirable willow clones.

The Hawkes Bay Regional Council weed cutting boat has again been contracted to assist with drain clearing operations in Kapiti streams and drains, particularly where there are access challenges. The weed is cut and removed from the watercourse.

The willow planting programme is also underway in the Wairarapa river schemes. Channel vegetation clearing work has been undertaken in the Waingawa River and willow mulching is being done in the lower Waiohine River to maintain channel capacity.

Annual asset condition inspections have been completed and staff are now processing the field data and adding new assets. A Council report will be prepared for the September Committee meeting.

Staff held a workshop with consultants to refine the use of an asset performance assessment tool which will be used to confirm asset criticality and help to prioritise resource allocation. The aim is to develop a tool that can be used nationally by river managers.

Notification of resource consent applications for the Hutt, Otaki, Waikanae and Wainuiomata Rivers is anticipated to occur in this quarter. At the same time work is almost complete on a new Code of Practice for river management.

The weather has been favourable for community activities. The Friends of the Otaki River have held a number of successful planting days with the help of the Phillipp Foundation, Te Horo School, Whitireia Polytechnic and the enthusiastic group of volunteers who turn out every planting day. Progress is being made on the development of a new walkway at Otaki in conjunction with the Ashford Park quarry development adjacent to the river.

#### 2.4.3 Investigations, Strategy and Planning

##### FMP Development

Pinehaven FMP has been approved by Council. This is a huge milestone for our Department as the FMP now moves into the Implementation phase.

Public consultation has been held on the draft Waiohine FMP with submissions closing on 15 July. Over 100 submissions have been received. A date for the hearing will now be set in late August with the aim of reporting to the Environment Committee on 22 September. A huge amount of work has gone into the consultation, including drop-in sessions, a bus trip, a public meeting in Carterton and a major mailout. There was positive media coverage early in the consultation process and two articles towards the end reflecting concerns



amongst affected parties on the Carterton side of the river and concerns of some Greytown ratepayers. Submissions have been received on all of these concerns and will be considered during the hearing process.



James discussing the draft Waiohine FMP during a consultation bus trip

Rural option development continues on Te Kauru Upper Ruamahanga FMP, with a workshop focussing on development of the common tools and looking at specific solutions at Rathkeale College. The TKURFMP Subcommittee endorsed officers continuing with the options development work for the rural areas in tandem with starting work on the draft FMP. Revised hydrology has been agreed with Masterton District Council (MDC) officers (including a peer review) and will now be fed into the existing hydraulic model as an interim step until a new hydraulic model is completed later this year. Options development for the urban area is on hold until the flood hazard is agreed with MDC. A decision will have to be made later in the year about whether to pause the FMP process in the rural areas while the Masterton urban reach work catches up or whether to proceed with an FMP that just covers the rural reaches of the northern Ruamahanga rivers.

### Investigations and Strategy

Analysis of gravel volumes and movement in the Otaki River is now complete and we are finalising recommendations for gravel management for the next four to five years. The focus is now moving on to the Waitohu and Waikanae Rivers.

Development of the Hutt River flood forecasting model is now complete. Consultants are testing the model and it will then be reintegrated into our system. An operational trial of the model can then commence.

The review of the Flood Warning System (in conjunction with Environmental Science, Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO) and Community Engagement) is ongoing. The next steps are to appoint an independent consultant to review our current system and to hold workshops with our main external stakeholders (both in August).

We have participated in and supported the development of an online “serious game” called Aqua Republica. This game (developed internationally and now being applied to New Zealand) simulates water resource management decision-making on a catchment scale, based on a computer model that runs in the background. It’s been developed as an educational competition for intermediate and high-school students. GWRC is supporting the school competition but we also see good opportunities in using the game across our organisation in community engagement or as an introduction/education element of collaborative decision making.

### **3. Biodiversity**

#### **3.1 General**

Biodiversity staff are leading the new Mahi Waiora project. This will develop communications material and staff training to support the coordinated delivery of proposed natural resources plan (PNRP) Methods 12 (sustainable land use) and 20 (wetlands). Biodiversity department staff have started work across the Environmental Management and Catchment Management Groups to engage staff in a new way of working. This will be characterised by a common approach to landowner support to be taken by staff in regulatory and non-regulatory roles.

#### **3.2 Biodiversity Management**

##### **3.2.1 Key Native Ecosystems**

- 3,430 wetland and coastal forest plants were planted at the Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui KNE site during two community plantings. The plantings were planned and funded by the Biodiversity department and led by Friends of Baring Head and the Park Ranger. Ninety people attended the second planting.
- The Biodiversity department, along with Porirua City Council and QEII National Trust, contributed to mapping the plant communities of the Taupo Swamp KNE site in Plimmerton.
- Rodent bait stations have been installed to protect five small areas of lizard habitat at the Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui KNE site. Possum traps and bait stations have also been installed at Baring Head. These traps and bait stations have been very active, and it’s hoped that another operation being planned as part of OSPRI’s TBfree programme will reduce the re-invasion of pest animals into this block. Volunteers will be involved with servicing the traps and bait stations at these sites.
- An aerial spraying programme to control the aquatic weed *Egeria* at the Parangarahu Lakes Area KNE site was completed in June.

### 3.2.2 QEII Covenant Support

- Five new proposals have been received for QEII covenant support. The total funding proposed to be contributed by GWRC for this is \$43,479, which will go toward fencing and pest control to support the significant values of the areas. The areas are:
  - Two wetlands in the Kapiti area which will extend the protected area of Te Hapua wetland complex;
  - The Spite wetland and nearby forest blocks north of Masterton;
  - A covenant near Greytown featuring wetland, swamp forest and lakes.

### 3.2.3 Wetlands

- Wetland Restoration Management Plans for the Tairoa (South Wairarapa) and Te Wānanga o Raukawa (Ōtaki) wetlands have been drafted and are going through the approval process.
- Land Management and Biodiversity staff are collaboratively developing a Restoration Management Plan for the Kaiwhata River Oxbow wetland. Site visits have also been conducted to two wetland sites in Wairarapa (Hidden Lakes and Moeraki Wetland) to appraise the sites and speak to landowners about being part of the Wetland Programme.
- The Biodiversity and Land Management departments jointly funded a two-day training course on wetlands and their management with NIWA's Paul Champion. This enabled Biodiversity, Biosecurity and Land Management staff to upskill on wetland management and threats to their values.

### 3.2.4 Fish Passage Restoration

- Biodiversity staff are working with the Environmental Regulation department to determine resource consent requirements for reinstating fish passage at three sites along an unnamed tributary of the Horokiri Stream at Battle Hill Forest Park. Biodiversity staff will support the Parks department to prepare a resource consent application for these proposed works, which will improve access to up- and downstream habitat for native fish
- The Hawkes Bay Regional Council, in conjunction with NIWA and ATS Consulting, are developing a floating fish ramp that is low cost and composed of robust plastic. This is intended to help a range of native fish species (including inanga) pass 'low head structures' such as perched culverts and weirs that are under one metre in height. GWRC hopes to deploy these devices in future to support native fish in the Wellington region

### 3.3 Biodiversity Advice and Advocacy

#### 3.3.1 Biodiversity Advice

- Staff contributed to a GWRC submission to the Ministry for the Environment on the proposed National Policy Statement for Urban Development Capacity. This contribution recommended changes to policy wording to better reflect the environmental values affected by housing development. It also recommended that the environmental benefits of housing intensification be reflected in the policies, and provided suggestions for guidance to support the implementation of the Policy Statement.
- Staff contributed to a GWRC submission on the Carterton District Council's draft guidelines for planting trees and shrubs alongside stockwater races. The submission commended Carterton District Council for providing this guidance, particularly where it allows for the enhancement of the ecological and amenity values of stockwater races. The submission also provided advice on enhancing the potential biodiversity outcomes of their guidelines.
- Staff contributed to a GWRC submission on the Natural Environment chapter of the proposed Kāpiti Coast District Plan. The submission supported many of the proposed provisions and sought better protection for threatened vegetation species. It also sought amendments to the biodiversity offsetting provisions so that regard is given to areas containing significant biodiversity values even if they are not scheduled in the Plan. In addition, the submission sought provisions that would lead to better consideration of adverse effects on scheduled sensitive natural features and more effective consideration of cumulative effects.
- Staff prepared and presented evidence in support of District Plan Change 41 (Urban Tree Groups) of the Upper Hutt District Plan. The presentation endorsed the amendments made by Upper Hutt City Council in response to an earlier GWRC submission on the Plan Change and asked that the hearing commissioner accept the recommendations of the officer's report.
- Staff advised Parks on two proposals to construct facilities in GWRC regional parks at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park (riding facilities for the Wellington Group of New Zealand Riding for the Disabled) and Queen Elizabeth Park (relocation of the Paekākāriki Surf Lifesaving Club). The advice suggested matters for applicants to consider in their Assessments of Environmental Effects to ensure that the developments do not adversely affect local biodiversity values.
- Staff advised Environmental Regulation on a request for further information to a consent applicant seeking to infill six seepage wetlands. The advice endorsed the position of an independent ecologist who disputed the applicant's suggestion that no mitigation would be required for the work. Staff also worked with the Environmental Policy department to show why any effects on the wetlands would need to be mitigated according to the provisions in

the *Proposed Natural Resources Plan*. The applicant has since withdrawn their proposal to infill these wetlands.

### 3.3.2 Collaborative Restoration: Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project

- Staff assisted the South Wairarapa Biodiversity Group with their annual beach clean-up between Whangaimoana and Lake Ferry. This event was supported by about 45 people from the South Wairarapa community, including Pirinoa School students and adult helpers.
- Biodiversity staff, along with Land Management staff, supported the Ducks Unlimited group with their annual planting event at Wairio Wetland. Over 60 people participated in planting 750 native plants (mainly kahikatea, flax and sedges). Biodiversity staff also facilitated students from Martinborough School in an activity identifying wetland plants.

### 3.3.3 Collaborative Restoration: Porirua Harbour and Catchment Project

- Biodiversity staff spoke at a fieldtrip of a conference being run by the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society and the Australian Marine Sciences Association. The fieldtrip informed participants about community engagement around the Porirua Harbour catchment.

## 4. Environment Management

### 4.1 Harbours

#### 4.1.1 Marine oil spill response

In late July Shane Parata, GWRC's Pouhono-a-iwi, attended Maritime NZ's Regional Responder oil spill training in Auckland. Because of Shane's role and his strong marine background he has been asked to join the National Response Team (NRT). If he accepts he will join Harbour Ranger, John Tattersall on this national specialist team that trains for and is ready to respond to a large marine oil spill anywhere in New Zealand.

On 21 July Harbours staff and a Maritime New Zealand representative met with some of the Operations team at KCDC to discuss the oil spill threat in relation to the Kapiti Coast and also response and co-operation options in case a spill occurs.

#### 4.1.2 Navigation aids

The issue of stray light coming from the sides of the Pencarrow light was resolved with the fitting of small shutters by the manufacturer on July 21. As LED lights are becoming more powerful there can be unexpected results from their use, as happened with this light. The manufacturer (locally based) is now aware of this issue in relation to other lights they supply.

A wind generator on the rear leading light that was damaged by wind has been repaired and reinstated to assist with battery charging in the gloomier parts of winter. Also on the Rear Lead lighthouse the continued wave action and exposure to all weathers takes its toll on the structure and we have been

assisted by contractors in re-securing and fastening the timber walkway and fendering that allows us access to the structure. Part of the challenge is getting the right weather; this work was carried out on July 26.



This job was made easier by last year's lengthening of our workboat *SeaCare* that improved the ability to easily transport the tools and materials required.

- 4.1.3 On June 13 an Island Bay commercial fishing boat *Miss J Jade* broke her mooring and came ashore. Due to the sandy beach there was minimal damage and she was refloated the next day with the aid of a small digger and another fishing vessel. There was some concern over the nature of the failure of the mooring (through no fault of the owner). This has led to better information on how some of the moorings are made and improved awareness of a possible weakness in them. As a precaution Harbours had a commercial diver check similar moorings in the bay in July to identify any others that could be at risk.







On 13/14 July Harbourmaster, Mike Pryce chaired the Navigational Safety SIG for the last time; Mike has chaired this annual meeting, mostly comprised of Harbourmasters, since its inception in 1999.

On Sunday 17 July the vessel *Frisian Spring* finally sailed from Wellington to transfer half her load of telecommunication cable onto the cable layer *Ile de Re*. The *Frisian Spring* had been in Wellington since January waiting to do this transfer here, but in the end MPI had requirements which proved challenging to meet with regards to the *Ile de Re* needing her hull cleaned before she could call at a NZ port. The transfer is now being done in Fiji.

On July 18, in rough southerly weather conditions, the Strait Shipping ferry *Straitsmen* lost a tractor unit and two insulated trailers off the side of the ship when approaching Wellington Harbour entrance. The trailers, containing pork carcasses, appeared to have floated briefly after going over the side and are believed to have sunk soon after. Wind and tide conditions suggest they could drift towards the harbour entrance and Fitzroy Bay. The coastline in this area has been checked twice with no sign of the trailers or their contents. Maritime NZ will be investigating the cause of the incident.

## 4.2 Parks

Tree planting started in earnest from 1 July, and there has been a concerted effort to get as many plants in the ground as possible to benefit from the winter and spring rain. While the highlight was the “6000 trees in a day” at Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP), there have been other smaller events elsewhere at QEP, at Battle Hill, East Harbour, Whitireia and Belmont Regional Parks. One highlight was a 90-strong effort at Baring Head while another was a combined GWRC/ Taranaki Whanui/ Mainland Island Restoration Group (MIRO) joint event at the Parangarau Lakes. Altogether we expect more than 22,000 trees will be planted this season.

### 4.2.1 Western Sector

Plans are now in full swing to accommodate Riding for Disabled (RDA) at Battle Hill from the beginning of October, now they have been given notice to vacate their current site at Kenepuru. An uncovered arena, to be used for up to



3 years, will be built in the paddock south of the homestead (see below), with staff to occupy space in the homestead itself. Some facilities and storage will be relocated from Kenepuru.



Temporary arena site at bottom of picture; proposed long term RDA site at top right in upper Abbotts Field.

The larger area shaded in blue will be the proposed permanent site for a fully enclosed arena, yards, offices and other facilities. At this stage we envisage formal consultation on the change to the Parks Network Plan to commence before Christmas 2016.

New farm licence holders have commenced their term on the eastern side of Belmont Regional Park, and they are quickly learning about the livestock, the farm and the wider park environment. This relationship, together with the new licence on the western side of the Transmission Gully Motorway (TGM) designation has already meant that we have been able to secure improved park access during lambing, from Belmont Rd to Hill Rd, and via a trail onto the western hills from Warspite Avenue, Porirua back to the Cannons Creek Lakes.

Following a significant rockfall in the Korokoro Valley, we lodged an emergency consent application with Hutt City Council to install a refurbished bridge at the fall site to cross the very significant gap that was created. All going well this will be in place by mid-August. Despite numerous warnings and barriers in place, park visitors continue to remove those barriers and put themselves and others at risk by accessing closed areas (The rope shown is in place to facilitate repair work, and is removed at night).



From left: Undermined Korokoro track; Coastal track washed away at QEP

Queen Elizabeth Park has recently sustained significant damage from very high tides and severe north-westerly winds that affected much of the lower North Island. A large section of the Coastal Track near Paekakariki has now fallen into the sea, while logs and smaller debris have choked the mouths of both the Whareroa and Wainui Streams. Emergency works are underway to clear the blockages, which for the Wainui Stream will entail instream works. Plans are well in hand to realign sections of the Coastal Track, which we hope to achieve in August before the spring winds.

Around 25 contractors attended the site blessing at Queen Elizabeth Park, which was led by Taku Parai of Ngati Toa Rangitira, with representatives of Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai and Ngati Haumia also in attendance. This was a valuable opportunity to reinforce our relationship with mana whenua iwi and convey the value of the site to the wide range of people who will be working on the project. All those present were also briefed on our Accidental Discovery protocol. We expect the ranger office and toilets to be unavailable for access from the first week of August.

#### 4.2.2 Eastern Sector

One of the challenges in park management is the balance and sometimes tension between a range of multiple uses and interests. The Akatarawa Forest is no exception, being one of our largest single Key Native Ecosystems, a significant area of plantation forest and the only site in which we permit motorised recreation. Forest security is an ongoing challenge and to further improve this we are trialling a new electronic lock system for the Valley View and Puketiro Forests which has proved successful in central North Island forests. Involving “fobs” (much like one uses to access an office building) rather than issuing keys, one of the system’s most attractive features is the ability to deactivate the fobs remotely if they go missing, which is much easier than tracking down errant keys.



Over the years GWRC has invested very substantially in protecting the fabric of the historic rail formation between Maymorn and Summit, with the most visible aspect being the upgraded Pakuratahi, Munitions Bend and Ladle Bend bridges. More recently we have fixed longstanding drainage issues in the Mangaroa tunnel portal, identified all the culverts under the formation and dealt with the most problematic of these, with more work to come. Most recently, the team's been clearing vegetation away from around a 140 year old rail bridge along Station Drive, exposing the stone abutments and the state of the bridge itself.



Historic stone bridge abutments and structure on Station Drive, Pakuratahi Forest.

We are continuing to work with the Friends of Baring Head towards the redevelopment of the lighthouse cottages and compound, with the Friends of Baring Head leading community engagement to seek funding for the estimated \$1.2m required for cottage and outbuilding transformation. So far they have submitted two grant applications for initial funds for asbestos removal, cottage services and stage one refurbishment works. This will see a day visitor centre created in the former generator building and the two light keepers' cottages restored for overnight visitor accommodation.

Project work has included an in-depth review of the project staging and associated costs, to validate the estimates. A summary flyer about the project has been developed which invites community engagement and support. New pages on the GWRC website show background reference material for potential funders which includes heritage plans and costs and services plans. A project steering group is guiding this work and exploring future management model options.



Concept illustration for redeveloped Baring Head cottage site

## **5. Strategy – Climate Change**

### **5.1 GWRC ‘Electric First’ Vehicle Policy**

To support regional leadership, GWRC has now adopted an “electric first” vehicle policy covering its fleet of more than 100 cars, SUVs, and utes. This vehicle fleet currently generates 40% of GWRC’s corporate CO2 emissions (this excludes transport operated by separate organisations such as trains and buses).

This policy requires those buying vehicles at GWRC to first evaluate an electric vehicle, and to only buy a plug-in hybrid, a conventional (non plugin) hybrid, or a solely fossil-fuel powered vehicle if justified. The update also brings an end to a preference for diesel vehicles. While electric vehicles do cost more upfront, they yield substantially lower running costs, particularly if they recharge using electricity supplied by GWRC buildings. By holding onto the vehicles for at least 100,000km worth of driving, the forecast combined purchase and running costs of an electric vehicle will be no more than a typical petrol vehicle, and in some cases will be lower. Therefore this transition is possible within existing budgets.

GWRC will share details about this policy for vehicle fleet managers in other organisations to study and adopt.

### **5.2 Electric Vehicle (EV) Symposium**

The sold out EV Symposium in June was a success, with positive feedback received from a wide range of stakeholders. Presentations from the day are available as video recordings at [www.TheFutureIsElectric.co.nz](http://www.TheFutureIsElectric.co.nz).

International speakers attended subsequent workshops with central government agencies and provided advice regarding the upcoming nationwide educational campaign on EVs. The speakers also met with GWRC and local stakeholders developing a plan for Wellington charging infrastructure.

### **5.3 Regional Electric Vehicle Working Group (REV-WG)**

GWRC convenes REV-WG which is comprised of officers from councils across the region and coordinates EV promotion and the development of charging infrastructure. The group is currently scoping the 100 most suitable locations for EV chargers. Delivering on this goal will offer families and organisations the confidence to buy an EV knowing they can travel freely throughout the region. The visibility of the chargers will also serve to promote EVs to the wider public.

## **6. The decision-making process and significance**

No decision is being sought in this report.

### **6.1 Engagement**

Engagement on this matter is not necessary.

## **7. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report*

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

**Nigel Corry**  
General Manager,  
Environment Management

**Wayne O'Donnell**  
General Manager,  
Catchment Management

**Luke Troy**  
General Manager,  
Strategy