

Report 2016.423  
Date 29 August 2016  
File CCAB-10-201

Committee Environment Committee  
Author Tony Faulkner, Team Leader, Land Management

## Progress on the Implementation of Farm Environment Plans in the Porirua Catchment and Kapiti Coast

### 1. Purpose

To update the Committee on progressing implementation of Farm Environment Plans (FEPs) in the Porirua Catchment and Kapiti Coast.

### 2. Background

Farm planning as a tool to achieve sustainable land use practices has a long history in the Wellington region, with the first plan being prepared in the 1950s. The target of these plans was initially focused on hill country properties in the eastern Wairarapa to address soil erosion issues. They have gone on to provide a very successful mechanism to assist landowners bring about sustainable land use change whilst developing and maintaining a healthy relationship between Greater Wellington (GWRC) and the landowner.

In 2011 the Land Management department undertook a pilot project working with intensive land users in the Mangatarere Catchment, west of Carterton. This pilot project initially worked with four dairy farmers within the catchment and revolved around the development of a comprehensive farm plan that targeted water quality improvements and good management practice (GMP) on farms.

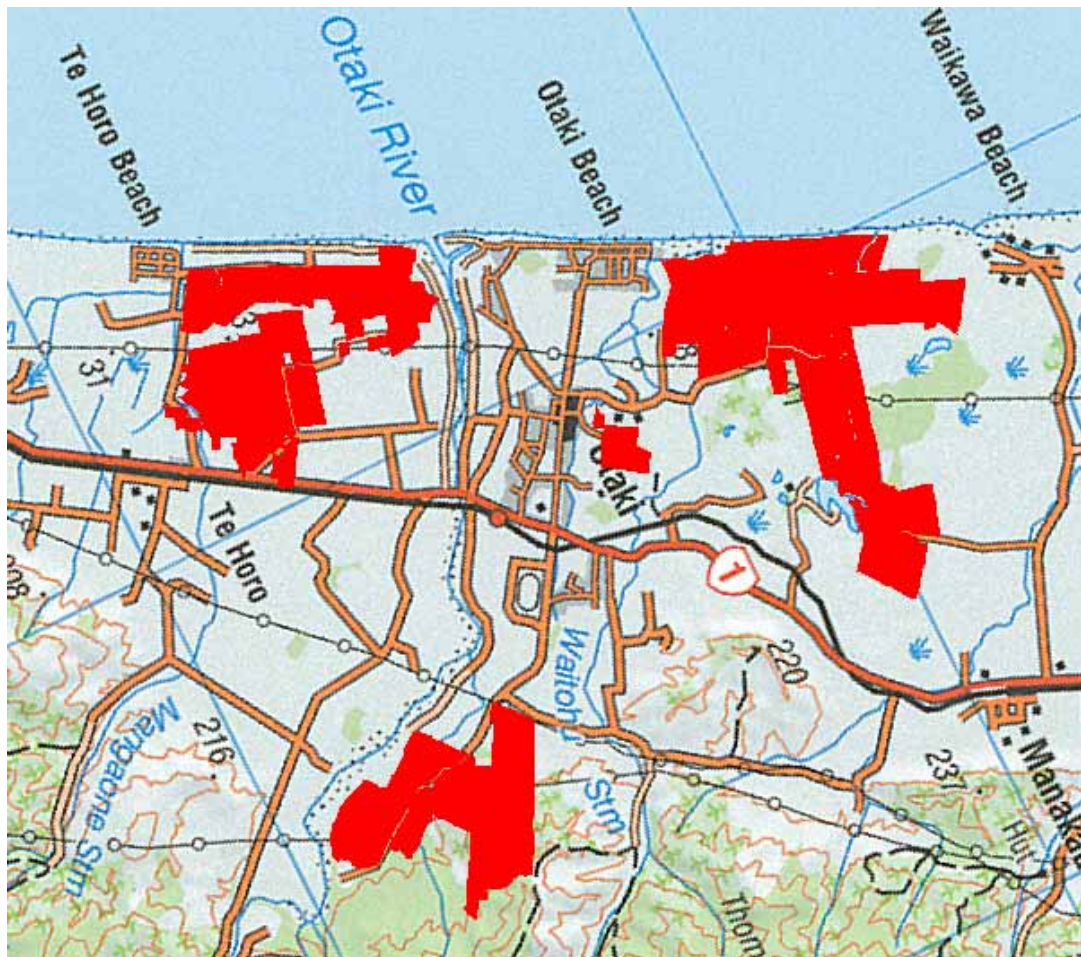
Since the programme's inception sixty FEPs, including eight on the Kapiti Coast have been produced. The main success of the programme thus far has been the high level of landowner engagement and their motivation to interact with the regional council in a non-regulatory manner. The relationships developed are positive and have led to an awareness being built around GMP whilst helping landowners learn about their farms natural resources. Landowners are well aware of change on the horizon in regards to nutrient management and are looking for support and guidance.

As part of the 2015/16 Long Term Plan (LTP) process, Land Management received funding to expand the programme to other parts of the Ruamahanga Valley, and into the Porirua Harbour Catchment.

### 3. Progress to Date

#### 3.1 Kapiti Coast

Land Management has been actively working with landowners on the Kapiti Coast through the Farm Environment Plan (FEP) programme since 2013/14. A Land Management Advisor (LMA) was appointed through the LTP process at the start of December 2015 to work in the Kapiti Coast and Porirua areas. The new LMA has taken over the management of 6 existing FEP's and will establish 2 new FEP's in the 2016/17 financial year. Of the 8 FEP's that will be in operation, 6 are dairy farms whilst 2 are beef farms (see map below).



A new initiative in this area is a collaboration between Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) and GWRC, combining their two programmes (Riparian fund and FEP funding respectively). KCDC provided eco-sourced native riparian plants and GWRC covered the costs of planting, sleeves, and releasing for landowners in the FEP programme. This worked out at 50% cost share.

In some instances an FEP farm may be adjacent to a Key Native Ecosystem which is managed through GWRC's Biodiversity department. In two cases Land Management and Biodiversity have collaborated to provide 100% funding (50% each) for the retirement of areas important to the ecosystem and also part of the FEP area.

The LMA is responsible for advising landowners in the Kapiti district on the pNRP Riparian Programme. The Riparian Programme supports landowners to achieve water quality and biodiversity outcomes and to be compliant with new rules around managing stock access to waterways which come into effect in 2018 and 2022. It involves the provision of advice on managing stock access to waterways as well as financial incentives for landowners to effectively manage the margins of streams and lakes on their properties. 2016 works summary (thus far):

- Over 2000 plants were planted in riparian and wetland areas this winter
- Around 1.3km of wetland or riparian retirement fencing has been completed

### **3.2 Porirua Harbour**

The Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour has been identified within GWRC as one of the sites of highest coastal biodiversity values in the region. As the harbour is a receiving environment for the catchment, managing the health of the harbour requires a catchment wide approach.

Sediment modelling has confirmed that rural privately-owned land is a major source of sediment entering the Pauatahanui Inlet arm of the harbour. To address this GWRC and Porirua City Council (PCC) have run a programme since 2006 working with rural and lifestyle block landowners around the Inlet to reduce erosion and improve biodiversity values on their land. In 2015 this work was transferred to the Land Management department through the appointment of the LMA. The LMA is part of the Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour Strategy Implementation Team (SIT).

The Land Management department uses three main approaches to support rural landowners in the catchment to reduce erosion from their land:

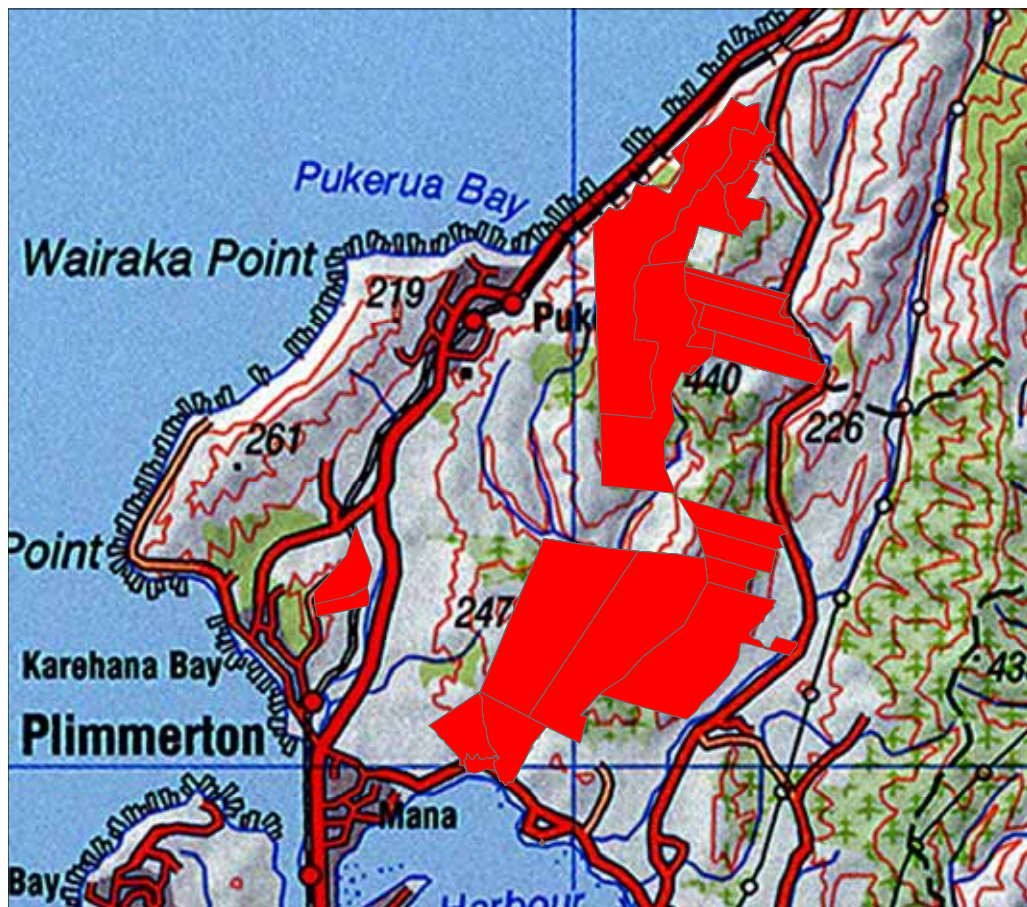
1. Producing Soil Conservation Plans for priority properties with areas identified as yielding significant loads of sediment.
2. Administering a riparian fund for smaller properties in the catchment who don't have enough land to qualify for a soil conservation plan, but who wish to address sediment loss via riparian retirement and planting.
3. Running educational events and initiatives to inform the rural communities in the catchment about what they can do to reduce erosion on their land

GWRC provide advice and financial assistance through the administration of Soil Conservation Plans (SCP) for properties generally 40ha or more unless a

major source of sediment is identified on a smaller property. Land Management administered 5 new SCPs in the 2015/16 financial year, and will continue with 5 SCPs per year until 40 SCPs have been created. Each SCP created has a regional grant rate of 50%. The regional grant is matched by the landowner bringing the operational expenditure to \$5,000 per SCP. Expenditure per property is not limited to \$5,000 as some properties may spend more than others. The operational budget for SCP's is outlined in the table below.

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>2015/2016</b>	<b>2016/2017</b>	<b>2017/2018</b>
<b>No. of SCPs</b>	5 new SCPs	5 existing & 5 new SCPs	10 existing & 5 new SCPs
<b>Operational Expenditure (50% GW:50% Landowner)</b>	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$75,000

Current Porirua Soil Conservation Plans are indicated in the map below.



A number of mitigation tools are available to reduce sediment loss from properties under the Soil Conservation Plan programme. Based on the land management advisors assessment of each property, any or all of these tools may be employed in the soil conservation plans. Grant rates for each of the mitigation tools are dependent on relative cost verses sediment loss reduction.

These mitigations include:

- Land retirement
- Riparian enhancement
- Stabilising land through pole planting
- Sediment capture devices
- Afforestation
- Sustainable farm management practices

#### 3.2.1 Public land

Land Management will work alongside the Parks department to review existing Sustainable Land Use Plans for GWRC owned parks in the catchment. These plans will be renewed to align with practices outlined in the SCPs for private land. Land Management will also work closely with PCC to provide advice and recommendations for their parks.

#### 3.2.2 2016/17 works summary (Year to date):

- 850 poles planted (700 private land, 150 public land)
- 14 ha steep land retirement
- 19.3 ha *Pinus radiata* forest establishment
- 1300 native plants established in riparian zones (PCC)

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

No decision is being sought in this report.

## 5. **Engagement**

Engagement on this matter is unnecessary.

## 6. **Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

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

Report prepared by:

**Tony Faulkner**  
Team Leader  
Land Management

Report approved by:

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