



Report 04.133
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Committee Landcare
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Divisional Manager's report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress of the Landcare Division since the Committee's last meeting.

2. Managers' reports

The Departmental Managers' reports are attached.

3. The weather

The horrendous weather we had in February has played absolute havoc with our work programmes. In my last report to you (prior to the February storms) I said that things were going along nicely and I was looking forward to a really good end of year result. It seems that I spoke too soon!

You have the flood reports from both Departments on this Order Paper so I won't repeat them. The clean-up job is very large and will take some time. Parks staff tell me that they expect to be finished most of the cleaning up "in a month or two" and for flood protection it will take longer. On top of the clean up staff are trying to juggle their existing work programmes and meet the expectations of the public.

One area, which has experienced a huge increase in workload, is providing advice to landowners on protecting their properties from the erosion or future flooding. As you can imagine our operations staff are under pressure to "fix" people's problems while at the same time they are supervising major repair works.

The good news is that the flood defences performed very well under some pressure. The flood defences are our top priority in a flooding event, as failure would have huge consequences. The Wainuiomata town centre works were particularly heavily tested and did not give way. Nevertheless, many of the “sacrificial” willows were sacrificed and they need to be replaced after the river channel is restored.

The wind in February was almost as destructive as the floods. Fallen trees have been a huge problem. In the parks the windfalls (and a number of slips) have blocked access tracks and roads. Windfalls have also fallen into the streams where they can block water flows and exacerbate flooding and erosion.

4. Water at Summit Yards

At the last Committee meeting I was asked to investigate whether the stream water at Summit Yards would pose a health risk from asbestos. Councillors will recall that in 2001 we discovered asbestos at the yards and spent a considerable sum of money remediating the site. I sought advice from GWRC Contaminated Sites officer Bruce Croucher. Bruce advises that it is “highly unlikely” that asbestos fibres will be released from the site into the stream. In addition Bruce consulted with Public Health who advise that asbestos is not considered a health risk in water, it is only when the fibres are released into air and can be inhaled that they cause a problem.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receive the report.***
2. ***Note the contents of the report.***

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1: Departmental reports