

## **Catchment Management Division**

Departmental Managers' Update  
for period ending 19 November 2007

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### **Biosecurity (Wayne O'Donnell)**

#### **1. Pest Animals:**

##### **1.1 National Possum Control Agencies Technology Transfer Conference**

The annual National Possum Control Agencies Technology Transfer Conference is being held at the Brentwood Hotel, Kilbirnie, Wellington on 28 and 29 November.

The symposium will focus on;

- Review of the Bovine Tb National Pest Management Strategy;
- Multi-species pest control challenges;
- New and improved toxic bait formulations for vertebrate pest control;
- Wild pig control – implications for wider pest management and new control tools.

Other sessions include a focus on regulatory and welfare issues, technical resources, guidelines and protocols, national training and the latest in information technology.

##### **1.2 Wild Pigs**

The inclusion of a specific focus on feral pigs at the forthcoming NPCA Conference recognises the increasing disquiet from landowners and Bovine Tb controllers nationally about the ever increasing wild pig population and alleged illegal relocation of pigs from TB-risk areas into Tb-free areas. The Animal Health Board Annual Report 2007 cites five Tb pigs detected in the Wellington region for the year ending 30 June 2007.

A Landcare Research NZ ecologist reports increasing feral pig populations throughout much of New Zealand in Issue 70 of Open Space magazine. It is well known that wild pigs create adverse threats to native forests, agriculture and forestry. Open Space magazine also states that when numbers do build to problem proportions, an intensive knockdown programme is recommended using a combination of aerial shooting, intensive trapping, spotlight shooting and targeted ground hunting. There is no toxin registered as suitable for pig control but researchers are currently considering acceptable alternatives for this method of control. The thought of pigs having to be controlled by toxins will be abhorrent to the hunting fraternity who generally pride themselves on being able to keep pig populations to acceptable levels.

### **1.3 Spring 2007 Rook Nest Baiting Programme**

The month of October was diabolical in terms of the westerly winds and gales that hammered the Wairarapa and thwarted any opportunity to aerially nest bait rookeries at the critical period when chicks emerge from the eggs. Breeding rookeries were blown apart after southerly and westerly gales occurred soon after the aerial surveillance phase was completed. Twelve rookeries were treated in the Wairarapa. A few rooks have been reported as being present in the Makara and Ohariu Valley areas but no breeding rookeries have been disclosed.

A senior public health protection officer was present for part of the control programme. Medical Officer of Health approval is now required to undertake this work.

Consideration will be given to forwarding the control programme to mid-September next year as a compromise to try and negate the excessive winds and still fit within an acceptable egg incubation period. Horizons Regional Council has been dogged by the same issues as Greater Wellington.

### **1.4 Key Native Ecosystems and Reserves Programme**

BioWorks have completed some priority sites within the Western Zone to allow rodent and possum monitoring to occur on schedule. There is still a lot of catching-up to do with the former BioWorks contract areas progressively being undertaken by the Pest Animals Section.

Hutt Valley Contracting Services is behind schedule with servicing the Wellington KNE's. Work that has been audited is of a good standard. Recent works include bait station access line maintenance at Wrights Hill and Denton Park/Polhill Reserves and bait station servicing at Huntleigh Park, Carey's Gully, Tinakori Hill (all WCC Reserves) and Korokoro Reserve (LHCC).

Time has been allocated to inducting and training new permanent staff in predator control in metropolitan areas. Risk management is a prime concern.

Servicing of the southern portion of Dry Creek (Belmont Regional Park) has recently been completed. Porirua Scenic Reserve has been re-baited and predator control traps checked.

Carters Covenant at Reikorangi has had a second baiting with Decal (cholecalciferol) and a new covenant site at Mangaone North Road (KCDC) has been set-up with the necessary hardware. It is expected that covenant owners will take responsibility for their own predator maintenance once the programme is established.

The Long Gully operation has taken some time to get operational but is now fully underway. This 65 hectare area lies almost directly west of and adjacent to the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary. The area is administered by the Wellington Natural Wildlife Trust who will be responsible for the ongoing predator maintenance and much of the biodiversity monitoring. The biodiversity skills set of the Trust members allows this delegation to be given with confidence. The Trust members have also been involved with the cutting of access routes in this difficult terrain.

## **2. Pest Plants:**

### **2.1 Regional Surveillance Species**

Work on Regional Surveillance species is increasing through the spring period. Staff will also be undertaking this work in conjunction with delimiting surveys around sites containing Eradication species. A delimiting survey occurs within 200 metres.

A sizable number of surveillance species sites are already known, but as yet have not been delimited. This will be a high priority this year.

#### **2.1.1 National Priority Pests**

Staff have completed the first inspections for cape tulip and water hyacinth under contract to Agri Quality NZ (on behalf of MAF). Two of the nine cape tulip sites had plants that needed control. Second inspections are due mid-November.

Biosecurity are applying to the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry, Biosecurity NZ (MAF BNZ) for an exemption under Sections 52 & 53 of the Biosecurity Act to permit the growing of unwanted organisms for education purposes (i.e. for display at shows, etc).

#### **2.1.2 Manchurian wild rice**

The single infestation site in Kapiti has been aerially surveyed. Two new infestations were found in nearby drainage channels, not visible from the ground. A track has since been opened along the drainage channel to access all sites for planned control during December-January. Timing is dependant on completing an AEE and applying for resource consent to apply the control chemicals over water.

#### **2.1.3 NPPA Inspections**

Two GW staff have undergone formal NPPA training, provided by MAF BNZ.

All plant outlets have been inspected across the region. Generally, there is a high level of acceptance of the inspection process. Acceptance is improved when there is an open communication process. Inspections of markets are planned for the upcoming months using our four NPPA trained staff.

### **2.2 Eradication Species (11 spp)**

Forty new sites have been located following delimiting surveys. Contractors will be required to control 14 sites whilst the remainder will be actioned by staff.

From 689 property surveys in the August – November period there were 15 new eradication species located (2.2% incidence).

Staff have been very busy over the past two months undertaking inspections, providing identification training for contractors and undertaking control on small infestations sites. Contractor audits continue on a regular basis.

## **2.3 Containment Species (six spp)**

### **2.3.1 Boneseed**

In South Wairarapa the Ngawi and Lake Ferry escarpments and all adjacent coastal settlements have been controlled. Staff and contractors have put in a huge effort, including aerial application, the use of abseilers to control the steep faces and ground work on lower slopes. The planned area of control has been extended well south with staff completing areas not requiring ropes. A new survey will be initiated to extend from Lake Ferry to Mangatoetoe to determine the extent of seedling spread.

In Porirua at Titahi Bay, staff worked on the lower coastal faces ahead of the abseilers to maximise the benefit of the contractor work. Staff input allowed the control area to be extended further south along the coast.

In Kapiti, all 220 known sites were inspected and just over 70% were clear of plants.

### **2.3.2 Hornwort**

NIWA recently visited the trial site at the northern end of Lake Wairarapa with Biosecurity staff and a MAF BNZ representative. The inspection indicated that better results could have been achieved if a different control regime was used. There is general agreement that GW staff will take responsibility for future trial work instead of using contractors. This will require the purchase and or hire of some specialised equipment.

Further control trials will begin later this year.

## **2.4 Site Led & Boundary Control species (seven spp)**

A number of boundary complaints have been received over this period. Site visits have occurred and agreement reached on control requirements with the affected parties.

Two Notice of Directions for old man's beard control were issued to property owners in Wellington.

## **2.5 Key Native Ecosystems**

### **2.5.1 Keith George Memorial**

Access tracks were cut along State Highway 2 to allow access to old man's beard in August. A follow-up spray is planned on regrowth as well as spraying old man's beard and Japanese honeysuckle in the gully adjacent to State Highway 58.

### **2.5.2 Nga Manu wetland complex**

GW staff have worked with Kapiti Coast District Council and Nga Manu Nature Reserve to put together an information pack for neighbours. This informs owners of the threats posed by weeds. Owners have been asked for approval for staff to conduct property surveys.

### **2.5.3 Paekakariki Escarpment**

Follow-up contract work on cape ivy and periwinkle is underway. Meetings have occurred with the Nga Ururoa restoration co-ordinator to help develop a bid for biodiversity funding.

### **2.5.4 Pigeon Bush**

A combined weed and pest plant survey was completed with DoC. Only weed species on road margins and the lower valley of Abbott's Creek were located.

### **2.5.5 Porirua Park**

Woody weed contract work is underway.

### **2.5.6 Pukerua Bay**

Contract work controlling boneseed and other woody weeds was completed on the escarpment. Some abseiling work will be required next year. The Department of Conservation are planning aerial spray of everlasting pea on land to the south. The helicopter has been utilised whilst on-site to treat boneseed on steep areas. A contract has started to release the Beach Road slip restoration plantings and cape ivy at the carpark road end.

### **2.5.7 Raumati Escarpment**

A multi species contract is underway for a kilometre of the escarpment. Species include, blackberry, convolvulus, broom, gorse, periwinkle, pampas grass and willows.

### **2.5.8 Riversdale Beach wetlands**

Staff met with Masterton District Council to discuss Greater Wellington biodiversity objectives and options for jointly funded projects. The wetland to the south of the Riversdale settlement was discussed along with Flat Point sites. Greater Wellington is already involved with the duneland restoration at Riversdale. Staff surveyed the wetland to the south and attended the regular committee meeting to report the findings and restoration activities that are required. Discussions have progressed with Masterton District Council and draft Memorandum of Understandings have been developed for planned operations for the next two years.

### **2.5.9 Tarakena Bay / Ringitahu Reserve**

Staff have assessed this south coast escarpment for pest plant / weed infestations. Control activities are planned for the New Year.

### **2.5.10 Trelissick Park**

Contractors have been selected for controlling weeds ahead of next year's restoration planting.

### **2.5.11 Eastbourne Coast**

A contract has been let for the control of marram grass on this site, prior to restoration plantings by a Take Care group. Marram grass previously sprayed at Pencarrow has achieved an 80% kill with minimal non-target activity.

## **3. Biological control**

The broom leaf beetle was released north of Masterton in the Trimble Trust forest area.

The buddleia leaf weevil will be released into sections of river easily accessible for collection and redistribution. Sites include the Waingawa River, the Hutt River and the eastern part of the Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Mainland Island.

Boneseed leaf roller releases were made at five sites in late October.

GW provided a submission in support of a bid by ARC through Landcare Research to import a defoliator for tradescantia. Current work overseas is very promising.

## **4. Communications**

A meeting was held with territorial authorities and other organisations about KNE's and Weedbusters. A request was made to these organisations to communicate with GW on any events where opportunities for joint publicity may arise.

Three Biosecurity staff participated in the Wairarapa Schools Science Fair judging.

Staff set up a display at the Carterton A&P Show. Unfortunately, the weather influenced the numbers attending.

Staff attended various Weed Swaps to aid DoC staff. There was a good public response, resulting in a number of new pest plant sites being identified.

Biosecurity staff met with a number of territorial authorities to review biodiversity work completed throughout the region during the year. Discussions centred on the upcoming budgets for 2008/09. The forum provided the territorial authorities with an opportunity to take a joint planning approach to future biodiversity related activities. Follow-up meetings were held with each participating territorial authority to discuss individual programme plans.

## **3. Bovine Tb:**

### **3.1 Vector Control Programme - 2007/08**

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

- 270,353 ha possum control
- 966 ha ferret control

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

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

Following this review, the revised programme for the 2007/08 year includes:

- 213,499 ha possum control
- 2,116 ha ferret control
- 24,767 ha of possum and ferret surveys
- 152,806 ha of pig surveys
- trend and performance monitoring.

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

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks	26,066	0	23,256	0	49,322
J G McCaslin	24,294	0	860	0	25,154
Professional Guiding	46,877	2,116	0	0	48,993
T Oakly	0	0	0	152,806	152,806
To Let	116,262	0	651	0	116,913
<b>Totals</b>	<b>213,499</b>	<b>2,116</b>	<b>24,767</b>	<b>152,806</b>	<b>393,188</b>

**3.1.2** The following table details areas of the 2007/08 control programme which have been completed as of late October. Of the programme already let (excluding pig surveys), 14,769 ha (19.0%) has been completed and assessed by either performance monitor or audit.

All pig surveys have a completion date of 30 June.

	Possum (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks	0	0	0	0
J G McCaslin	5,723	0	0	5,723
Professional Guiding	2,136	0	0	2,136
T Oakly	0	0	6,910	6,910
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7,859</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,910</b>	<b>14,769</b>

### 3.1.3 Monitoring

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

To date the trend monitoring has not commenced. Likely aerial blocks (Crown land) are expected to be monitored over summer and farmland monitors will commence from February 2008 onwards.

### 3.2 2006/07 Programme

The following projects carried forward from the 2007/08 year are still to be completed. BioWorks is the contractor for these projects.

- Mangaroa Kaitoke HMR 1 1,644 ha
- Otaki Buffer HMR 1 3,028 ha new work plan approved
- South East Wairarapa stage 3 HR 5 3,658 ha

#### 3.2.1 Parcel 2

Tenders for Parcel Two closed late October. Seven strata in five operations were tendered, covering 21,461 hectares.

No tenders were received for South East Wairarapa stage 3, HR 6, 2,977 ha. This stratum will be reviewed with changes made to the operation boundary before it is re-tendered.

### 3.3 Contractor Capacity – 2007/08

The Vector Management (VM) team have, for a number of years, highlighted in the Bovine Tb Regional Plans concerns about contractor capacity in the Wellington Region. The demise of Target Pest Ltd. and the recent problems suffered by BioWorks have exacerbated the problem.

Since the commencement of the 2007/08 year the VM and the AHB have been discussing options to improve contractor capacity. A decision has been made to offer two 60,000ha parcels to contractors for a two year period. The aim is to either attract new contractors into the region and/or provide an opportunity for currently registered contractors to grow their business in the region. This process is being jointly managed by the GW VM team and the AHB.

Registration of Interest process has recently been concluded. Contractors were asked to submit a number of details and were given a pass / fail, depending on whether minimum specifications were met. The next stage involves identifying the location and performance requirements of the two parcels for contractors to tender. Contractors will also need to specify how they intend to establish and grow their business in the region.

The successful contractors will need to perform satisfactorily in 2007/08 if they are to be offered a 60,000ha parcel for 2008/09. Performance criteria are currently being determined.



The aim of this process is to have both parcels let before year end. However, this is likely to result in neither of the successful contractors completing the entire 60,000ha parcel before 30 June 2008. Any uncompleted work will be rolled over into the 2008/09 year. The contractor will be expected to complete the remaining works and the new 60,000ha parcel in 2008/09.

The net effect of this new preferred supplier arrangement is that the approved 2007/08 vector control programme is highly unlikely to be completed as originally planned. However, if the new process results in additional contractors operating within the region then we can look to the future more positively.

## **Flood Protection (Graeme Campbell)**

### **1. Manager's comments**

#### **1.1 General**

The works programme for the year is progressing well. This is very pleasing given the size of the capital spend this year. All of the major projects are on or ahead of the programme and forecast to be completed within budget.

While we are on programme with the physical works some of the investigations work is lagging behind primarily due to a lack of staff resources. I believe we are close to resolving these and we will hopefully be able to catch up with the investigations work.

The key issues facing the department are:

- Progressing the resource consent application for the South Waitohu stopbank.
- Scoping the Waikanae and Waingawa Scheme reviews
- Kicking off the Waiwhetu clean up and channel widening work
- Finalising staff recruitment

More detail on the individual projects is contained later in the report.

A successful departmental workshop was held on 6 November 2007 with a theme of "it's great to work for flood protection". This is building on the Council-wide initiative of "Making Greater Wellington Greater". The workshop along with our Floodplain Management Planning workshops and asset management work is certainly helping to galvanise the department into a single unit.

Dave Reed, a Senior Riverhand in the Wairarapa, has resigned and is finishing in early January. Dave's input to the Department's work has been much appreciated and he will be missed. We are currently advertising for a replacement Riverhand.

We have employed two engineering students to work with the department over the summer to help them gain work experience and to help us with our asset management work. We hope to employ a third student for the summer and will look to attend the Graduate Fair in Christchurch in June 2008 with a view to employing a graduate at the end of 2008.

### **2. Kapiti floodplain management [Kees Nauta]**

#### **2.1 Friends of the Waikanae River (FOWR)**

The annual walkover of the Waikanae River was held on 11 October 2007. This is an opportunity for members of the community to meet with GW Flood Protection staff and Councillors to look at and discuss any issues relating to the river and its management. Flood protection and environmental enhancement works were looked at and discussed. Of particular interest was the site of the proposed western link road and the potential impacts it may have on the community and the environment. The day was a success and attended by 25 people.

## **2.2 Friends of the Otaki River (FOOR)**

Several members of the FOOR Committee attended the GW Rata Award ceremony on Wednesday, 7 November 2007. They had been nominated for an award in recognition of their dedication and hard work on the Otaki River. While they were not successful this time they had been successful in being awarded a Conservation Award from DoC earlier in the year.

The annual Otaki River Walkover was held on Wednesday, 12 September and was the largest held yet with 60 people attending. The day was a success and the feeling was very positive towards the flood protection and environmental work that has been carried out along the river. It was also an opportunity for past GW Councillors and members of the community who had been involved in planning for flood protection in the early days to reflect on the progress made so far and the difference it has made to the community.

The FOOR held their AGM on Wednesday, 24 October 2007. The meeting was well attended and several new members were voted on to the committee. It has been a very successful year for the Friends of the Otaki River and several key projects have been completed. One of these was the opening of the Otaki River Walkway in December 2006. This walkway is now being well used by the community.

## **2.3 Waikanae River Environmental Strategy**

Work is progressing on the review of the Waikanae River Environmental Strategy. A draft review document is being prepared that will go out for comment shortly. A workshop to discuss this will be held on 11 December 2007 at El Rancho.

## **2.4 Proposed extension to the Otaki River Walkway**

As part of the work being carried out on the Chrystalls extended stopbank, money has been allocated for environmental enhancement work. Some of this money has been earmarked to extend the Otaki River walkway from the SH1 bridge where it currently finishes upstream to the Chrystalls lagoon area. This is an area that has had a lot of effort invested into it by the FOOR over recent years and is both picturesque and environmentally significant. The public have been excluded from walking to the area for safety reasons up to this point but the extended stopbank works will make it possible for a safe access way to be created. The track will have an easy gradient and will suit families.

## **2.5 Recreation on the Waikanae River**

Staff attended a meeting at the KCDC offices to discuss recreational use of the Waikanae River corridor. Some of this will be tied into the Waikanae River Environmental Strategy but there is a general recognition of the need for a more detailed strategy that manages and plans for current and future use and potential conflicts. Many of the decisions made regarding the Waikanae River will be relevant to recreation on the Otaki River as well.

## **2.6 Chrystalls Extended Stopbank**

The Chrystalls Extended Stopbank is included in the 2007/08 Annual Plan for completion by 30 June 2008. The stopbank involves 2.1km of earthen stopbank, 400m of railway embankment strengthening and construction of culverts, retaining walls and a flood gate.

Five tenders were received by the submission deadline on 27 August 2007. All tenders received passed the minimum technical requirements and were within the Engineer's estimate and GW's budget. Following a detailed evaluation of tenders by AC Consulting Group and GW staff, it was recommended that the lowest tender price of \$932,235, from HRS NZ Ltd, be accepted. Approval to proceed was granted by the Chief Executive, and the works commenced on 8 October 2007.

The contractor's programme shows that the stopbank will be substantially completed by 29 February 2008, earlier than the contract requirement of 30 April 2008.

To date works have proceeded rapidly with 800m of stopbank, 350m of railway embankment strengthening and 25m of retaining wall nearing completion. The quality of the work has been good and we are confident that works will be completed on time and within budget.

## **2.7 South Waitohu**

The more detailed hydraulic analysis required to complete the impact assessment of the stopbank has been completed. The work shows that there are no significant detrimental impacts upstream or downstream of the proposed stopbank. Work is now progressing on the finalisation of the resource consent application, and we will now start the consultation with the wider community.

## **3. Hutt River floodplain management [Daya Atapattu]**

Implementation of the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan (HRFMP), in its 7<sup>th</sup> year, is about 12% complete and progressing well. We are currently working on four structural projects and a proposed district plan change.

### **3.1 District plan changes**

A plan change to include the Hutt River flood hazard information into the Hutt City district plan was completed in 2006. The Hutt River flood hazard information for inclusion in the Upper Hutt District Plan is ready. We expect Upper Hutt City Council to commence the process for the proposed plan change in January 2008.

### **3.2 Ava to Ewen project**

The Ava to Ewen project involves improving the waterway and upgrading of stopbanks from Ava Rail Bridge to Ewen Bridge. This project, costing about \$16 million, is being implemented in four stages. The project is currently progressing on programme and within budget.

Stage 1, a river realignment, and Stage 2, Alicetown stopbank reconstruction, are complete. Stage 3 includes the Opuhu pump station and the Ava Rail stopbank and waterway upgrade works. Opuhu pump station, a GWRC/HCC joint initiative, was completed in February 2007. The Ava Rail stopbank and waterway upgrade works are progressing well and on track for completion by March 2008.

The Ava Rail stopbank project also includes environmental enhancement of the river berm and establishment of Inanga spawning habitat in the Opuhu stream. A preliminary design for this part of the work has been completed and John Bissell, Environmental Planner, has

commenced scoping implementation of this project. We expect planting to be completed by winter 2008.

Stage 4, the Strand Park upgrade, is scheduled to commence in September 2008. The design work has been completed and we are ready to prepare the tender documents

### **3.3 Boulcott/Hutt stopbank project**

The purpose of the Boulcott/Hutt stopbank project is to construct a new stopbank, including an upgraded section, from Mills Street to Kennedy Good Bridge to provide the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan recommended standard of protection to Hutt City.

The proposed new stopbank will be mostly located in the privately owned land of the Boulcott and Hutt Golf Clubs. A feasibility study to determine a preferred alignment for the new stopbank, including an extensive consultation process, was completed in September 2007. The Hutt River Advisory Committee considered the feasibility study and consultation outcomes and selected a preferred alignment for the stopbank through the Boulcott and Hutt golf courses. The selected option, the Green alignment, makes it difficult for the Boulcott Golf Club to continue with a 9 hole course on the current location. The Landcare Committee, after considering a submission from the Boulcott Golf Club, asked officers to investigate a variation to the preferred alignment through the Boulcott golf course before proceeding to the detailed design and statutory approvals stage.

We are now investigating the variation proposed by the Boulcott Golf Club. Outcomes from this study will be reported to the Hutt River Advisory Committee in February 2008.

### **3.4 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank upgrade**

The Whirinaki Crescent stopbank upgrade project is designed to provide the HRFMP recommended 2300 cumec (440 year) standard of flood protection to the Whirinaki Crescent community. This project experienced delays because of extra time required to complete the land purchase negotiations.

The project is now being implemented in two stages. Stage 1 includes construction of a 175 metre long stopbank and site filling of an area of about 1600 m<sup>2</sup> to provide the required protection. Stopbank works are now complete and the site filling is going through the statutory approval process. Stage 1 works will be completed before Christmas 2008, subject to statutory approvals for site filling.

Stage 2 works include reconstructing the remaining 700 metres of stopbank. A contractor was appointed in October 2007 and the earthworks will commence in January 2008. We expect to complete this project by June 2008.

### **3.5 Maoribank investigations**

The purpose of the Maoribank investigations project is to develop a strategy to manage degrading bed levels at the Maoribank bend of the Hutt River. The investigation project will be implemented in two stages. Stage 1, a risk assessment, includes an assessment of the bed rock erosion rates and its consequences. Options for managing the river bed will be investigated in Stage 2.

Stage 1 investigations are now progressing. We expect to complete the investigation project by June 2008.

## **4. Western Operations [Jeff Evans]**

### **4.1 Hutt River**

Willow and native planting programmes on the Hutt River are now complete, survey maintenance of sight points has been undertaken and new marker posts and locating plates have been installed where required. Maintenance work continues on repairing fences and access tracks and staff are assessing requirements for the purchase of rock rip rap for the 2007-2008 works programme.

### **4.2 Hutt River Ranging Services**

Work continues with ranging and enforcement where required on the river berms. Misuse of vehicles has been an issue over the last period and an approach has been made to the Police for some assistance in this area. A number of community planting days have been held over the last period and a programme of maintenance works for the Hutt River trail has now been developed.

### **4.3 Otaki River**

Winter 2007 willow and native planting work is complete on the Otaki River. Bed recontouring works have been undertaken on the Lutz-Wallace debris fences to stop the river outflanking them. Willow rejuvenation work has also been undertaken in a number of areas to help increase the vigour of the willow lines and the Otaki Friends have held a number of successful planting days. Staff are also currently sourcing prices for rock rip rap for programmed maintenance works.

### **4.4 Waikanae River**

All planting work has been completed for the season. A large number of surplus willow trees were removed from the berm at Jim Cooke Park and a formed walkway has been installed above the Kebbels rock line. Staff have also been working with contractors to install a 1.1 km boundary fence between the Howarth Estate and the river as part of a boundary adjustment.

### **4.5 Watercourses**

Wind blown tree removal has been the main job over the last period. The inclement windy and wet weather has kept staff busy removing fallen trees from streams, and minor watercourses in the region. Maintenance runs are programmed to start over the next few weeks. The Waitohu Stream and Waimeha Stream mouths were cut in the last period.

A resource consent application to carry out maintenance activities in the Waiwhetu Stream was lodged with Environmental Regulations on 6 November. The consent will be publicly notified.

## 4.6 Gravel extraction

The instream work associated with the gravel extraction from the Hutt River is due to start mid-November, with work continuing through to Christmas. The work will focus on the Belmont to the Kennedy Good Bridge reach of the river.

Gravel extraction figures to the end of November 2007 are set out below.

River	Area	Contractor	Period Year 2007/08 (cubic metres)		Year 2006/07 (cubic metres)
			Period	Year	Full Year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	9,947	14,063	46,100
	River	Horokiwi	4,486	11,335	46,890
Otaki	River	Winstones	12,500	16,366	40,929
Waikanae	Above Greenaway Road	Various	0	0	3,330
	Below Greenaway Road	Gary Holland Earthmoving	0	0	5,360
Waitohu	River	Mills Albert	0	2,502	2,500
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>26,933</b>	<b>44,266</b>	<b>145,109</b>

## 5. Wairarapa Operations [Mike Longworth]

### 5.1 Wairarapa River Schemes

#### 5.1.1 General

Work in the Wairarapa rivers has got off to a good start for the new season. Programmed planting and lopping work is now largely completed. River alignment and beach maintenance work using heavy machinery such as dozers is underway. Rock and boulder protective works for bank erosion sites will be constructed over the next six months.

### 5.2 Kopuaranga River Scheme

The Kopuaranga River Scheme works have commenced. The works programme has been developed following detailed site visits and will target specific areas of willows to gain the most benefit from clearing in this first year. The site visits were also beneficial to develop working relationships with the community. To date, 10 days of willow clearing have been completed and the adjacent landowners have noted the localised reduction in river levels. Further willow clearing and aerial vegetation spraying is planned in the next quarter. A meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held in December to discuss the progress to date. A number of residents outside of the scheme have requested work and this is currently programmed within the isolated works budget for this financial year.

### 5.3 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme

#### 5.3.1 New Rating Classification

The LWVD Scheme review is now virtually completed. The review has taken a significant amount of work over the last four years and the outcomes are an enhanced maintenance

budget, a development works programme and a new rating classification. The special consultative procedure to adopt the proposed new rating classification for the LWVD Scheme has commenced. Letters outlining key elements of the proposed new rating classification, the proposed rates and offering the opportunity to make submissions have been sent to all properties in the scheme area. Submissions will close on 19 November and be heard in early December so as to have a recommendation for Council in February 2008. It is proposed to use the new rating classification for setting the 2008/09 rates.

A key feature of the proposed new rating classification is the introduction of a dwelling charge for all the dwellings in and around the scheme area to recognise the indirect benefits they receive from maintenance of the scheme.

### **5.3.2 Global Resource Consent**

The global resource consent to carry out routine maintenance work for the LWVD Scheme is expected to be granted by the end of November 2007. The officer's report has been written and the proposed consent conditions are being reviewed by staff. The affected parties to the consent have signed off on the consent and its proposed conditions.

### **5.3.3 Gravel Extraction**

There has been a strong early demand for gravel licences this year to the point where the gravel resource is now fully allocated in the Ruamahanga River above the Waiohine junction. There is still unallocated gravel available in the lower valley rivers; however demand has increased for the Tauherenikau River.

Due to large scale deposition of gravel upstream of the Waihenga Bridge and low extraction rates, it has been decided to issue licences without royalty to encourage more extraction from that location.

## **5.4 LWVDS development work**

The development work of boulder bank protection and stopbank upgrades budgeted at \$870,000 for this year will commence early in January 2008. Boulders have already been extracted and stock piled. This is the first year of a 9 year programme which will cost \$7.8m.

## **5.5 Investigations**

### **5.5.1 Private Stopbanks around Lake Wairarapa Study**

Following the July 2006 floods, and very high lake levels causing a number of private stopbanks to fail, local farmers approached the Council for assistance. As a result an undertaking was made to carry out a study to investigate the state of private stopbanks and other private structures associated with preventing flooding around Lake Wairarapa. Michael Hewison from Eastern Consulting is carrying out the study. He has rung the 25 landowners around the lake and has submitted their responses for staff review. Staff are currently going through the responses and will shortly ask Michael to commence visiting 16 properties to inspect and assess structures. Once the structures have been assessed, options for Council's involvement, if any, will be developed and reported to Council.



### 5.5.2 Waingawa River Scheme Review

The Waingawa River Management Scheme has been in place since 1992 and was reviewed in 1998. It is now due to be reviewed again.

The scope of the review is expected to be finalised this month. Preliminary work on the review has been done such as developing a hydraulic model and carrying out some analysis of the river cross sections.

### 5.5.3 Wairarapa Combined District Plan

The three District Councils in the Wairarapa are in the process of developing a Combined District Plan. The Wairarapa Combined District Plan hearings committee heard submissions on the proposed designations associated with the stopbanks and flood ways in the Wairarapa on 8 November 2007. Staff have been requested to provide further information to support the designations, particularly around their extent.

### 5.6 Drainage Schemes

The Regional Council manages 15 drainage schemes in the Wairarapa. The lower than normal rainfall over winter has meant that the pumped drainage schemes have not incurred significant power charges and overall, the budgets for the drainage schemes are on track to recover the reserve balances that had been depleted in the previous year.

## 6. Strategy and Technical Support [Sharyn Westlake]

The following table summarises the number of formal, written requests attended to from 21 August – 9 November 2007. These include information requests from the public, local authorities and also comment required on resource consent applications and plan changes.

	June 2007	YTD
Requests brought forward	4	7
Additional requests received	62	82
Responses provided	55	74
Outstanding responses	11	15

Our Department's Policy contribution on a national, regional and local level is continuing. We remain involved with the review of the Regional Policy Statement, the Ministry for the Environment's Flood Management Review and the development of a National Policy Statement on Flood Risk Management.

Flood Protection is about to hold the third of a planned series of four internal workshops on floodplain management planning, as part of the internal policy development in the context of the national framework for best practice flood risk management.

The objections to Plan Change 50 (an update of flood hazard information) in the Kapiti Coast District Plan are still in the final stages of settlement through the Environment Court mediation process. We expect this to be wrapped up shortly, without needing to go to the Environment Court.

## **7. Investigations and Assets [John Eyles]**

### **7.1 Waiwhetu Stream floodplain management study**

This project has changed considerably since the last reporting period. The Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Committee (at its last meeting on 22 August) requested that the preparation work for the clean up of contaminated sediments in the lower Waiwhetu should commence, even though final funding for the project has not been agreed. In the short term, work is underway to design and secure resource consent for the remediation trial, with the goal of completing the trial by April 2008.

This change of focus in the Waiwhetu project will mean a delay in the completion of the floodplain management plan of approximately 12 months while the clean up project is advanced.

A revised budget and project plan to complete the cleanup and channel widening is being developed. A heads of agreement between the parties is also under negotiation, including possible cost share arrangements with Hutt City Council and the Ministry for the Environment.

John Eyles attended the annual Waste Management Institute conference in Hamilton on 6 and 7 November to learn more about the remediation of contaminated sites, such as the Tui mine in Te Aroha. It is proposed that John will be the Project Manager for the remediation work and the channel widening.

### **7.2 Asset management**

The Western Rivers Asset Management Report was presented to the Landcare Committee on 19 September, fulfilling the annual reporting performance indicator for the department. On the whole, the department's flood protection assets are considered to be in good condition and are being maintained appropriately.

Software provider SAP has been selected for further consideration in the organisation-wide asset management information system review. Senior staff are now heavily committed to the evaluation of the asset management software to determine suitability for the department.

## **Land Management (Dave Cameron)**

### **1. Manager's comments**

#### **1.1 Soil Moisture Concerns**

Soil moisture levels across the Wairarapa are causing some concern for the new poles and seedlings planted for soil conservation purposes. High wind run has been the main feature of the weather for the last six weeks and any effect of rainfall has been offset by high evapotranspiration losses. Pole audits are currently underway and results to date are very good however this good start could be compromised if the current weather patterns remain.

Rainfall for the ten months to the end of October at the Tanawa site (north of Tinui) is 913mm c.f long term average of 1149mm. This represents rainfall at 79% of normal. Monthly rainfall to 16 November is 22mm. The long term average for November is 74mm. As a result of variable rainfall patterns rainfall totals in the hill country to the east of Masterton are somewhat lower.

#### **1.2 Government Funding Initiatives**

Two Government funding initiatives that focus on afforestation and soil conservation planting in hill country environments have been released in the last two months. The Hill Country Erosion fund totals \$10M over four years and the Afforestation Grant Scheme \$50M over the same period of time.

Staff are preparing options for an application to the HCE fund and need to meet a February 2008 deadline. While a good percentage of this fund will be allocated to Horizons Regional Council there is a very good opportunity to supplement funding of current hill country programmes with a new initiative.

The AGS fund promotes the afforestation of land, primarily for the sequestration of carbon. Government would retain the carbon credits in exchange for forest establishment grants. Early discussions have been held with Hawkes Bay, Horizons and Taranaki Regional Councils to consider a joint bid. MAF are comfortable with this approach and have signalled agreement to ring fence a part of the fund. A working group incorporating staff from the four Councils is to be formed and an application will be forwarded by February 2008.

#### **1.3 Land Management Officer Vacancy**

Three applicants have been short-listed for the position. Interviews will take place on 21 November and it is hoped that a new appointment can be scheduled for January 2008.

Michelle Bird is currently on maternity leave and has signalled a desire to return to work on a part-time basis when her leave expires in May 2008. Subject to approval of this request there will need to be consideration of staff resources applied to the area of riparian management and biodiversity in the Wellington and Kapiti areas.

## 1.4 Options for future Nursery Land

A visit was made to the Aokautere nursery in Palmerston North to view current operations and discuss further options for securing the site as a potential supplier of poles to Greater Wellington, as well as a potential supplier to other Councils in the lower North Island.

Discussions with Horizon Regional Council staff indicate that they are very interested in a joint approach to securing pole supplies from Aokautere. What form this supply agreement takes will be formalised over the next year and may well be part of a joint bid to the newly formed Hill Country Erosion fund.

Dialogue with Masterton District Council continues over the possible use of the Homebush treatment site. Both these options will remain on the table until the preferred one is progressed as part of the LTCCP process.

## 1.5 Catchment Schemes

Catchment Scheme expenditure for the first quarter reflects a steady start to work for the year. Work has been focussed on planting of both poles and seedlings. In the last month construction work on boulder weirs has been completed in the Awhea/Opouawe catchment.

The Homewood and Maungaraki Catchment Scheme expenditure reflects the strong focus on pole planting. The Whareama Scheme will begin its willow spraying programme during January/February, while channel maintenance work is programmed for the Kaiwhata Scheme in the first quarter of 2008.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget 07/08</b>	<b>Expenditure to Date</b>	<b>% Spent</b>
Awhea/Opouawe	40,000	7,291	18%
Whareama	20,000	5,929	30%
Homewood	12,200	6,810	57%
Mataikona/Whakataki	12,000	3,319	28%
Maungaraki	12,000	6,316	53%
Kaiwhata	12,000	904	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>108,200</b>	<b>30,569</b>	<b>28%</b>

## 2. Farm Plans (Don Bell)

### 2.1 New Plans, Reviews and Annual programmes

Activity	Completed	Annual Plan Target	Total 10 Year Expenditure	
New Sustainability Plans	1	3	\$88,760	
New Conservation Plans	1	2	\$30,315	
Ten Year Reviews	2	20	\$82,500	
Activity	Completed	Annual Plan Target	Approved Expenditure	Annual Plan Budget
Annual Programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability plans</li> <li>• Conservation plans</li> <li>• Shelter plans</li> </ul>	93	130	\$411,600	\$550,000
Isolated works	9		\$9,500	\$10,000

### 2.2 Comment

- The development of a good auger-planting method was a significant feature of this year's contract pole-planting programme. It will enable planting to commence next year irrespective of soil moisture levels which would normally dictate the start for pole-bar operations.
- 20 properties have been selected for audits of pole planting quality and siting and the initial assessment has been completed; they will be re-assessed in March 08.
- Helicopter pole spreads went smoothly with the overall cost working out at \$2.20 per pole (\$2.40 last year). The larger runs (3 – 4000 Poles), some high numbers per property and shorter flights all helped keep costs down.
- A review of client portfolios for Land Management Officers has been completed to take account of staff changes as well as move to a more catchment orientated grouping.
- Andrew Patrick will be on ACC (sports injury) leave for 6 weeks or so, rehabilitating following an operation for a torn ham-string. Katie Jones has completed the draft soil intactness report on the state of soils in the Wellington region 2001 – 2003.

### 3. Akura Conservation Centre (Stan Braaksma)

#### 3.1 Nursery Operations

- The winter tidy up operations of stool beds is just about completed. This involves chipping heavy material, mulching all slash, row spraying, mowing and a fertiliser application. A recent flood at Akura has mobilized some slash requiring further tidy up.
- The wet soil conditions in October delayed soil preparation for new cuttings planted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October. A total of 12,700 cuttings (3 ha) have been established. Start up growth of cuttings and stools have been good with minimal wind damage to date.
- Total Poplar and willow sales for the year.

	<b>3m</b>	<b>2.5m</b>	<b>2m</b>	<b>stakes</b>	<b>cuttings</b>
2007	26,910	1,433	8,009	2,670	12,685
2006	24,200	3,440	9,670	5,260	20,400

This includes 9,550 3m Poles purchased from Aokautere (13,675 in 2006).

- The renewed resource consents are approved for bore water extraction. This includes the 2 litres/sec approved for the irrigation October to April inclusive. The irrigator is ready to go with priority water to new cutting beds and new regrowth of stools. This year we will apply 20mm/ha/ week to a Poplar and willow block to measure the potential of increased growth under adequate moisture levels through the growing season.
- The 2008 three metre pole production has been estimated

GW Nurseries	11,550 Poplar	8,080 Willow
Aokautere	6,660	400
	70%	30%

Total of 26,100 3m poles.

- Pole production tables are projected through to 2013 with predicted three metre production ranging between 22,000 and 27,000 poles/annum from our two Nurseries. A briefing to the Akura Advisory Board has addressed additional production coming from improved irrigation, a new area in the Masterton District Council's Homebush sewage treatment land and the impact if Mangapakeha Nursery were to be sold. In the past five years pole demand has been increasing from 2002 - 2004 average of 17,000 3m poles/annum to 26,000 poles over the 2005 - 2007 period
- The P.radiata harvest at Mangapakeha Nursery completed in June/July 2007 still awaits full payment. We have a letter of commitment to pay by the end of November from Whittakers Sawmilling. To date two \$3,000 payments have been made on a total of \$37,309.
- Fencing at Mangapakeha has been completed on most boundary fences. The floodgates are still to be repaired when lower river flows are evident. Many of these will involve some cost sharing with neighbours. PF Olsens have just completed the harvesting of

Mangapakeha forest and are due to replace 300m of boundary fence and upgrade the access road to pre-logging condition.

- Advertisements are currently being placed for the tendering of high prune and stump prune operations.

### 3.2 Trading

- Dry soil conditions prevailed until late July, which meant delayed planting and sales activity at Akura. Once underway staff were extremely busy moving planting stocks in a shortened season. The total tree sales are down on the previous year. Sales of P.radiata are well down, with the mediocre returns and a high anxiety around Kyoto protocol, carbon credits and the liabilities associated with harvesting. Similarly the recent sheep and beef incomes have retrenched with only small numbers of Conservation woodlots being established.

- Summary of items traded.

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
P.radiata seedlings	85,000	185,400
Exotic og seedlings	1,710	4,400
Acacia Eucalyptus RT	19,100	9,232
Exotic RT	6,800	6,400
Leyland Cypress	4,865	6,768
Poplar/Willow RC	6,410	7,915
Native RT	45,520	59,992
Flax og	2,000	4,595
1.7m Dynex sleeves	21,200	23,375

### 3.3 Staffing

- The Nursery Assistant position was filled late in the season by Raewyn Hullena at short notice. Raewyn's previous experience was invaluable to Akura. Henri Heinz was employed to relieve some workload for a period of 4 weeks. Peter Cameron assisted with the cutting planting.

### 3.4 Budget

- The Akura Business Unit has returned solid trading figures for the first four months of the financial year. The majority of income has been posted. Over the next six months the current surplus will be reduced as maintenance, contract pruning, fertiliser application and irrigation costs come to hand.
- There will be some pressure on the budget to achieve the budgeted surplus as additional costs have been incurred in transitioning to the new management structure. The profit margin from the additional poles sourced from an external nursery are greatly reduced in comparison to poles grown at Akura.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Budget 07/08 – Operating Surplus</b>	<b>October Operating Surplus 07/08</b>
Nurseries	21,100	(28,200)
Trading	(58,200)	(57,500)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(37,100)</b>	<b>(85,700)</b>

#### 4. Biodiversity (Megan Banks)

- A review of the riparian programme *Streams Alive* is currently underway. The programme has been running for four years and all participants have been sent a survey. The results of this survey will form the basis of the review along with the feedback from a couple of focus group meetings. The review will be presented to the Biodiversity Co-ordinating Group in April 2008. A paper will then be presented to the Catchment Management Committee for consideration.

#### 5. Operations (Kevin Burdan)

##### 5.1 Silviculture Programmes

- Work in the first four months of this year has been relatively quiet. Good progress is being made within the Conservation Reserves, however work on farm woodlots is still slow. This can be attributed to the reduction in farm returns for the last year and the relatively depressed log market.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Completed (hectares)</b>	<b>Annual Plan Target (hectares)</b>	<b>Expenditure to date</b>	<b>Annual Plan Budget</b>
Thinning	12.5	200	\$ 3,940	\$60,000
Pruning	18.3	200	\$10,325	\$120,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>\$14,265</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>

##### 5.2 Conservation Programmes

- Final tallies for contract pole planting for the past winter are 18,094, leaving approximately 8,000 poles planted by landowners themselves. An additional 65 hectares were established in conservation woodlots.
- Pole planting contracts were undertaken on 52 properties and the woodlots were established on 17 properties.
- A pole audit is currently underway. Staff have held a field day assessing performance standards and 24 farms across the Wairarapa hill country will be audited. A new planting technique has been trialled this year and results will be eagerly awaited following a dry winter/spring period.



## **Integrated Catchment Management (Ian Gunn)**

I have continued to prepare a paper on the TCM concept. Current focus is on how to manage the process.

I have attended:

- A seminar on the Emissions Trading Scheme
- Two Water Programme of Action meetings. This project is back on track with officials making good progress on a National Policy Statement.
- Meeting with the committee organising the Papawai Streams Alive programme. This project is likely to become bigger as it includes the Papawai marae. The committee is now looking at additional sources of funding.

The Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme rating review has completed the period of submissions for the Special Consultative Process. This involved sending out 2400 proposed rating notices to 1800 landowners. Less than 30 submissions have been received which will be heard early in December by a Hearings Committee (see Report 07.771 elsewhere in the agenda).