

Catchment Management Division

Departmental Managers' Update
for period ending 29 May 2009

Biosecurity (Davor Bejakovich, Manager)

1. Pest Animals: (Ray Clarey)

1.1 Rabbits

Staff are continuing with the annual inspection of a subset of rabbit prone properties across the region. Properties inspected to date have provided no evidence of escalating populations. Any isolated rabbit population increase will not now be evident until late spring.

Rabbits are currently being blood sampled in the Western Zone to test for rabbit calicivirus (RCD) immunity levels. The RCD survey is not being undertaken in the Eastern Zone this year. The 2008 survey resulted in 45% of adult rabbits disclosing RCD immunity in the Western Zone and 57% in the Eastern Zone (Wairarapa). Although immunity levels have been slowly increasing each year the virus is continuing to suppress rabbit levels in most areas across the region.

1.2 Rooks

The Ministry of Health is currently undertaking a review of the model permit conditions for vertebrate toxic agents (VTA's). The model permit conditions previously only applied to 1080 and cyanide. The review includes Health Protection Officers, ERMA NZ, DoC, Animal Health Board, the National Possum Control Agency, VTA users and selected regional councils. Greater Wellington has been requested to assist with the development of the model permit condition for the rook avicide DRC 1339 (3-chloro-p-toluidine hydrochloride) as it is recognised that GW is an agency with significant expertise in the control of rooks.

1.3 Hazard identification on WCC lands

Pest Animal team members have recently completed a hazard review of each of the individual 29 sites totalling some 4,800ha on Wellington City Reserves and adjoining property that make up the WCC Reserves ecological health programme. Health and safety issues are important and have gained an increased priority over time. A Job Safety Analysis card detailing possible hazards has been prepared for each site. This card, together with a list of Biosecurity Pest Animals generic outdoor hazards and a map of the site has been supplied to WCC. GW staff and contractors involved with the pest animal programmes have also been supplied copy and the hazards discussed. WCC have been asked to determine and advise of hazards that they may have identified.

1.4 Combined Hutt Water Catchment, Akatarawa Saddle and Kaitoke Regional Park Operation

Planning for this aerial operation has been stalled pending a meeting with the Medical Officer Health (MOH). The MOH requires further clarity on some aspects of the request for approval.

The operation was due to start on 18th May 2009 but will now be rescheduled for a suitable 'weather window' in June. This operation of 11,703ha involves GW staff from Biosecurity, Parks, Water Supply and Communications.

1.5 Cat desexing campaign

The third cat de-sexing campaign for this financial year is due to start soon. The area of focus is the suburbs of Highbury, Wilton, Crofton Downs and Ngaio in Wellington City. This trial is a joint campaign with Wellington City Council, the Wellington SPCA, GW and participating veterinary clinics. The aim is help protect native wildlife in the Karori Sanctuary and Otari-Wiltons Reserve. Both of these areas have been the subject of considerable investment by both WCC and GW. It is also hoped that a model can be developed that can be extended to other metropolitan areas and include a larger range of funders. Cats are highly efficient predators and prey on native birds, lizards, fish, frogs and invertebrates.

2. Pest Plants: (Richard Grimmett)

2.1 Biological Control

Grass Carp

A series of meetings have been held with Waterways Restoration regarding the use of Grass Carp for aquatic pest plant containment. The Flood Protection Department is interested from a drainage maintenance perspective. GW is taking a holistic and long-term view to include the use of these fish in our tool box of aquatic weed control options and to complement current chemical control operations. An application for consent to release Grass Carp will include an area in the LWVDS drainage areas as well as the Kapiti Forest Lakes area. The fish will be used to stop pest plant spread and improve drainage scheme performance. The aquatic pest plants (especially Hornwort) will be controlled within the confines of flood gates. An option to provide barrier nets to waterways open to lakes is being considered. The proposal is to progressively farm the fish stocks in waterways within the area of consent. DoC and Horizons Regional Council are included in our discussions with positive responses from these agencies to date.

2.2 Annual inspections and survey

Annual inspections are entering the final phase of the programme. Autumn weather has remained mild which has allowed plants to germinate and mature further into the year. Some of the multi-visit sites (i.e. Bathurst burr & thistles) have succeeded in maturing. A further inspection of some sites is scheduled to ensure very few plants mature before winter.

Biosecurity officers continue to collect samples of unknown plants that exhibit pest attributes for consulting with other staff or sending to Landcare Research for identification. Of interest is the identification of two Mistletoes (*Ileostylus micranthus* & *Tupeia antartica*) at Kourarau on the Maungarakei Range; Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) which is one of the United Kingdoms' top 10 pest plants that thrives beside waterways; Michaela's daisy (*Aster lancelets*), an aquatic moss (*Leptodictyum riparium*), and a lily (*Lilium longiflorum*).

2.3 Biodiversity

Contract works and community group support has continued to focus on providing well prepared sites for planting programmes and maintenance spraying to enable natural restoration processes (e.g. self seeding). Officers are completing final contracts for the season. Assessments are being undertaken to prioritise the 2010-2011 seasonal work programme in preparation for Memorandum of Understanding discussions with Territorial Local Authorities.

2.4 NZ Biosecurity Institute (Lower North Island) AGM and Education Forum

This was held on 19 and 20 May and was hosted by Hawkes Bay Regional Council (HBRC). Greater Wellington and Horizons Regional Council were represented.

Topics and field trips included:

- Urban possum control on Hospital Hill in Napier
- Future urban control at Havelock North, another place with a high number of possum complaints.
- Possum Control Areas (PCA's) programme which is still expanding with an aim to extend it by 50-70 000 hectares per year
- Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA) Control
- Cape Kidnappers pest animal control area where rifleman, robin, tom tit, whitehead, kiwi, and grey faced petrel have been re-introduced. They are working towards re-introducing saddleback, red-crowned parakeet, brown teal, little spotted kiwi, weka, banded rail and takahe. This is all funded by landowners and a trust
- Boundary Stream Mainland Island (DoC) – intensive mustelid and ungulate control
- Lake Opouahi - Kiwi Creche and Hydrilla control by grass carp
- Guavas Station - Impressive intensive ivy control in the last big piece of lowland Hawkes Bay native bush

2.5 Lifestyle Farmers Field Day in Otaki

The 19th Lifestyle Farmers Field Day was held at the Otaki Racecourse on Saturday, 23 May. Greater Wellington has been the main sponsor for this event since its inception. Biosecurity staff talked about pest control with hundreds of enthusiastic lifestylers. The field day was aimed at people who own small blocks. The advice and expertise of the Greater Wellington staff was in demand. Three significant reports of new sites of pest plants were checked out immediately. Most attendees had a real passion for the land and appreciate GW's role in managing pests.

3. Bovine Tb Vector Management: (Graeme Butcher & Grant Crawford)

3.1 2008/09 vector control programme

The AHB approved vector control programme for the 2008/09 year includes:

- 191,965 ha possum control
- 12,145 ha possum control carried forward from 2007/08 year.
- 40,293 ha of possum and ferret surveys
- 210,670 ha of pig surveys
- Trend and performance monitoring.

The table below summarises the contract areas for the 2008/09 year.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GW BioWorks	87,952	0	26,161	0	114,113
J G McCaslin Ltd	23,262	0	0	0	23,262
Professional Guiding	82,157	0	14,132	0	96,289
M & M Contractors	7,823	0	0	0	7,823
T Oakly	0	0	0	210,670	210,670
Sub Total	201,194				452,157
Withdrawn	2,852				(2,852)
Totals	204,046	0	40,293	210,670	901,462

The following table details areas of the 2008/09 control programme which have been completed as at 27 May 2009.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GW BioWorks	52,563	0	13,613	0	66,176
J G McCaslin Ltd	16,944	0	0	0	16,944
Professional Guiding	77,053	0	14,132	0	91,185
M & M Contractors	7,823	0	0	0	7,823
T Oakly	0	0	0	6,910	6,910
Totals	154,383	0	27,745	6,910	189,038

With regards to the possum control programme, 154,383 ha or 76.7% has been completed and assessed by either a performance monitor or audit.

With regards to the survey programme, 27,745ha or 68.9% has been completed and assessed by audit.

An estimate of contractor possum control progress as at 27 May 2009 has been made following a review of contractor monthly reports. Contractors estimate they have completed approximately 172,665ha (85.8%) of possum control. This progress includes partial progress of several projects.

All pig surveys will be completed by mid June.

3.2 The following table details projects which may not be completed within the 2008/09 year. This information has been obtained from contractor reports.

Control Projects	Area (ha)	Comment	
Haurangi Crown HR 1	289	These projects all include some treatment with aerial 1080 pellets. Delays are only expected if unfavourable weather conditions exist.	
Haurangi Crown HMR 1	5,664		
Kahutara Pirinoa HMR 4	762		
Kahutara Pirinoa HR 3	2,510		
Kahutara Pirinoa HR 4	3,369		
Te Wharau HMR 7	943		
Te Wharau HR 4	1,610		Contractor delay
Akatarawa HR 1	1,497		Delays experienced due to the projects being let late in the year.
Akatarawa HR 6	1,453		
Akatarawa HR 7	1,035		
Whangaehu Mauriceville MR 3		Control concludes last week of June. Monitor in July.	
Mangaroa Kaitoke HR 4			
Totals	19,132		

The progress review indicates that 19,132 ha of possum control may not be completed by the end of the financial year. Control and monitoring costs for accrual or carry forward may be up to \$632,170. However this is a worst case scenario that may only arise if weather conditions affect the application of aerial 1080 baits.

3.3 Monitoring

During the 2008/09 year, 104 trend monitors and 51 performance monitors are required.

All monitoring projects have been let, shared between the following contractors:

- Contract Monitoring Partnership
- Quality Control

To date 76 trend monitors and 40 successful performance monitors have been completed.

3.4 Haurangi Crown aerial 1080 pellets

Planning for the aerial 1080 control proposed for the Aorangi State Forest Park and surrounding area is well underway. The total operational area is approximately 7,700 hectares.

Consultation has been completed. The final plans include treating 4,000 hectares with 1080 pellets which have been coated with EPRO deer repellent. The AHB have

approved \$42,000 for this to occur. GW will be responsible for approximately \$5,400 of these additional costs.

Contact with representatives from the Upper Hutt and Wellington NZDA indicated they are not opposing the programme now that deer repellent is being used. A local group made up of hunters without NZDA affiliations are also supportive of the final operational plans. The Wairarapa branch of the NZDA continues to protest against the operation and have sent letters of complaint to Government Ministers. Subsequently, we have provided information to the Department of Internal Affairs detailing the consultation which has occurred.

The contractors are expecting approvals for the operation from the Department of Conservation, Medical Officer of Health and Resource Consent to be issued by early June. The operation will then commence as soon as settled weather conditions allow.

3.5 Akatarawa

The Akatarawa HR 1, 6 & 7 projects were let in April 2009, much later than the rest of the programme due to a lack of interest by contractors. Negotiations were held with Professional Guiding Services regarding the formation of these tender documents and as a result the operation was divided into 3 stratum:

- HR 1 1,497 ha
- HR 6 1,453 ha
- HR 7 1,035 ha

Contractors have now commenced work and in the first two weeks 940 possums were removed. However, not all landowners are agreeable to the control works being undertaken. The Vector Managers have persuaded five occupiers who were originally opposed to the operation to now let contractors undertake control. We are still working with one further occupier to ensure access can be gained. If access cannot be obtained through negotiation, the enforcement powers of the Biosecurity Act may be used.

3.6 Pig Survey Progress

The following table details pig survey progress to date for the 2008/09 year.

Project	Area (ha)	Required Samples	Samples received to date
Akatarawa	20,538	30	35
Bideford	39,023	40	13
Castle Hill	4,529	30	30
East Alfredton	4,900	20	11
Homewood Riversdale	25,789	120	41
Kapiti	30,966	50	13
Mataikona	6,779	40	60
Moonshine	6,035	20	30
Otaki Crown	3,551	15	7
Pakowai	6,909	60	78
Stronvar	25,976	85	32
Tinui	35,675	120	159
Totals	210,670	630	509

On 4 May Gillian Atkinson (AsureQuality) and Graeme Butcher attended the monthly meeting of the Wairarapa Pig Hunting club. The purpose was to explain the reason and processes behind the AHB pig surveys which are being undertaken throughout the Region. An opportunity was taken to explain the risks of Bovine Tb to hunters and how the disease can be spread by the improper handling of carcasses and the spread of bovine Tb between scavengers and carcasses.

The presentation was well received and will help with the supply of pig heads for sampling within the region.

Hunters advised that they have had comments relayed to them, allegedly made by GW and the AHB, that they are responsible for the illegal spread and liberations of feral pigs. The opportunity was taken to refute those claims.

3.7 Infected herds

		I Herds @ June 2008	I Herds @ end of December (one clear test in brackets)	Target I Herds @ June 2009
VFA	Cattle	0	0	9
	Deer	0	0	
VRA	Cattle	9	6 (2)	
	Deer	0	0	

3.8 2009/10 programme

The Wellington Vector Control Manager has proposed the following plan for vector control, monitoring and surveys for the 2009/10 year,

- 207,967 ha possum control
- 87,696 ha of ferret and possum surveys
- 252,464 ha of pig surveys
- 52 Performance monitors
- 103 trend monitors

To date this entire proposal has not yet been approved by the AHB. However the AHB has already commenced tendering the 2009/10 programme. Approximately 22,850 hectares were let in tender round one, as follows.

Project	Strata	Area (ha)	Contractor
Martinborough	HR 1	2,874	Professional Guiding Services
Moonshine	HR 2	2,031	BioWorks
Ponatahi Longbush	MR 1	6,029	Professional Guiding Services
Ponatahi Longbush	MR 2	4,756	Professional Guiding Services
Taueru Maungaraki	HR 1	4,308	BioWorks
Taueru Maungaraki	HR 2	2,857	BioWorks

Some contractors will have year two contracts to complete which were let during 2008/09, as follows.

- BioWorks - 26,007 ha of possum control.
- BioWorks - 26,164 ha of surveys.
- Professional Guiding Services - 34,533 ha of possum control.
- Professional Guiding Services - 14,132 ha of surveys.
- T Oakly - 208,167 ha of pig surveys.

4. Monitoring and Investigations (Sara Moylan)

This month a wax-tag possum monitor in the Western Hills of Lower Hutt commenced. The operation covers the suburbs of Harbour View, Korokoro, Belmont, Maungaraki and Normandale. The two suburbs that have been completed to date show very low possum numbers in these peri-urban areas. These areas receive ongoing possum and rodent control.

Two RTC (Residual Trap Catch) possum monitors were completed for GW Parks Department at Cannons Creek and Speedy's Reserve. Both show low possum numbers with no possums trapped in Cannon's Creek and an RTC of 2.3 recorded at Speedy's.

A scheduled rodent monitor was due this month but the run of bad weather made it difficult to complete the fieldwork. There is still one site to be monitored next week. This will be the last rodent monitor for this financial year and once the results have been tabulated, the annual report will be written.

Flood Protection (Graeme Campbell)

1. Manager's comments

Work is progressing well within all of Flood Protection's key activity areas. Of most significance for the Committee are:

- Boulcott/Hutt Stopbank - preparations of the application for statutory approvals are continuing with lodging of the documents expected by the end of July 2009. Staff are currently considering how best to include the implications of the requirement at Mills Street into the current planning process.
- The timing of planning for further development by both HCC and NZTA is requiring staff to put more effort into the planning of the City Centre reach design than would have otherwise been anticipated. Staff believe it is important to meet the timing requirements of these organisations to ensure opportunities for future projects to be integrated are optimised.
- The review of the Waikanae floodplain management plan is continuing and while it is showing that good progress has been made, issues with managing the effects of climate change and future development will be complex to deal with.
- The demands on Flood Protection to further reduce the impacts of river works on the environment are continuing. Staff are working with Fish and Game NZ to make sure we minimise the amount of in-channel works we undertake. Staff can decrease the regular in channel work, over time, by implementing works of a more permanent nature. There are, however, capital cost implications of this which will need to be considered. Staff have also agreed with Iwi to a trial of returning native fish to waterways after machine cleaning. The first trial will be in Otaki in November 2009.

2. Western Floodplain Management Plans [Daya Atapattu]

2.1 Ava to Ewen project

The Strand Park stopbank reconstruction contract is on track for substantial completion by the end of May 2009. The contractor is currently working on completing access over Market Grove and Whites Line West, foot paths, installing penstocks, reinstating berm areas and grassing.

2.2 Boulcott/Hutt stopbank project

Topographical surveys and planned geotechnical investigations are now complete. Additional investigations will be carried out in May/June 2009 to determine the extent of concrete debris buried in the western berm of the river. Preparation of the designation/consent applications are taking more time than originally planned because of work required to resolve some of the issues raised by the affected residents and golf clubs. We now expect to lodge the applications by the end of July 2009.

2.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank

The resource consents required for the removal of two trees to complete the stopbank was granted on 4 May 2009. Staff are currently preparing a landscape plan for UHCC approval before removing the two trees. Staff expect to complete the earthworks during September to November 2009.

2.4 Maoribank investigations

A works programme to reduce the erosion risk from Hutt River bed lowering at the Maoribank is now approved by Council. Urgent works will be completed in 2009/10.

2.5 Kapiti floodplain management

2.5.1 Waikanae Floodplain Management Plan (WFMP)

The 10 year review of the WFMP is progressing with Stage 1 (Review and evaluate the existing FMP) nearing completion. A series of workshops have been held by the project team with other members of Flood Protection to seek feedback. Following the completion of Stage 1 we will move on to Stage 2 which will involve a detailed analysis of the outcomes of Stage 1, consideration of changes to the plan and consultation with interested and affected parties. A separate report will be provided to update the Committee on progress.

2.5.2 Friends of the Waikanae River (FWR)

FWR have started preparing for the Honda Treefund planting on 28 June 2009. FWR have received \$40,000 of funding for the Oxbow restoration in the Waikanae River, from DoC's Community Conservation Fund. They are providing the plants from their own nursery for this project.

2.5.3 Friends of the Otaki River (FOR)

FOR are hosting the first Honda Treefund and public planting day on 16 May in Otaki. The group hope to plant 1000 plants in the area by Chrystalls Bend.

In conjunction with GW staff, a maintenance plan and planting plan are being developed to guide FOR's restoration work for the next 3 years (on the Otaki River corridor) and provide a work programme for the part time position, funded by Ministry of the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund (SMF).

3. Western Operations – Jeff Evans

3.1 Hutt River

A new rock groyne has been installed at Maoribank and maintenance work has started on the Hutt River flood gate structures. Hand rails have been fitted to the Black Creek flood gates to improve safety and help with access when cleaning. Staff have also

been busy updating the Asset Register in preparation for the introduction of the SAP plant maintenance software.

3.2 Hutt River ranging services

Maintenance continues on cutting back overgrowth and spraying vegetation on the river trail. Mulching has been undertaken on native plant plots with the help of Randwick School and Rotary.

The two user counters which were installed along side the walking track are recording large numbers of visitors to the river. After 12 days we had 2,768 users at County lane and 3,876 users at Block Road.

3.3 Otaki River

The rock groyne at Mangahene has been topped up after settling in a recent fresh. A new block and rock groyne has been installed opposite Stresscrete and the up stream rock line has had a snub groyne put on the end. Staff have dug in excess of 1,000 holes in preparation for the Honda tree fund / Otaki Friends group planting day on 16 May. Pampas is being mechanically removed from the Otaki Lagoon in preparation for the re-vegetation planting.

3.4 Waikanae River

A low level access track has been built at Edgewater Park for operational access to the right bank. The Kebbles corner walk track has been rebuilt after flood damage and fallen trees have been cleared up behind Dricon in preparation for friends planting. A new culvert and rock head wall has been put in at Otaihanga to get water flowing through the Oxbo.

3.5 Western watercourses

Clearing runs have been completed in the Kenepuru Stream, Pinehaven Stream, Te Mome Stream, Korokoro Stream and work is now underway in the Waiwhetu Stream. Drain clearing runs have been completed on the Otaki drains and river mouth cuts have been carried out on the Mangaone and the Waimeha streams.

4. Wairarapa Operations [Mike Longworth]

4.1 Wairarapa river schemes

General

The work programmes in the Wairarapa rivers for 2008/09 are now substantially complete.

The 10 river schemes advisory committees held their annual meetings over the period 7 April to 12 May. The meetings went well with a number of committees complimenting staff on the way the rivers were being managed. The difficulties over the amount of in-water work the engineers wished to do and concern raised by Fish and Game NZ staff regarding this type of work were explained to the various scheme

committees. A number of the committees recommended that Fish and Game NZ staff be invited to the meetings in future to enhance the mutual understanding of each party's objectives.

The following table contains the recommendations from the meetings which have been fed into the budgets. In general, the work programmes have been increased by 5 – 10%. The effect of this on the overall river rate has, however, been minimised by reducing the money put into reserves as some of the schemes now have adequate reserve levels.

River Scheme	Work Programme	River Rate
Mt Bruce	\$104,980 (6% increase)	Nil increase
Te Ore Ore	\$128,050 (6% increase)	5% increase
Gladstone	\$131,000 (10% increase)	Nil increase
Kopuaranga	\$26,300 (4% increase)	4% increase
Waipoua	\$89,900 (8.6% increase)	8.6 % increase
Waingawa	\$141,900 (nil increase)	Nil increase
Whangaehu	\$5,322 (nil increase)	Nil increase
Taueru	\$4,500 (133% increase)	10% increase
Waiohine	\$305,700 (nil increase)	Nil increase
LWVDS	\$805,800 (nil increase)	Nil increase
LWVDS Development	\$772,975	Loan

Gravel

The gravel returns for the third quarter were 128,666cum compared to the same quarter last year of 200,576cum or 36% less. Last year's full year extraction was 287,665cum. On the basis of the trend to date, gravel extraction and income from gravel royalties for the year is likely to be in the order of 30 to 40% down from last year.

4.2 Investigations and technical advice

Waingawa River Scheme Review

The next step in the review required the completion of the hydraulic modelling work to finalise the analysis of gravel transport and flood extent under various flooding scenarios. This work is largely complete and will be presented to the Waingawa scheme committee in June.

Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan

Work has progressed on the Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) for the Waiohine River. The hydraulic modelling is currently underway with flood hazard maps expected to be developed in mid-June. These flood hazard maps will allow the remaining items in phase one of the FMP process to be completed. The old Waiohine River Scheme and floodplain committees met on 1 May. Both committees were dissolved and members of the new Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan Advisory Committee appointed. The committee will meet and elect a chair at an inaugural meeting programmed for late June 2009.

4.3 Drainage schemes

The wet 2008 winter caused higher than normal power usage and a series of unplanned electrical and mechanical maintenance problems at three of the pump stations have meant that the over all budgets for the drainage schemes are over expended. Rate increases will be necessary for those schemes that are over expended and that do not have adequate reserves. Meetings to propose rate increases on the five pumped schemes will be held over the next month. The drainage schemes are entirely self funded. A consultant has been engaged to make an assessment of the future maintenance requirements of the schemes to enable staff to better determine the annual rate requirements.

5. Investigations and Assets [John Eyles]

5.1 Waiwhetu cleanup project

After seeking professional advice, Council re-tendered the works contract as the initial bids exceeded the project budget. The re-tender closed on 22 April.

The evaluation of the re-tender has been completed and a preferred tenderer, Brian Perry Civil Limited (BPC) identified. Negotiations are continuing with BPC with a view to signing contract documents satisfactory to all parties shortly. There is still some work to do but staff are confident of a satisfactory outcome.

The re-tender process will delay the start of construction, but any delay will primarily affect the flood works part of the project and not the clean up (and consequent funding from the Ministry for the Environment). All going well, construction should start in June.

A new date for the opening ceremony will be set once the contract details are finalised. The next scheduled Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Subcommittee meeting is on 9 July.

5.2 Pinehaven flood hazard assessment

A joint project with Upper Hutt City Council is underway to complete the first stage of a flood hazard assessment for the Pinehaven stream.

The field work component of the topographical survey has been completed and consultants are currently processing the data. The LIDAR survey has not yet been flown due to bad weather conditions. This may cause a delay in the programme.

The main outputs from the study will be a set of flood hazard maps which will identify those areas at risk of flooding. The next stage of developing options for managing any identified flood hazard will be undertaken in 2010/11.

5.3 Asset management

Asset inspections and a peer review of assets for Horizons Regional Council is being programmed for completion by the end of the financial year.

Staff are also continuing their involvement in the implementation of SAP asset management software. Flood Protection have been identified as the first department to go "live" with the new system. Data migration issues are being worked through, and a go live date for the system is programmed for mid-August 2009.

6. Strategy and Technical Support [Sharyn Westlake]

The following table summarises the number of formal, written requests for advice responded to over the period from 10 April – 19 May 2009. These include information requests from the public, local authorities and also Flood Protection comment on resource consent applications to GWRC. There appears to have been a marked decrease in the number of requests for advice and information over this reporting period.

	10 April – 19 May 2009	YTD
Requests brought forward	0	2
Additional requests received	21	274
Responses provided	21	276
Outstanding requests	0	0

After a busy time preceding the last report, no submissions have been made over this period.

Land Management (Dave Cameron)

1. Manager's comments

1.1 Afforestation Grant Scheme

The Afforestation Grant Scheme Regional Council pool has recently completed its second application round for 2009/10. The National Allocation Panel met in May and the following expenditure has been approved:

	Regional Council Pool Allocation	Grant Allocated	Grant to be allocated	Number of projects	Area Planted
2008/09	\$1.2M	\$1,206,240	\$0	9	502.6 ha
GW totals 2008/09		\$322,800 (27%)		4	134.5 ha
2009/10	\$3.5M	\$3,393,740	\$106,260	49	1,423.1 ha
GW totals 2009/10		\$654,760 (19%)		9	273.4 ha
2010/11	\$3.5M	\$978,440	\$2,521,560	8	389.6 ha
National Totals		\$5,578,420		66	2,315.3 ha

A further round of applications is being sought by 31 October 2009 to allocate the remaining 2010/11 grant money. Outcomes will be known by the end of November. At this stage Greater Wellington has a further 8 projects in this round. However, this is likely to be increased as the deadline approaches.

1.2 Homebush lease discussions

Further discussions have been held with senior staff at Masterton District Council (MDC) regarding the availability of suitable land at Homebush to expand the present nursery operations. MDC are shortly to call for expressions of interest in the use of land and treated waste water on the balance of land at Homebush not presently required for their own waste water discharge.

Our present interest is on securing a minimum of 8 hectares of suitable land. Desktop calculations would suggest that a fully operative nursery would require in excess of 70m litres of waste water for a 30 week growing season. Subject to the final outcome of Stage II Akura expansion in the 2009-19 LTCCP, consultation will take place with MDC regarding future options.

1.3 Akura Conservation Centre

Akura Conservation Centre has opened a week earlier than normal ready for Queen's Birthday weekend. While trading has been slow there have been good levels of enquiries. The new Nursery catalogue is almost completed with higher levels of detail and a much improved profiling of eco sourcing and lists of native species available. Added are more sundry items such as soil mix and compost. The poplar and willow clones are now listed with full clonal descriptions.

Soil moisture conditions in both nurseries have improved with the arrival of colder and heavier May rainfall. Unfortunately both poplars and willows have now shut down for the winter. Land preparation for new cuttings has been completed at Mangapakeha and will lay fallow until the cutting planting in early spring.

Pole harvesting has started this week at Mangapakeha Nursery and an inspection of Aokautere has sorted the necessary supply arrangements. Poles from Aokautere will begin arriving on a weekly basis at the end of the first week in June. The current order is for 4,500 poles.

Flood Protection have been given a schedule of pole and stake material available for 2009, and this has resulted in healthy orders being placed for this material.

1.4 Streams Alive

Preparation is almost complete for all the new planting sites for this winter, and planting will begin in June.

There has been a good response from Streams Alive participants to the GrowSafe and Approved Handlers training. Both the Otaki and Upper Hutt days are full and a third is being planned for Upper Hutt. A follow up session will be held, in conjunction with Darryl Kee of Biosecurity, teaching practical weed control a fortnight after their GrowSafe course. This will give landowners direct experience controlling environmental weeds with the aim that they will undertake weed control on their stream banks and on their properties in general.

Weed control has been identified as a key part of the planting maintenance programme. While the Streams Alive programme takes care of the spraying for the first two years after planting, control is required on a regular basis after this to ensure emerging seedlings are not suppressed by excessive weed growth.

1.5 Enaki Stream walk

The Care Group, assisted by Don Bell (Land Management Officer) organised a stream walk and forum in late April to see and hear first hand the results to date of the restoration project. Eight group members attended, along with representatives from Fonterra, DairyNZ (Dairy Action Team), as well as Greater Wellington staff members Alton Perrie (Freshwater Scientist) and Steve Orr (Compliance Officer).

In brief, there are positive improvements in water and habitat quality as reflected by the changes in the aquatic invertebrate community. However, the overall health of the stream remains poor due to high levels of nutrients.

The group expressed concerns that their good work was being undone by a few continued bad practices, particularly stock crossings, but also probably associated with effluent disposal to land (wet paddocks or too close to streams) and rare instances of dairy shed malfunctions.

The consensus from the forum was that regulations needed to be tightened, either through more stringent requirements in the Clean Streams Accord or Regional Plans (reflecting the view that other agricultural industries should also be included).

1.6 Issues for the next period

- Preparation of Safe Operating Procedures for quads
- Opening of Akura Conservation Centre in late May
- Winter planting programme starts in early June
- Completion of Annual programme for Farm Plan clients
- Adoption of a new rating classification for the Maungaraki Catchment Scheme

2. Farm Plans (Don Bell)

2.1 Delegated approvals - New Plans, Reviews and Annual programmes

Approvals to-date	New 10-year Plans, Reviews	Annual Plan Targets	Total Programme Estimates	
New Sustainability Plans	1	3	\$61,690	
New Conservation Plans	2	2	\$41,498	
Ten Year Reviews	19	20	\$783,082	
Annual Programmes	133	130	\$738,149	
Programme delivery	Annual Programmes Undertaken	Annual Plan Target	Expenditure to date	Annual Plan Budget
Annual Programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability plans • Conservation plans • Shelter plans 	138	130	\$383,000	\$550,000
Isolated works	2		\$6,518	\$10,000

2.2 Highlights

Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre (TATC) meeting

Discussions have been held with TATC senior managers on how Greater Wellington could assist with developing and contributing to a Sustainable Land Management course for Agriculture students.

The basic concept is built around preparing a farm plan to address environmental and animal welfare issues. GW staff could expect to assist in developing specific modules, as well as supervising students in the field through training opportunities associated with the Mangarata erosion control programme and Taratahi shelter plan.

Silviculture protocols

Land Management staff have prepared a draft protocol which provides guidelines when recommending afforestation as a land-use change to private landowners.

The need arises from increasing demands on staff resources and time as the recent Regional and Government initiatives (AGS, ETS, WRECI) become bedded in.

The protocol reflects a cost-effective approach to afforestation on erosion-prone landforms, supported by strong project management services. At the same time our services relating to afforestation of non-erodible landforms will be minimised.

Conservation Week

Land Management staff are assisting with the organisation of activities associated with Conservation Week in September this year. These are proposed to involve the Restoration Groups associated with the Makoura, Enaki and Papawai Streams and reflect a theme of “encouraging community participation”.

Promotion

St Catherines and St Patrick College pupils from Wellington were given a presentation on the recent changes to farming practices and water-use in Wairarapa.

A brief presentation was made to the Pork Industry Board and members on the association with Bryan Tucker and his farm environment programme.

Land-use Capability Mapping

Consultants have completed this year’s mapping programme. Dr Doug Hicks has indicated he will confine his services to training in future, creating an opportunity to engage Roger Wood (former GW Land Management Officer) to support Terry Crippen in preparing our landform maps.

3. Akura Conservation Centre (Stan Braaksma)

3.1 Nursery Operations

Drilling of the new central 250mm irrigation bore at Akura has been completed by Wairarapa Drilling 2006 Ltd. A consultant is currently completing a sustained pump test and will address the impacts to neighbouring bores, bore water quality and this will culminate in an Assessment of Effects Report necessary for the Water Permit application.

Nursery staff attended the Nursery Managers workshop in Hawkes Bay/Poverty Bay in April. A major issue has been the very active poplar and willow rust affecting growth this season. The poplar rusts were all analysed as *Melampsora larici-populina*, the European poplar rust. The lifecycle is unknown at this stage but it is evident that our spray programme may need to start much earlier. Hawkes Bay Nursery, with adequate irrigation has all its production on a two year cycle. The local droughts have meant that Akura and Mangapakeha have been returning 3 and 4 year rotations on most of the main production blocks.

3.2 Trading

Cartons for transporting the first shipment of *P.radiata* have been delivered to Cambridge Nursery. The first batch of 20,000 is arriving this week. *Radiata* seedlings at Cambridge are conditioned and hardened off to our specification levels. Seedlings at Arborgen Tokoroa will need further growth to achieve our specification levels. Our visit revealed huge surpluses of seedlings available from cancelled carbon sequestration projects.

The Eco sourcing of native seed is almost complete with seed from 37 species collected to date. Late seed ripening and difficulties in sourcing enough seed from some species will account for a further 12 species. The seed is sent in an uncleaned state directly to Morgans Road Nursery (Blenheim) giving immediate feedback on ripeness and ability to germinate.

The AGS projects approved are proving both an opportunity for Akura to supply tree seedlings and a liability in terms of projects not being ready for 2009 planting. The Nursery industry is requesting deposits with orders, to cover their liability for cancellations. Growing trees on spec has been very risky this year.

Akura welcomes Raewyn Hullena back for her 18th season as a Sales Assistant at Akura.

3.3 Budget

The Akura Business Unit operating surplus at the end of April is \$7,600.

The Nursery unit is exhibiting a significant loss relative to the overall budget. Sales are expected to pick up in late May with the start of the planting season and the opening of the nursery to public sales. The expenditure line to the end of the year will be offset by the sale of 4,000 poles to Land Management.

The Trading situation reflects a strong position for this time of the year.

Activity	Budget 2008/09 – Operating Surplus	Operating Surplus to April 2009
Nurseries	(9,000)	(30,100)
Trading	44,000	37,700
Total	35,000	7,600

4. Biodiversity (Jacki Byrd)

4.1 Ohariu Voluntary Social Change Project

Two meetings are being planned for the Ohariu Voluntary Social Change Project, one to be held in Manawahe, Bay of Plenty, and one in Wellington.

The monthly newsletter NatureRulz will continue till the end of June, and it is hoped this will be taken over by the community. The project will have a presence at the community run fair to be held in October. A demonstration planting site with signage is being planned.

An event with the Makara School is planned during Conservation Week in August in conjunction with Take Action or EnviroSchools. A second bird count will be conducted, with results to be published in the newsletter.

5. Operations (Kevin Burdan)

5.1 OSH

An investigation has been carried out on an incident at Riversdale beach involving a staff member and a member of the public.

Audits have been completed on two silviculture crews. These crews have been compliant with their Health and Safety Plans. Audits have also been carried out on all Land Management vehicles.

The department representative has been compiling the evidence for the forthcoming ACC audit.

5.2 Pole audit

Pole audits on last years have been carried out on 22 properties with varying results. The best had a survival rate of 99.7% over 300 poles and the worst survival rate surveyed was 62% over 100 poles.

The average survival rate over the total poles surveyed was 91.6%. This is a very good rate and is above the average rate for the last five years. The main casualty was Veronese, which is normally planted in the drier, windy sites.

5.3 Silviculture

Silviculture work has been limited in the last few weeks with poor weather being a major factor.

Additional to the Farm Plan silviculture, 15.5ha of silviculture has been completed in the Metro forests, and 16.6ha of thinning and 2.6ha of pruning in the Wairarapa Reserve forests.

Farm Plan Silviculture

Activity	Completed	\$	Annual Plan Target (hectares)	Year to date	\$
Thinning	1.1ha	688	100	64.0ha	24,660
Pruning	16.9ha	12,135	100	67.8ha	54,241
Total	18.0ha	12,823	200	131.8ha	78,901

Total Catchment Management (Ian Gunn)

TCM

The draft Eastern Wairarapa supercatchment has been circulated to the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee and local iwi prior to having some discussion with these groups about the analysis of the issues and selecting some priorities.

Draft analysis of other supercatchments continues with the Porirua Harbour supercatchment being given priority given the programme of work currently being lead by Porirua City Council.

Tawaha Research

Significant time has been spent researching the history of the construction of the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme network of stopbanks in the Tawaha area.

Forestry (Barry Leonard)

1. Plantation forests (Wellington)

1.1 Log harvest contract

The result for April was less than March at \$120,194 but the average return was better at \$16.10, an increase of \$1.24 per tonne. The fall can be attributed to a reduction in tonnage from 9,361 in March to 7,438 in April. March was an exceptional figure and April had three public holidays and two crew moves.

This month was marked by generally good weather and minor price increases on export volumes. These increases in some grades were exceeded by the effect of the strengthening dollar with March based on an exchange rate of 0.50 and April on 0.57.

Domestic volumes were subdued, with no sales to Eurocell and only about three to four loads per week to Davis. What has been noticeable has been a move by the local mills to tighten up their log specifications and their policing of them. Davis has begun rejecting marginal logs that have been acceptable for the past five years and Kiwi from Masterton reduced their allowance for sweep to a half the previous allowance and at the same time reduced the proportion of short log it would accept (4.9 m). Towards the end of the month Kiwi came back seeking additional volumes and suggesting that we were favouring export over domestic sales. They were reminded that much of the reduction was because of their more stringent requirements. At this time we were selling them about seven to eight loads per week out of Metro forests and up to five per week out of Tauanui. Kiwi representatives visited the skids in Upper Hutt claiming that the reduction in logs from all sources had led to the mill working short weeks. While they were here, they relaxed the specifications and a new grade was added. This will give them access to a greater volume out of Metro forests but there may be some delay before this takes effect, as Log 5 and Log 6 are presently in unsuitable settings.

Log 5, the ground based crew, which was in Mangaroa, has now moved to Centre South in Puketiro where they are logging adjacent to the main road. They will set up a number of skids and tracks in readiness for the hauler to set up in late spring. Log 6, the other ground based crew, is still at Glider Club in Pakuratahi West and has just moved to the last setting in the block. This is fortunate, as the ground has begun to cut up with the recent rain. From here Log 6 will convert to a hauler operation and set up in the southern side of Boiler Gully. Log 36 is just completing the combined Maori Redoubt/Kilometre Block and, when finished, will pass their hauler (TMY 45) to Log 6 and convert to the larger (TMY 70) hauler. This will set up on the northern side of Boiler Gully.

Demand from China remains strong and prices have increased a further US\$3 to US\$10 per JAS this month. We have been warned that price and volumes are very elastic, and that sellers (Rayonier New Zealand, etc.) should be cautious when pushing for price increases.

There have minor shortages of transport, mainly associated with congestion at the port and, of recent days, a scrap ship that took up the log berth for five days while a log ship sat in the stream.

As each load arrives at the port, the load is scaled to convert the load to JAS. This function is carried out by a company called C3. Up until recently they would cease work at 3.30 pm each day. After submissions by carriers and the exporting companies C3 has agreed to staff the port until 1700. This will enable much more efficient use of the trucking fleet.

For April Log 5 harvested 1,803 tonnes for \$27,140 at an average of \$15.05, Log 6 3,063 tonnes for \$43,305 at an average of \$14.13 and Log 36 2,571 tonnes for \$49,749 at an average of \$19.17. In total the month's returns were 7,439 tonnes for \$120,194 at an average of \$16.10.

1.2 Silviculture contract

In April 14.54 ha of silviculture was completed.

1.3 Plantation Forestry operations

With the onset of winter vandalism in the forest seems to have reduced.

- Apart from some pothole maintenance no significant road activity has been required. We will have to spread fines over the main route before deepest winter but will leave it to as late as possible.
- An outcome of the engineering inspections of the forestry bridges was a requirement to remove a beach under the Wainui Stream bridge and clear the willows that were obstructing the flow under Cook's Bridge. Both these tasks have been completed. A further requirement was to paint those areas of the Bailey bridges showing signs of corrosion. This will have to be a summer job. Meantime we are seeking advice as to specifications and a list of those capable of carrying out the task.

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

1.4 Forest access

The lack of access into Maungakotukutuku remains.

All main roads are in good order.

The alignment for the upgrade to Raupo Swamp Road has been settled but only minor earthworks were possible before the weather required work to cease.

1.5 Market trends

Domestic demand remains steady, except in relation to Kiwi in Masterton, which is aggressively seeking additional logs.

The strong demand from China shows little sign of abating and I will be showing a Chinese manufacturer through the forest next week with a view to increasing volumes.

1.6 Bio-energy

In a development with this project, Clean Energy of Taupo recently made a further presentation to Eurocell suggesting a three stage development. This development

would start with sawdust as a fuel at the beginning, move to include bark at the second stage and perhaps incorporating forest residues at the third stage by which time the plant would be supplying all Eurocell's heat for kiln drying and all power, as well as putting power back into the local network. We will watch progress with interest.

2. Reserve forests (Wairarapa)

2.1 Tauanui logging

Steady progress during the month saw a total of 1437 tonnes produced. This was the highest monthly production for the year to date, despite deteriorating weather and ground conditions. In addition, the forwarder has been carrying logs to a landing site that is furthest from the cutting face.

The product mix, which is a combination of the quality of the trees being harvested and market access at the time, has seen a higher percentage of logs going to a local domestic mill, but the majority of logs still going to export. We are limited by quota to the domestic mill.

Therefore, while costs are lower and returns higher, our quota allocation limits the degree to which we can capitalise on this option. The quality of these logs has seen ongoing favourable consideration by the local mill and, as conditions deteriorate through the winter, we may be able to increase our volume as others struggle to meet their quotas.

The cost of delivering the export volume to the wharf has seen the net return fall to \$16.19 per tonne.

Against the current economic background conditions the logging operations are continuing at a surprisingly positive level.

2.2 Silviculture

One crew has continued with thinning operations in high stocked second rotation stands in Hiwinui that have been pruned.

A total of 9.8 ha of thinning have been completed for April.

While costs can be saved by not pruning, stands require thinning to produce crop trees that will produce marketable logs at maturity and reduce the risk of wind-throw, fire and disease.

2.3 Lincoln University

As in previous years, a day was spent with second year Agricultural Science and Agricultural Commerce students on their annual East Coast Hill Country Farming Tour.

The Stoney Creek video was used to introduce the 65 students to the concept of using forest species to reduce the on and off-site impacts of large-scale erosion.

Students then visited a number of forest investment projects where forest management concepts were introduced and discussed.

At the Pottinger property (Annerley, Tinui), forestry as on farm diversification and erosion control was observed and discussed in the context of an operational hill country farm. Farm management was described, demonstrated, discussed and debated against the current economic background.

2.4 Stoney Creek anemometer

Meridian Energy has erected the 30 m anemometer tower on Stoney Creek to collect wind data and assess potential for a wind farm site.

Poor cellphone reception from the area created some data download problems. Some windswept trees have been felled to improve reception but there has been no further feedback from Meridian since this work has been completed.