

Resource Investigations Department Report

John Sherriff, Manager

April 2000

1. Resource Information

1.1 Floodwarning

Since the last meeting the following severe weather bulletins were received:

14 March Heavy Rainfall Wellington, Wairarapa

The following rainfall and river alarms were also received and responded to:

14 March Phillips Rainfall Alarm

21 March Warwicks, Kapakapanui Rainfall Alarms

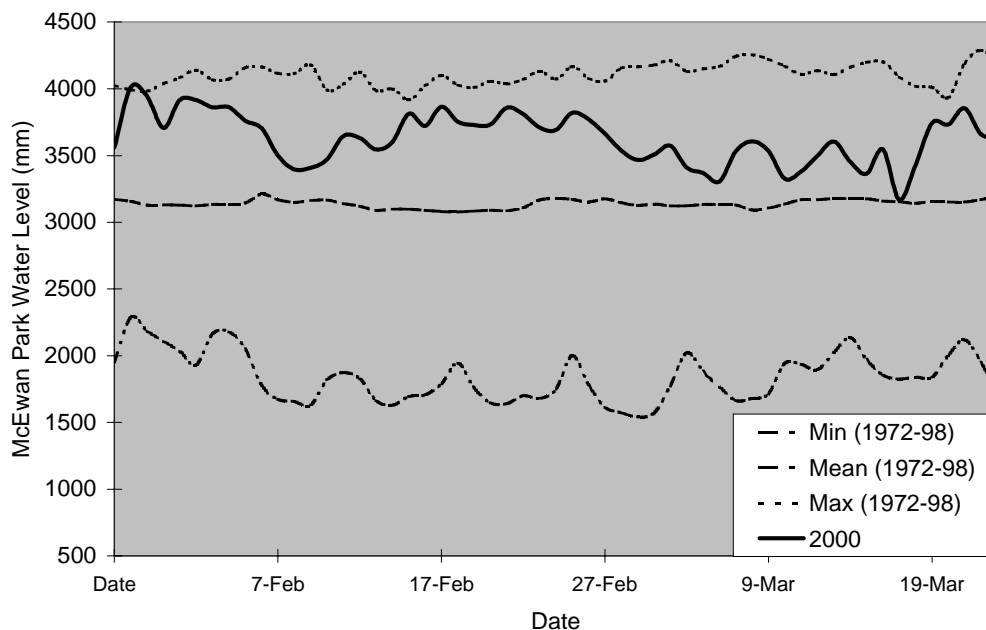
1.2 Quality Assurance System

The review of our Quality Assurance System scheduled for 6 March 2000 was postponed by TELARC. This review was to include the extension of our quality system to cover consent management and pollution response. No alternative date has been set for this review to take place.

2. Resource Analysis

2.1 Groundwater Levels

Artesian pressure measured at McEwan Park since January has remained above average. These consistently high levels can be attributed to relatively low public demand and relatively high river levels over this period.



Over the previous three months groundwater levels on the Kapiti Coast have again been generally higher than for the same period in previous years. These high levels can be attributed to relatively high rates of summer recharge compared with previous years.

2.2 Moera Gravel Aquifer Bore

The Moera Gravel Aquifer bore reached its target depth of 150 m in early March. At this stage the Council's work programme was temporarily suspended while we allowed the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Science to conduct geophysical work that will contribute to the understanding of earthquakes in this area. This work will also contribute to our understanding of groundwater in the Hutt Valley. The bore is currently being made ready to conduct a pump test which will determine how much water is available from the Waiwhetu Gravel Aquifer. This pump test will run for about seven days and should be completed by the end of April.

2.3 Rainfall and River Flows

Rainfall across the western Wellington Region was largely below average during February. The only monitored area to receive its average rainfall during February was the Orongorongo Ranges.

Rainfall totals were as low as 35% of average in the southern Tararuas, Wellington and Petone. The northern Tararuas (feeding the Waitohu Stream and Otaki and Waikanae Rivers) received only 50% of normal rainfall while on the Kapiti Coast between 30% and 50% of average rainfall was recorded.

All monitored rivers experienced below average flows except for the Orongorongo and Wainuiomata Rivers which received rainfall from several southerly rainfall events (refer to the attached Figure). On the Kapiti Coast, river flows were as low as 40% of the February average in the Otaki River and Waitohu Stream, and 60% in the Waikanae River. The Hutt River had 85% of normal flow, while the Porirua Stream and Pauatahanui River were 75% and 60% of average respectively.

The attached hydrographs show that on several occasions flow in the Waitohu Stream dropped below the first and second stepdown levels set in the Regional Freshwater Plan (to a minimum of 145 litres per second on 18 March) and came close to the set minimum flow of 140 l/s. They also show that the Waikanae River reached a low of 780 l/s litres per second on 18 March, only 30 litres per second above its set minimum flow.

Flow in the Wainuiomata River fell below the first and second stepdown levels at Leonard Wood Park during February despite the flow being above average for the month

3. Resource Quality

3.1 Pollution and Non-compliance Complaints

A summary of pollution complaints and our performance in responding to them will be reported to the Committee at the meeting.

3.2 Enforcement Action

Two abatement notices have been served since the last meeting.

1. On 15 February 2000 an abatement notice was issued to Clive Taylor Ltd, Paraparaumu requiring them to undertake works to prevent discharges into a waterway.
2. On 14 March 2000 an abatement notice was issued to Daryl Soderberg and Martin Owens of Wainuiomata requiring them to undertake remedial works in Catchpool Stream.

On 15 March 2000 we commenced Court proceedings against New Zealand Oil Services Limited for an unauthorised oil discharge which occurred at Seaview in October last year.

3.3 Munitions Site Investigation

A draft report on the Munitions Site Investigations has been received and is currently being reviewed by staff. The findings of this report will be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

4. Staffing

Jason Wills, Lyndell McGregor and Mike Ede have all resigned and will be leaving the Council in the coming month. Jason is pursuing interests in the private sector and Lyndell will be working for Environment Waikato out of their Taupo office.

After 12 years service with the Wellington Regional Council, Mike is going home to Blenheim to take up the position of Hydrologist with Marlborough District Council.

I wish them all well in the future.