



Report 03.541
Date 15 September 2003
File Y/21/1

Committee Rural Services and Wairarapa
Author Colin Wright, Divisional Manager, Wairarapa

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of current activities and provide information of interest since the previous meeting held on 19 August 2003.

2. Divisional Matters

2.1 Wairarapa Irrigation Study

The Consultant's report on Stage 2 has recently been received and was discussed by the steering committee on 9 September. The material from this study is currently being reported back to local committees in each of the possible scheme areas. It is also intended to shortly hold public meetings in the same areas to explain the findings to date and the Stage 3 proposals.

The Regional Council is working closely with Go Wairarapa on this project.

I will give a short presentation to the Committee on the current status of the study.

2.2 Staffing

- Kevin Worsley, Senior Biosecurity Officer (Plants), retires on 26 September after nearly 34 years of involvement with pest plants in the region. Kevin has been invited to have morning tea with the Committee at its 30 September meeting so that his long service can be officially recognised.
- Harvey Collerton has been appointed as Resource Advisor filling Laura Watt's vacancy. Laura has moved to the Wellington office.
- Tim Baker has been appointed to the position of Environmental Monitoring Officer – Groundwater. This is a new position budgeted for in the LTCCP to provide for a greater emphasis on groundwater resources.

- Brett Cockeram has been appointed as Technical Assistant in the Land & River Operations Department. He is replacing Graham Reidy who has moved to the River Management Section.

3. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

3.1 Environmental Incidents:

Date	Incident	Outcome
12 August	Dairy effluent polluting stream, South Wairarapa	Changes required to management of effluent system and feedpad. New consent required for the farm.
19 August	Silt in river, Carterton	Unable to trace source, but suspected cause was logging of pine trees. No further action taken.
21 August	Stream works in urban Masterton causing concern	Found to be simple modification of already completed works. No further action required.
27 August	Dirty water in stream, rural Carterton	Unable to trace source. Suspected to have been dairy cow access to stream on previous day.
1 September	Odour from industrial site, Masterton	Found to be temporary malfunction of pollution control equipment. Company has been written to in relation to the incident.
4 September	Water pollution, Makoura Stream, urban Masterton	Complainant claims to have traced source, but staff are doubtful that this source is causing the degree of pollution alleged. Still being investigated.
8 September	Two large trees washed into Mangatarere Stream, Carterton.	Passed on to Land and River Operations Dept.
15 September	Dairy effluent being sprayed too close to neighbouring property and overflowing into waterway	Under investigation.
15 September	Dead sheep in Waipoua River, Masterton	Removal arranged.

3.2 Enforcement

- The abatement notice issued to the timber treatment plant at Waingawa has been complied with in relation to proper collection and disposal of treatment chemical residue. The timeframe for the requirement to investigate site contamination has been extended by one month.
- With a new irrigation system approaching and the appeal of the abatement notice unlikely to be heard for several months, it has been decided to seek enforcement of the Alexander abatement notice in the Environment Court. No application for a stay was made to this abatement notice, and irrigation continued last year in contravention of the notice.

3.3 Notified Consents

<i>Consent Application</i>	<i>Status</i>
Opaki and Te Ore Ore Water Races – Masterton District	Submissions closed 12/2/03. Consent conditions drafted with approval by all parties likely. On hold at applicants request
Henley Lake Take and Discharge – Masterton District	Submissions closed. Pre hearing meeting held. Draft conditions circulated to all parties.
Sewage Discharge. Application for variation – Carterton District	Submissions closed on 19/12/02. Application on hold at applicants request.
Water Races -Carterton District (2)	Awaiting further information from applicant’s consultant.
Water Races - South Wairarapa District (2)	Submissions closed and pre hearing meeting held. On hold at applicant’s request to allow review of Code of Practice.
Featherston Sewage – Discharge	Revised application and AEE provided.
S Barton – Water take – Lake Wairarapa	Limited notification proceeding.

3.4 Appeals

<i>Appellant</i>	<i>Nature of Appeal</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Current Status</i>
J Barton	Additional charges on withdrawn stopbank access application	Mediation declined by Greater Wellington. Hearing by Commissioner alone declined by Appellant.	Hearing awaited
J Barton	Requirement for “up front” payment of estimated consent processing costs.	Mediation declined by Greater Wellington. Hearing by Commissioner alone declined by Appellant	Hearing awaited
I Alexander	Appeal of abatement notice requiring irrigation to cease	Judicial conference held. Counsel’s memorandum submitted to Court. Mediation declined by Greater Wellington	Hearing awaited. Barrister engaged by appellant. May be joined with hearing of Greater Wellington application for enforcement of the abatement notice.

3.5 Wairarapa Coastal Strategy

With publication of the draft strategy, the project is now in its second public consultation phase until 30 September. Over 150 requests for the draft strategy have been received by way of advertisements and the brochure.

Community consultation days are being held at coastal communities and inland towns, with maps, technical reports and other information available for discussion

with staff and councillors involved with the Coastal Strategy Group. Interest has been strong and expressions of support given to the process.

Where requested, submissions will be heard by the full Coastal Strategy Group. Following analysis and consideration by the Group a final draft will be presented for approval in mid-November.

3.6 Review of Permitted Water Take Rule

A task group has been established to review Rule 7 of the Regional Freshwater Plan relating to permitted water takes (surface and underground water). The group, led by Murray McLea, is to provide an internal discussion paper by 30 November 2003 and make recommendations to the Environment and Rural Services and Wairarapa Committees by 30 April next year. It has the brief to develop principles that should underlie permitted water use, identify preferred options, and recommend an adoption strategy.

3.7 Hydrology

Rainfall

Rainfall figures for August were up from last month in the valley at Tauherenikau and particularly in the eastern hill country at Tanawa Hut where 245mm were recorded – 178% of the long term average. Further heavy rain in early September combined with warm soil temperatures has given a much needed early Spring boost to pasture production.

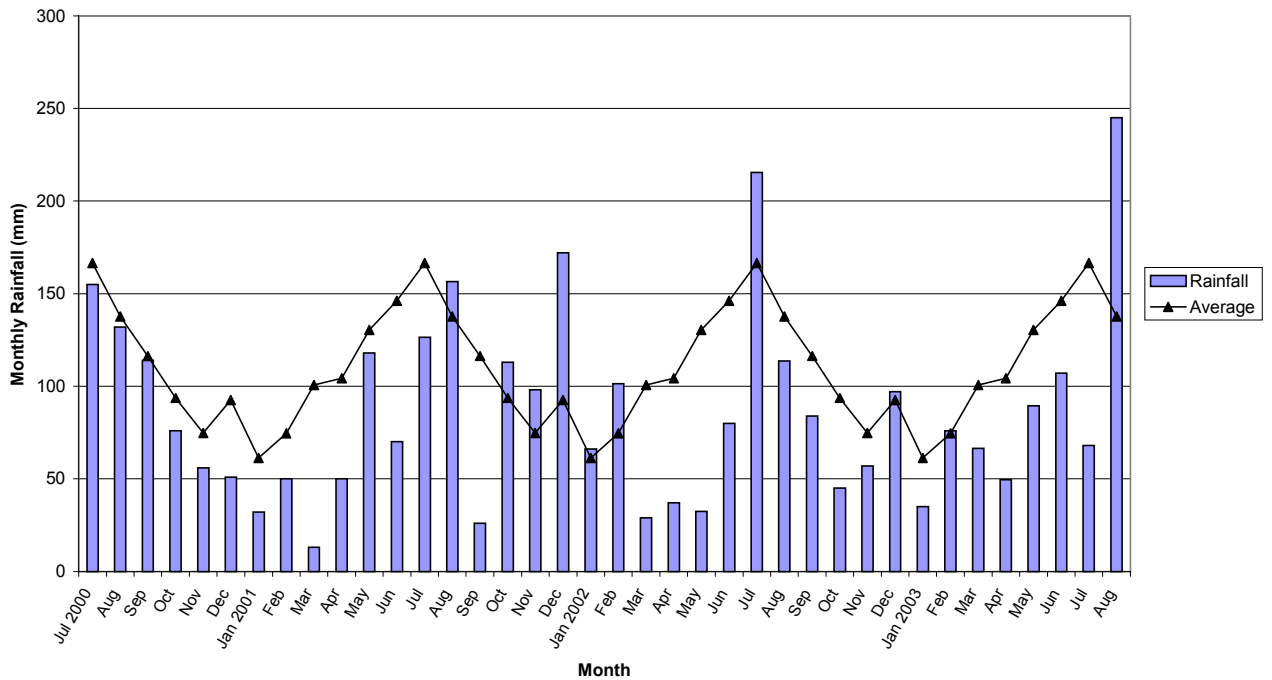
Tararua Ranges rainfall at Angle Knob continued to be low at 60% of average. Consequently river flows continued to be below average in August.

The following table gives rainfall figures for August with July's shown for comparison.

Site	Location	August		July		August	July
		mm	average	mm	average	% of average	
Angle Knob	Tararua Ranges	415	677	393	632	61	62
Alloa	Middle Valley	107	105	79	116	103	68
Tanawa Hut	Eastern Hills	245	138	68	170	178	40

The following graph shows the monthly rainfall for Tanawa Hut since July 2000 against the long-term average for each month.

Tanawa Hut Rainfall



Rivers

Mean river flows for both the Tararuas and Lower Valley (Waiohine at Gorge & Ruamahanga at Waihenga) during August were still below average for this time of year, and similar to last month's flows.

The following table gives August flow statistics for the Waiohine (Gorge) and Waihenga (Ruamahanga - Martinborough Bridge) sites.

Site	August		July		August	July
	m ³ /sec	average	m ³ /sec	average		
Waiohine	19.3	28.5	22.9	29.4	68	78
Waihenga	88.8	127.7	83.5	139.5	70	60

Floodwarning

	August	Financial Year to date	Previous Year to Date
No. of events	2	3	2
No of Lists Issued	3	11	12

A small flood event occurred over a two day period with the low alarms of 3.35 & 3.5 metre on the Ruamahanga River at Waihenga being exceeded. It is not an uncommon occurrence to have only the lower reaches of Ruamahanga River alarms triggered from an easterly rainfall event. Rainfall varied over a 24 hour period between 74mm at Tanawa Hut in the eastern hills to 115mm at Angle Knob in the Tararuas. Lesser amounts were recorded elsewhere.

Groundwater

Groundwater levels at the Baring's site (Parkvale) show that current levels in the Parkvale No.3 aquifer continue to be at the Long Term Minimum. Water levels in August were still 1.0m lower than at the same time last year. Some improvement is anticipated following the significant September rain that has subsequently fallen.

This Parkvale aquifer is under a moratorium for new resource consents and this is currently being reviewed. As part of this review a piezometric survey of all bore water levels has been completed prior to the coming irrigation season. In the Kahutara aquifer, an isotope sampling programme has commenced to determine the age of the water and hence an indication of the source and rate of recharge.

4. Land & River Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)

4.1 Planting Programme Update

Good rainfall in the latter part of August and early September has enabled the planting programme to proceed under very favourable soil moisture levels. The bulk of the hill country programme has been completed. Planting in the shelter and riparian programmes generally gets underway at the beginning of September when the threat of heavy frosts has passed. These programmes are normally completed by the end of September.

4.2 Akura Conservation Centre

The Centre has been trading at very good levels. Virtually all the available pole material has been sold and the numbers of seedlings on order should see last years tallies exceeded.

As soon as soil moisture levels allow, ground will be prepared for the planting of new blocks. The new planting is a combination of the introduction of improved poplar clones and the replacement of some of the original stools planted in 1985/86. The improved poplar clones have been trialled over the last five years.

4.3 NZARM 50th Conference

The New Zealand Association of Resource Management held its 50th Conference in Rotorua in mid-September. The Association, previously known as the Soil Conservators Association, is the professional body that serves land resource practitioners.

Several Land Management staff attended the conference which included sessions looking at current land resource management issues, such as dairy conversions and the East Coast Forestry project, and future challenges. Future challenges identified issues with land use and its effect on water yield and quality (i.e. Integrated

Catchment Management), and the engaging of communities to achieve “action on the ground”.

4.4 Technical Services Activities

Activities completed include -

- Work on AMM geoscan project for the Lower Wairarapa Valley Review
- Mapping work for Police in ‘Operation Reef’
- Collected flood level information around Tawaha floodway
- Scanning of 1947 aerial flood photos
- Attended ESRI GIS conference
- Waingawa River 6 monthly resurvey
- Completion of coastal surveys at Castlepoint & Riversdale
- Computer draughting work on Soil Conservation farm and sustainability plans
- Large number of external customer enquires for maps and information
- Changes to Upper Ruamahanga and Waipoua rating classifications
- Gravel Licence System – processing of gravel returns and new licences.
- GIS and mapping work completed for Pest Animals and Pest Plants, completion of posters for various BVTB operations.

4.5 Tauanui Reserve Logging Access

The access from Whakatomotomo Road to where roadline harvesting is to begin has been completed and is settling with the heavy rain. This is expected with new forestry roads and the main reason that roads are put in well in advance of being used. Water table maintenance and removal of slips has been carried out as required.

A meeting with local residents, South Wairarapa District Council staff and councillors followed by a site inspection has resulted in a plan of immediate works being developed and distributed to local residents. The District Council is due to carry out these works as soon as weather permits.

The logging contractor is waiting for these road works to be completed so that he can commence logging.

4.6 Pole Planting

The pole planting in all schemes is going to schedule.

4.7 Erosion Protection

Protection works have been completed in difficult conditions in the vicinity of the Dakins Road Vineyard area. A number of bores which irrigate the vineyards have been constructed close to the Ruamahanga River. An active and large erosion bite has threatened the bores with at least one ending up in the river channel. Intensive cabling of willows over a 150-200 metre length of river has secured the river bank edge for the time being. The vineyard owners are aware that it would be prudent to invest in some protection works in this area to secure their water supplies long term.

4.8 Makakaweka Stream Investigation

Investigations are underway on the Makakaweka Stream diversion in the Matahiwi area. This is one of the cut-off drains upstream of Masterton which carries flood flows in to the Serpentine Stream and then the Waipoua River. Apparently GWRC owns the land on either bank of the diversion. Initially it is proposed to assist Masterton District Council tidy up this section of diversion. Then we will try and strategically withdraw. The works go back to the 1960's so there is a lot of old files to trawl through to clarify all matters.

4.9 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Review

The Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Review continues. By the meeting date aerial scanning to compile a contour map with half metre contours will hopefully have been flown. Work continues on river management options etc.

4.10 Waiohine River Bridge Upgrade

The Waiohine River road bridge proposals now have the go ahead from Transit. In a letter dated 17 September Transit state *"I am pleased to confirm that Transit New Zealand has brought forward the replacement of the Waiohine River Bridge in its ten year State Highway Plan into the 2004/05 financial year. The replacement bridge proposed is the 95m long structure with 600mm freeboard as favoured by Greater Wellington and the South Wairarapa and Carterton District Councils.*

Now that the project has been brought forward and in order to construct the longer structure, Transit will need to make use of the \$300,000 (excluding GST) offered in Council's letter dated 21st October 2002. I have also included a copy of my letter of 21 June 2002 that outlines the basis on which the \$300,000 sum was arrived at to enable the Councils to reach agreement on their respective cost shares.

As indicated in our letter of 16 December, a formal Heads of Agreement will be prepared for signing by the respective Councils. It is envisaged that at the time of construction Transit will invoice GW the full sum and that GW would recover the cost shares from the two local authorities".

A meeting will be arranged with all the parties shortly to clarify amongst the parties who will pay what etc.

5. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

Pest Plants:

5.1 Boneseed

Surveys and clearance programmes are underway on the containment pest plant Boneseed. Currently this species is flowering and attempts are being made to complete programmed work while plants are more visible and before the seed is set.

A \$2,500 contract to clear Boneseed has been completed at Riversdale Beach. The contract covered the removal of all Boneseed plants from private properties on Blue Pacific Parade and various reserves throughout the settlement. Ninety four occupiers agreed to have their property inspected and cleared of all Boneseed located. Plants were found on seventy percent of the properties inspected. These were removed and stockpiled for chipping. This is the first Boneseed clearance programme at Riversdale. It is intended to undertake a further operation next Spring to complete initial clearance.

A Boneseed clearance contract has also been completed at various coastal settlements in South Wairarapa. A total of 72 active sites were cleared from private properties at Lake Ferry, Whangamoana, Ngawi and Mangatoetoe. The successful tender to clear and stockpile all Boneseed from the participating properties was \$3,920.00. This is the second year of initial Boneseed clearance at these settlements. On some private properties and reserves, infestation is well established and it may take another two years before completion of initial control.

Surveys have been carried out in the Boneseed service delivery areas of Otaki and Waikanae. Some 75 new sites have been located. These generally involve only one or two plants and have been cleared by staff. At Pukerua Bay, further clearance will be carried out along the steep coastal escarpment south of the settlement. This area is part of the Raroa Key Native Ecosystem.

5.2 Madeira Vine

An excavator has been used to remove infestations of the Eradication pest plant Madeira Vine from two sites in the Kapiti District. This difficult to control species produces numerous deep-rooted corms. Excavation and removal is the best control option where infestations are well established. After initial clearance, follow-up herbicide applications over an extended period will be needed to control regrowths.

5.3 Memorandum of Understanding

Meetings have been held with senior officers of four TLA's to ratify individual Memorandums of Understanding supporting biodiversity. The TLA's involved were Upper Hutt City, Wellington City, Lower Hutt City and Kapiti Coast District.

5.4 Communications

- Staff have spoken at or arranged displays at the following venues:

- Farmers Unlimited Conference 2003 at Levin
- Kapiti Horticultural Society flower show
- A static display at the Wellington Zoo
- An exhibit about mustelids in the environment has been in place for several weeks at the Aratoi museum in Masterton.
- All of the pest animal information brochures are being updated to incorporate the latest information and to portray the new corporate image.
- A pest plant and animal display was in place at the annual plant sale day at the Otari/Wilton Bush Reserve on 14 September.
- A comprehensive pest plants and animals display will be in place at the Home & Garden Show to be held in the Westpac Stadium on 26 to 28 September.

Bovine Tb:

5.5 2002/03 Programme

Almost all control work carried over from the 2002/03 year has now been completed.

Only one stratum (2,325 hectares) in the Te Wharau operation is yet to be completed.

Aerial Control

Monitoring has commenced within the large Holdsworth-Woodside Crown operation which was aurally sown in August.

Monitoring is approximately 30% completed and no possums have been caught to date.

5.6 2003/04 Programme

The approved programme for the 2003/04 year includes the following:

	Hectares
Possum control	321,668
Ferret control	31,645
Surveys (ferret, possum)	30,025
Surveys (pig)	<u>10,000</u>
	393,338

The following area has been let for contract to date this year:

	Hectares
Possum control	182,941
Ferret control	28,896
Surveys (ferret, possum)	5,742
Surveys (pig)	<u>10,000</u>
	227,579

- Approximately 95,000 hectares of vector control and surveys will be let in October.
- Any further hectares let will be made after reviewing trend and 2002/03 performance monitors. This includes 70,000 hectares of possum control, ferret control and survey areas.

Current Progress

Currently contractors are working in the following operational areas:

- Homewood-Riversdale
- Stronvar
- Bideford
- Te Wharau
- Kahutara-Pirinoa
- Mt Bruce-Waipoua

Performance

To date only one stratum of the 2003/04 program has received performance monitoring:

Te Wharau	HR 1	RTC	0.7%
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5.7 Animal Health Board Plans

Currently the Vector Management group is preparing three-year plans for the AHB. The plans are part of the new Performance Management Framework that the AHB are implementing for Vector Managers. The process includes the preparation of the following plans:

- **Local Control Programme Plan –**
Details the required vector control and surveys within the region.
- **Capacity Management Plan**
Details the ability of the region to be able to provide contractors to complete the LCPP.
- **Contract Management Plan**
Details the contract selection and management processes to be undertaken by the Vector Managers.
- **Local Environment Management Plan**
Details the communication to be held with the local community and stakeholders of the region.

Drafts of the four plans have been completed and submitted to the AHB. A meeting was recently held with the AHB Regional Co-ordinator to review the drafts. A number of changes will be required to satisfy AHB requirements. All Plans are scheduled to be considered for approval by the Board in early October.

Pest Animals:

5.8 Rooks

The annual rook nest surveys are due to begin once the strong norwesterly winds abate. The rooks have started nesting and it is critical to know what stage breeding is at prior to undertaking the helicopter rook nest-baiting regime. The survey is done from a helicopter allowing the whole region to be inspected within the same day. The data gathered is more robust than from the 'old' method of counting nests from the ground.

A recent newspaper article published in the Kapiti Mail and Wairarapa Midweek has been successful in disclosing the presence of rooks in a few new areas. Readers were asked to advise of any rook sightings. It is not yet known whether the rooks are breeding in these areas or whether they are non-breeding birds using transient roosts. One of these sites is in the upper Ohariu Valley.

There were rook sightings by the public last year at Makara and Pikarere Farm but staff were unable to find them, despite an intensive effort.

It is our intention to treat every rookery this year and further reduce the overall population by at least thirty percent. Both Horizons and Hawkes Bay Regional Councils are concurrently embarking on intensive rook control programmes and are using the same methods as Greater Wellington. Horizons have purchased 300 tubes of bait sufficient to treat 1800 nests or over 6,000 birds. This may help alleviate the rate of southward drift of rooks into our region. The effort being put in by Horizons is greatly appreciated.

Staff involved with the helicopter rook nest baiting have recently undergone further training and competency assessment with the contracting company.

5.9 Magpies

It seems that Wellington regional constituents do not share the recent Landcare Research opinion stating that magpies are not 'big crims' and that they probably got their reputation from being big, showy, noisy and Australian. With the breeding season well underway the calls for assistance with magpie attacks has been steady. Of note is that all loan traps are out and there is a waiting list. This is in spite of many occupiers now owning their own traps. Most people still seem to consider magpies are an unwanted pest and are solid in their stance that magpies, tui and native wood pigeons do not co-exist.

5.10 Spur-winged Plovers

Spur-winged Plovers have been making a nuisance of themselves at Masterton Airport by landing on the runway and generally living within the airport environs. One aircraft strike has been reported and there is concern that other strikes may ensue unless the plovers are persuaded to move away. Spur-winged Plovers are a protected species under the Wildlife Act and any control measures to disturb or kill them is subject to a permit from the Department of Conservation.

There are limited opportunities for the control of these birds in the current situation and the problem has not yet been fully resolved.

5.11 Pet Shop Inspections

Inspections of pet shops are underway throughout the region. This is being carried out pursuant to Sections 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 which declares that no person shall release, or cause to be released, breed, or sell or offer for sale, or hold in premises where animals are offered for sale or otherwise spread animals so declared in a Regional Pest Management Strategy. The visits will also provide information and advice about the aims and objectives of the Biosecurity Department and endeavour to develop a rapport with the businesses that work toward lessening threats to our economy and biodiversity.

5.12 Rabbits and Haemorrhagic Disease

Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) has recently been confirmed as recycling at Woodside and Western Lake in the Wairarapa and at Te Horo on the Kapiti Coast. No doubt the disease will be active at other sites but may be just unnoticed, as it is often innocuous in low populations. Although RHD was present in the spring of 1997 it has been more general for it to have been recorded in the autumn since then. Rabbit numbers are still increasing in many areas indicating that there are still reasonably high immunity levels to the disease.

5.13 Wairarapa Wetlands Survey

This survey commenced on 29 May 2003 and is an objective of the Greater Wellington Wetlands Action Plan (April 2000) to develop a concise inventory of all wetlands in the area. The survey has almost been completed in the Wairarapa with the only area remaining around Lake Onoke and the southern part of Lake Wairarapa. This area requires the use of a boat but weather conditions over the past few weeks have not been suitable. There are also about 20 sites in the Hutt Valley to be assessed to complete the regional survey.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa