



Report 05.635
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Committee Rural Services and Wairarapa
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Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of current activities and provide information of interest since the previous meeting held on 13 September 2005.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Divisional Matters

3.1 Tb Vector Management

I am very pleased to report that the annual review by the Animal Health Board of Greater Wellington's performance, as the regional vector management agency, has resulted in an overall rating of "outstanding performance achieved". Congratulations to all those involved, and particularly Wayne O'Donnell, Graeme Butcher and Grant Crawford.

3.2 Horizons Regional Council Visit

The visit by the Horizons Regional Councillors and Senior Management to the Masterton office on 18 October as part of their tour of the Wellington region gave an opportunity to discuss some items of mutual interest.

Ian Gunn gave a presentation on the methods being used to develop a new rating system for the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme, while the Horizons people also appreciated the opportunity to visit the Akura Conservation Centre.

3.3 Staffing Matters

Ken Wright, who leads the Pest Animals team based at Upper Hutt, is leaving to live in Nelson. Ken started in 1990 as the sole pest animals officer for the western part of the region. His talent, drive and enthusiasm led to the successful predator control operations within the metropolitan and Kapiti Coast districts. He forged strong links with the territorial authorities, Department of Conservation, Public Health and ecological care groups such as Forest and Bird.

Ben Winder has commenced as a Pest Plants Officer based in the Masterton office.

Brett Cockeram has been appointed to the position of Environmental Monitoring Officer in the Planning & Resources Department to replace Raelene Hurdell. Brett will transfer from the Technical Services Section of the Land & River Operations Department on 28 November.

Paula Pickford has commenced parental leave with her baby expected around the end of November. Stephen Thawley has been appointed to the fixed term position of Section Leader – Consents and Compliance to cover Paula's absence.

Susannah Guscott and Dierdre Ross who have been working on contract have been appointed to part-time positions in Consents and Compliance.

3.4 Best Wishes

This is the last Committee meeting for the year and I would like to wish Committee members a pleasant time for Christmas and the holiday season on behalf of all the Wairarapa Division staff.

This is also the last meeting that the Wairarapa Division will be servicing this Committee. Under the Chief Executive's restructuring plans the Division will cease to exist at the end of January, as will my position of Divisional Manager, Wairarapa. It has been a very interesting journey since the heady days of local government reform in 1989 and there have been plenty of challenges and successes along the way.

4. Planning & Resources Department: (Ted Taylor, Acting)

4.1 Environmental Incidents

Date	Complaint	Outcome
7 September	Mangatarere stream flowing very dirty, rural Carterton	Found to be the result of consented river works. No further action needed.
8 September	Dairy effluent flowing onto neighbouring property, rural South Wairarapa.	Found to be the result of changes to an effluent system. Problem corrected by farmer when informed of it.
10 September	River abandoned in Waingawa river bed, Masterton	Vehicle removed and disposed of by Regional Council.
14 September	Reduced flow and dirty water in Masterton urban stream	Found to be the result of roadworks, which had finished by the time the complaint was investigated. No further action required.
15 September	Suspected treated timber found in a load of purchased firewood.	Very minor (2) offcuts of treated timber found in truckload. Timber mill who supplied wood to take more care with treated offcuts.
15 September	Bitumen overflowing into stream, urban Masterton	Drum of bitumen removed by contractors.
16 September	Demolition waste dumped on Waipoua river bed	Abatement notice served. Material has been removed.
20 September	Sewage overflowing into neighbouring property, rural Carterton	Failed septic system has subsequently been remediated.
21 September	Smoke nuisance caused by backyard burning, urban Masterton	Small amount of plastics involved. Person responsible has been asked not to burn toxic material in future.
21 September	Earthworks in wetland, rural Masterton.	Under investigation.
23 September	Waipoua river running discoloured.	Found to be caused by consented river works. No further action required.
4 October	Fuel spill in stormwater drain causing stream pollution.	Cleaned up by Council staff.
6 October	Odour from piggery in rural Carterton reported.	Unable to detect odour at time of investigation. Possibly caused by proximity of effluent disposal.
13 October	Dairy effluent in stream, rural South Wairarapa.	Found to be running through field drains. Farmer has been required to move effluent system.
16 October	Lambs tails dumped in Waiohine river.	Removed by Council.
18 October	Piggery effluent overflowing from broken pipe.	Under investigation.
19 October	Stream dammed, urban Masterton	Person responsible has removed dam at request of Council.
25 October	Stream reported running low, rural Greytown	Investigated. Found to be within normal flow range. No further action taken.
25 October	Foam in stream suspected to be caused by detergent, urban Carterton.	Found to be natural cause. Educational material sent.

26 October	Stream pollution, urban Greytown	Found to be caused by dairy cows accessing stream. Farmer has volunteered to reticulate water to affected paddocks to prevent further complaints.
27 October	Dairy effluent in stream, rural South Wairarapa.	Effluent pond overflowing. Farmer has since fixed problem. Staff considering what, if any, further action may be taken.
27 October	Mangatarere stream running dirty	Found to be caused by consented river works. No further action necessary.
28 October	Dead cow in Mikimiki stream.	Removed and buried by farmer at staff's request.
28 October	Dust from industrial site, Masterton.	Historic, on-going problem. Staff looking for solutions.
2 November	Smoke pollution, rural Carterton	Caused by tyres being used to start fire. Person responsible has been informed that burning of tyres is now banned under National Environmental Standards.

4.2 Notified Consents

<i>Consent Application</i>	<i>Status</i>
Featherston sewage – discharge	An application for a discharge to land trial has been received. This application is currently being processed.
A E & S W Benton Partnership (1 Water Permit - Groundwater Take)	A hearing was held on 12 October and adjourned to allow the applicant to provide further information to the commissioners. When this is available it will be circulated to all parties for comment prior to a decision being made.
Martinborough Coastal Developments Ltd (3 Discharge Permits – Land; Water and Air)	A joint hearing with South Wairarapa District Council was held on 2 nd and 3 rd of November and adjourned to allow the applicant to provide detailed landscape rules.
J A Bicknell (3 Water Permits – Surface Water Take)	Submissions closed 6 July. A number of submissions received, some for, some against. A pre-hearing meeting was held in August. The applicant has agreed to the proposed consent conditions with sign-off from submitters now being sought
R I & C V Scott (1 Water Permit - Groundwater Take)	Submissions closed 6 July. A number of submissions received, all in favour. A pre-hearing meeting was held in August. The applicant has agreed to the proposed conditions.
N & E E Reid (2 discharge permits)	Application received for renewal of consents required for piggery operation. Has been placed on hold for further information which is expected at the end of November.

4.3 Enforcement

(1) Enforcement Status

Charges have been laid against Lansdowne Development Ltd and Bruce Buchanan Ltd in regards to an unauthorised discharge of silt laden water in March 2005. The first hearing was scheduled for 10 November but neither defendant appeared. A new date has been set when it is expected the defendants will appear, if they do not we can apply for “formal proof” which will allow the case to proceed in their absence.

(2) Abatement Notices

Dermot Payton was issued with an abatement notice in September for dumping demolition waste into the Waipoua River. Oldfield’s Operations and Dermot Payton’s trust have now removed the waste.

4.4 Appeals

Castlepoint sea-wall

Masterton District Council have appealed the Castlepoint seawall decision. Their appeal focuses on Stage II of the project (which was declined by the Hearings Committee). Stage 1 has been resolved. MDC have now gone back to the Environment Court asking for a year’s stay in proceedings to enable an integrated coastal management plan to be developed for the area.

Land & River Operations Department – Scadden's Stopbank

John Barton has appealed this decision. This matter has gone to mediation with discussion continuing between the parties.

4.5 Hydrology

(1) Rainfall

In September the Wairarapa was dry from the Tararua Ranges to the eastern hills. The September rainfall totals for the three representative sites used in this report are all below average although not as low as in August. Prior to then the last notable rainfall event was in mid July. This led to soil moisture levels in September dropping to well below what would normally be expected. However, from mid September a number of short southerly events brought moderate rainfall and north-westerly frontal systems brought rain to the Tararua Ranges, lifting western river flows above their unseasonably low values.

In October 2005, rainfall was near average in the Central Wairarapa, below average in the Tararuas and above average in the eastern hills.

The table below shows rainfall statistics for 3 representative rainfall sites.

Rainfall Totals

Site	September		October	
	mm	% of average	mm	% of average
Angle Knob (Tararuas)	362	59	546	75
Alloa (middle valley)	53	60	92	95
Tanawa Hut (eastern hills)	44	37	183	189

On a year to date basis (January to August) rainfall is about average; 88% of average for Angle Knob, 90% for Alloa and 90% for Tanawha Hut.

An isolated thunderstorm hit Masterton on 30 October in the late afternoon. Very intense rainfall combined with hail fell over a very limited area lasting about 15 to 20 minutes. The Wairarapa office rooftop rain gauge recorded 22mm in the peak 10 minutes. By comparison the rain gauge at Wairarapa College recorded only 1.6mm over the whole duration of the event. It is estimated that the return period for the rainfall intensity was greater than 150 years. Stormwater systems are not designed to cope with this intensity and this is exacerbated when hail blocks downpipes and drains. Similarly, hail blocks rain gauges leading to under-recording of the intensity.

(2) Rivers

The mean flows for both the Waiohine at Gorge and Ruamahanga at Waihenga sites were very low for this time of year.

River flows for September were well below average reflecting the rainfall figures. River flows for October were also below average but not as low as for September.

These sites normally have their highest average flows during the late winter/spring period. With flows having been below average since July, the probability of low flows and hence restrictions on surface water takes this summer looks likely.

The table below shows river flow statistics for two representative sites.

River flows

Site	September		October	
	m ³ /s	% of average	m ³ /s	% of average
Waiohine	11.4	40	20.1	61
Waihenga	34.8	31	77.9	73

(3) Floodwarning

There were no floods or significant freshes in September or October.

The Lake Onoke mouth closed four times in the period, each event being for a short time only.

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

5.1 Akura Conservation Centre

There has been a high level of activity in the last month. Much of this has been within the nursery itself, including the planting of 6,500 new cuttings, the building of a new spray rig for the control of poplar rust, agreement on a new alignment for the Waipoua River stopbank, and completion of the general spray and mowing programme.

The new spray rig is to be used to control the outbreak of poplar rust which has compromised growth in the last two or three seasons. Additionally the unit will be able to apply nutrients through foliar application and improve growth rates.

Growth off the stumps has been good, especially in the last fortnight when temperatures were high and there was a lack of wind. Rainfall on 13 November has delayed the start of the irrigation programme.

5.2 Staff Training Programme

Two new Land Management staff have been provided with training in land use capability mapping, and the preparation of Farm Plans. This work is a key component of the land management programmes. Land use capability mapping provides the basis for where tree and pole planting should be carried out, and the Farm Plans are the document that sets out the ten year programme of works. There is a high degree of consultation with landowners in the preparation of a Farm Plan.

In any one year 25-30 of these Farm Plans are reviewed and in most cases a further ten year programme is mapped out.

5.3 Kaiwhata Catchment Scheme

This area of our region was severely affected by the March 2005 floods. A large amount of repair and clean-up work was carried out prior to the winter. A wide range of agencies and individuals contributed to the huge effort required to tidy up the debris, in particular, local landowners, Juken NZ Ltd, Oldfields and Forests Enterprises.

The Storm Damage Reserve in this Scheme had been built to \$25,000 over twenty years. This level of Reserve has proven invaluable in being able to respond to the damage and destruction in a quick and meaningful way. Further work is planned in the next month. A recent meeting of the Scheme Advisory Committee endorsed additional expenditure and will consider the future level of works programme and the contribution to the Storm Damage Reserve at its next meeting.

5.4 Kopuaranga River Enhancement Project

Stage one of the Kopuaranga River enhancement project has been completed with a resurvey of 57 cross-sections from 1974 survey, from the Ruamahanga Confluence to Palmers Road. This data will be used to develop a hydraulic model for the area which is being proposed to be cleared of willows.

Flood mapping for the 2004 flood event from the Ruamahanga River to Hastwell has been completed following meetings with landowners along the river. The flood extents are mapped onto GIS coverage.

5.5 Lower Wairarapa Development Scheme Review

Work continues on the Lower Ruamahanga Classification with meetings focussing on finalising the GIS data. This will be used to develop the new rates classification. Extra data on GIS coverage includes data sets produced for private pump stations and reclaimed land from dredging.

A bed level survey of Donald's Creek from SH No 53 to Abbots Creek has been completed using a local surveying company. The final plans are awaited.

5.6 Data Collection

New Troll water level recorders and housings at various sites on Wairarapa rivers are being used to collect more data on flood travel times and flood heights in locations where information is lacking. A test and calibration of the two recorders on a fresh in the river system produced excellent results. This has seen the purchase of two additional units.

5.7 Waipoua River

Additional funding required to repair flood damage upstream of Masterton has been arranged. Works have commenced in the Daniel-Mahunga section. This will be followed by works at the Gold's bend and at the Akura Conservation Centre.

Annual monitoring of Waipoua River cross-sections shows continued degrade of the lower Waipoua especially around Colombo Road Bridge. This has led to a stop on gravel extraction in the lower Waipoua. The extent of the degrade in the Waipoua River is being further investigated based on a surveyed profile from 1957.

5.8 River Works

Following the end of the trout spawning season, channel alignment/improvements have been occurring throughout the river system. For the first time at least two large bulldozers have been operating. Local anglers raised some queries. River management staff have attended a monthly meeting of anglers to explain the Council's river works programme. There is now a better understanding of why and when works are completed. With the completion of these works river maintenance staff are lopping the willows along the river edge.

5.9 Tauanui Logging

Steady progress is continuing with 2700 tonnes being logged for October generating a \$32.12 net per tonne stumpage. Dry conditions have allowed good progress to extend the road line. Logging operations are expected to cease around the Christmas break, by which time the bulk of the annual volume will have been harvested.

5.10 Rural Fire

Recent rain has eased the fire danger which had been increasing as a result of the more prevalent north-west conditions. Staff participated in a major Regional Incident Management table top exercise. Mentoring was provided by one of the National Rural Fire Incident Management teams. Members of this team have assisted at major fires in the United States and Australia.

5.11 Conservation Forestry Works Unit

The Works Unit has been tidying up small planting jobs and release spraying. The silviculture programme is starting a seasonal build up with three two man contract crews working full time and a larger crew prepared to move in periodically for larger jobs.

6. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

Pest Animals

6.1 Third New Zealand Biosecurity Summit

The third NZ Biosecurity Summit was held in Christchurch on 31 October and 1 November 2005.

- The theme of the conference was 'partnerships between Biosecurity NZ (BNZ) with industry, the community and regional government'. Workshops (consisting of six working groups) were held focussing on each of the three partnership themes.

The outcomes of these workshops will be available on the BNZ website at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/biosecurity-summit.

Murray Sherwin (MAF Director General) said it had been a year since Biosecurity NZ had been formed with a focus on restructuring the areas of policy, NZ Food Safety Authority and MAF Quarantine Services. They were strengthening the corporate structure and were working to a budget of \$160M per annum up to 2006. He said that they would run out of resources before running out of priorities. With the continuing exotic incursion events there is always constant pressure to do something. He is determined to have BNZ as credible, effective and trusted.

Barry O'Neil (BNZ – Assistant Director General) gave a definition of partnership as he understood it and spoke about the success of the hoax Waiheke Island foot and mouth disease operation. He also spoke of major concerns he has for unwanted organism problems with the marine and freshwater environments. He was of the opinion that partnerships had not worked, expectations were not aligned, there were no pre-agreements, accountability was not clear, the role of others was unclear, there are science and technology gaps and that the marine and freshwater mitigation programmes were perhaps 20 to 50 years behind terrestrial programmes.

On a positive note, he said that the BNZ engagement with regional government had made an excellent start.

Charlie Pederson (President of Federated Farmers NZ) said that urbanites do not realise the threat that exotic incursions pose to farming and the downstream effects to the national economy. He said that biosecurity should be given the same level of importance as the NZ military defence effort. He was critical of the handling of the foot and mouth scare at Waiheke Island and generally 'bagged' the government and MAF on

- Varroa – the emphasis was on honey production and not pollenisation which was critical to the pastoral and horticultural industries
- Sea squirt – the mussel farmers would do better talking to beekeepers for a strategy
- Didymo – farmers were told it was not an issue for them, when clearly it is and meetings about didymo focussed mainly on recreational issues
- BNZ dictated terms to the farmers and gave them no choice

Basil Chamberlain (Chief Executive, Taranaki Regional Council) supported the need for more effective partnerships to secure success for New Zealand's biosecurity objectives. He considered that NZ could have more effective partnership relationships by shaping our law, structures, systems and procedures. He said that the best way forward was to reform our biosecurity law, including, but not limited, to the Biosecurity Act. There is a need to start moving seriously to deliver against a background of increasing threat, challenge and public expectation.

6.2 Tauherenikau Key Native Ecosystem Project

Department staff met recently with the owners and others at the Tauherenikau bush site to discuss work progress to date and to plan the next stages of enhancement.

An inspection was made of the weed control work carried out by contractors. The contractors are now doing the second stage of the re-spraying programme for wandering jew that has sprung up since the initial work was carried out last year. So far, wandering jew, sycamore, ivy and old mans beard have been the main pest plants targeted.

There is some urgency to erect promotional signage and notice boards at the racecourse and nearby facilities in readiness for the next race day to be held in February next year. Similar information will be prepared for publication in the racing programme for that event also.

Schools from around the Wairarapa are going to be approached to provide an opportunity for them to participate in the planting programme when it happens next year.

Predator control has been ongoing at the site for several years with possums, rats and mustelids maintained to very low levels. In addition, recent night shoots have been undertaken. The rabbit problem is likely to be ongoing as the local environment offers a variety of suitable habitat. Poisoning and shooting is planned for the latter part of January after the breeding season has ebbed.

6.3 Communications

Staff gave presentations on possum control to the Johnsonville Lions Club on 3 October and on pest animals management to pupils of the Miramar North School on 25 October.

Pest Animals staff provided a pest management display at the annual Otari Plant Sale Day on 8 October and were in attendance at the Wairarapa A & P Show on 29 October.

Pest Plants

6.4 Eradication Species

Survey work has continued on these species in the Western Zone. During this period a total of 24 new infestations have been recorded.

- Since the focus has switched from suppression species to survey work, new sites of eradication species are being located on a regular basis. During the survey period from April to the present, 784 properties have been surveyed in Kapiti. Of these, 5.4% have had eradication species located on them.
- Contracts have now been let for all areas of the region with the exception of climbing spindleberry.

6.5 Vigilance Species

- One new site of egeria has been found in a stream at Wainuiomata.
- Sites of monkey apple and mile-a-minute are being located on a regular basis.

6.6 Containment Species

Contracts have been let for the control of climbing asparagus, boneseed (Kapiti) and South Wairarapa including abseiling on the escarpment to the rear of Ngawi settlement.

An aerial survey was also carried out during this period around coastal South Wairarapa to determine the extent of boneseed in the area. Infestations were located 1km inland. The area that boneseed is estimated to be spread over at Ngawi is approximately 77 hectares. The majority of sites contain scattered plants.

6.7 Plant Retailer Inspections

Nearly all outlets were inspected during the last reporting period. One outlet in Kapiti was found to be selling hornwort and another in Masterton selling lagarosiphon. Both operations were advised of their responsibilities and asked to remove the plants. Follow-up inspections will be undertaken to ensure there is not a repeat.

6.8 KNE

(1) Porirua Scenic Reserve

Four contracts have been let in this Reserve to cover a variety of weeds that cover approximately 20 hectares. As part of the programme, the Department of Conservation has agreed to undertake work on their land that is linked to the Reserve.

(2) Porirua Park

A weed survey is being undertaken in this Park and will be the basis for a management plan in conjunction with Porirua City Council.

(3) Tauherenikau

Three contracts have been let for the control of wandering jew, old man's beard, jasmine, ivy and blackberry. Approximately \$10K is budgeted for Tauherenikau this year with half of the funding coming from the Department of Conservation 'Biodiversity Condition Fund'.

Bovine Tb

6.9 2004/05 Programme

The following operations from the 2004/05 programme remain uncompleted as at the 1 November.

Operation	Strata	Area	Current Progress	Operator
Featherston	HR 1	412	Rework underway	BioWorks
South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	HR 1	1,114	Rework underway	BioWorks
South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	HR 2	1,150	Rework completed	BioWorks

Trend monitors to confirm possum population levels are still to be completed within the Mangaroa-Kaitoke operation. Unfortunately, due to the rugged terrain and difficult access, monitoring contractors are not particularly interested in undertaking this monitor. Unacceptable high tender prices have been rejected and the area re-tendered.

6.10 2005/06 Programme

The Animal Health Board has approved the 2005/06 programme which includes

- 420,860 ha possum control
- 56,114 ha of ferret and possum surveys
- 75,135 ha of pig surveys

Pig surveys will be implemented over a wide area, samples will be provided by BioWorks, preferred suppliers (hunters) and occupiers.

The following table summarises the areas let to date for the 2005/06 year:

	Possum (ha)	Ferret (ha)	Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks (tender)	53,435	-	10,319	63,754
GWRC BioWorks (preferred supply)	119,243	-	22,812	142,055
Target Pest Control	29,714	-	-	29,714
Professional Guiding	35,150	-	-	35,150
J McCaslin	3,346	-	5,389	8,735
Sub Totals	240,888		38,520	279,408
To Determine	137,090	-	17,624	154,714
Control Removed	42,882	-	-	42,882
Totals	420,860	0	56,144	477,004

6.11 Issues

(1) South East Wairarapa – Stage 3 (33,180 ha)

Approximately 11,907 ha of aerial and ground control has been let, following an open tender, to BioWorks and should be completed by February 2006.

Approximately 21,273 ha is still to be let, this includes the Aorangi Forest Park. The release of this work is subject to the following:

- deer repellent being able to be successfully applied to cereal pellets;
- the bait not causing adverse environmental affects; and
- that the repellent will only repel deer and not possums.

Given the above issues it is clear that the remaining 21,273 ha is highly unlikely to be let in the 2005/06 year. The Council may not be in a position to let a tender for some time, possibly in excess of 12 months. The cereal bait repellent trial in Hawkes Bay appears to have been successful at reducing possum densities and repelling deer. However, there remains the major obstacle of successfully manufacturing the bait on a large scale.

Biosecurity staff are aware that some misinformation is circulating in the Stage 3 area about alternative control options. At this stage, alternatives are not being considered for properties that demanded repellent additive. Council policy is that landowners or occupiers who demand alternative control methods must pay for all additional costs.

(2) Animal Health Board Contracts

All contractors are now working under the new AHB Vector Control Contracting Procedures (incl. monitoring contracts). In this region, it is taking considerable time to work effectively with the procedures. A considerable increase in administrative functions has occurred, and some difficulties have arisen around the use of 'interim completion dates' for vector control contracts. Concerns are regularly being raised by contractors about the inflexibility of the new VCCP. These issues are being discussed with AHB Contract Managers.

(3) 2005/06 Contracts

Biosecurity staff expect that the entire control programme should be let by December this year and the monitoring programme let by February 2006.

(4) Programme Amendments

Vector control has been removed from 42,882 ha due to low residual trap catch results. This area involved 20 stratum from 12 operations and will save approximately \$406,000. These savings will not be redirected elsewhere within the Region.

6.12 Proposed 2006/07 Vector Control Programme

Staff have recently been reviewing the proposed 2006/07 vector control programme. Staff have been advised by the AHB that there are severe limitations on funding due to the need to undertake a number of previously delayed operations around New Zealand. These operations are required to proceed to ensure the Board meets its 2012/13 targets.

The result for the Wellington Region is a reduction in total funding from approximately \$7.1M to \$5.8M. Most of the deferred work is feral surveys which may lead to delays in achieving Vector Free status for some parts of the region. At this stage, it is unclear whether there will also be funding cuts in 2007/08.

7. Recommendation

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa