

## Environment Management Division update

For period ending 8 June 2007

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### 1. Environmental Monitoring and Investigations (Ted Taylor)

#### 1.1 Groundwater

Groundwater levels in semi-confined rainfall and river recharged aquifers are generally low for this time of year with the seasonal recharge that generally commences in late autumn delayed as a result of the low rainfall.

Deep rainfall recharged aquifers are at seasonal lows but are not showing the same weather related variation as the shallower aquifers.

#### 1.2 Air Quality

The concentration of fine particles (PM<sub>10</sub>) in ambient air did not exceed the limit set by the National; Environmental Standard for Air Quality as recorded by our monitoring station at Wairarapa College in April or May. However, concentrations have reached the low 40s (limit 50 µg/m<sup>3</sup> as a 24 hour mean) on a couple of occasions in the month reflecting cooler temperatures and the seasonal use of fires for home heating.

#### 1.3 Rainfall

Rainfall in the April May period has been below average in the Tararua Ranges and well below average in the Eastern hill country and the valley. From January rainfall has been below average for all three areas, with one exception being for the Tararua Ranges in March. With five months of below average rainfall we can define conditions in May as drought like.

The monthly rainfall figures for Tanawa Hut going back to 1990 show that this period is similar to the summer/autumn of 1997/98. However, more rain in the period preceding this autumn - a wet winter (the July floods) and above average to average rainfall in November and December - means this event is less severe than that earlier.

	April 2007		May 2007	
	mm	% of average	mm	% of average
Angle Knob (Tararuas)	194	41%	500	83%
Alloa (middle valley)	55.4	70%	19.6	21%
Tanawa Hut (eastern hills)	40.0	38%	15.5	12%

## Annual Rainfall

	Year to Date (Jan – May)	
	mm	% of average
Angle Knob (Tararuas)	1797	76%
Alloa (middle valley)	190	49%
Tanawa Hut (eastern hills)	138	29%

### 1.4 Rivers

River flows were well below average for both of the representative Tararua catchments, more so in April than May when a number of small freshes travelled down the Ruamahanga.

	April 2007		May 2007	
	m <sup>3</sup> /s	% of average	m <sup>3</sup> /s	% of average
Waiohine River	7.29	39%	18.2	79.5%
Ruamahanga River at Waihenga	17.1	29%	38.2	48.3%

### 1.5 Flood warning

No flood events occurred in the April - May period.

The outlet from Lake Onoke was blocked for 31 days, 15 days in April and 16 days in May.

Water levels in Lake Wairarapa were above the winter target level of 9.95metres during all of May.

## 2. Environmental Regulation (AI Cross)

### 2.1 Consent Statistics

In the period from 21 April to 25 May we have received 20 Wairarapa-based applications, and processed 15 consents.

Our median processing time (excluding s37 extensions) for Wairarapa non-notified consents was 12 working days, the same as the last period.

Details of non-notified consents approved in the period have not been provided in this report, but can be viewed in Report 07.346 to the Environment Committee (21 June 2007).

## **2.2 Key Notified Consents Update**

### **2.2.1 Fully Notified Applications**

#### **Stronvar Properties Ltd**

These are applications for a 56-lot subdivision at Stronvar, Masterton involving applications for discharges of wastewater (from a community waste water scheme) and sediment from earthworks, taking water (for communal water supply), and erecting a dam to establish an amenity and stormwater treatment lake.

There have been delays in receiving further information on a range of substantial matters including community wastewater treatment, and the operation and integrity of the proposed lake. The delay is reasonable given the complexity of the matters being considered.

#### **Masterton District Council**

Applications for managing the closure of the Masterton Landfill and provide for ongoing waste management related activities has been placed on hold for further information. We understand that information requested is still pending, and once received we will then publicly notify the applications.

#### **Palliser Bay Station**

This is a joint application for discharges from a community wastewater scheme associated with a proposed 22-lot subdivision on Cape Palliser Road, South Wairarapa. Submissions have not raised issues relating to wastewater discharges, and are now proceeding without a hearing for the applications to GW.

#### **Webstar**

A pre-hearing on a replacement application from Webstar (Blue Print Group Limited), Masterton, to discharge fine particle matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) and other contaminants to air from printing and gas-fired boilers, has been completed. The applicant will investigate issues raised by the single submitter regarding the significance of odours discharged beyond Webstar's boundary further over the next two to three months. A short-term trial of new discharges from new printing equipment assessed will also be extended to tie in with revised timeframes. The processing of this application will consider air quality within the Masterton air shed, which sometimes exceeds NES for Air thresholds for PM<sub>10</sub> of 50 ug/m<sup>3</sup>.

#### **MDC - Masterton Wastewater Treatment Plant**

Replacement applications for Masterton Wastewater Plant were lodged in early May and we are currently assessing whether we have enough information to notify the applications. There is much new technical material to work through resulting from the pre-application process, and at the same time a transition to new staff leading the process. However, I expect applications to be notified on 23 June at the latest. Since their lodgement, the applications have continued to draw media interest.

Applications involve a component of discharging effluent to land during drier conditions as well as discharging treated effluent to Ruamahanga River – an increasingly outmoded practice nationally.

#### 2.2.2 Limited Notified Applications

No progress to report on existing limited notified applications.

### 2.3 Appeals and Objections

#### **A E & S W Benton Partnership**

These appeals relate to a declined application to take groundwater from the Kahutara groundwater zone, which is affected by a moratorium not to ‘accept’ further applications.

Mediation continues with the Court recently further extending the period for all parties enabling us sufficient to consider GW’s proposed conditions. We now have until 30 June to finalise a consent order for the Court, otherwise the appeal will go to a full Court hearing if it can’t be resolved. There are a number of areas of contention in the proposed conditions including the duration and purpose of the revised conditions (taking water vs. pump testing for possible future use).

#### **Prema Investments Ltd**

A decision granting consent for Prema Investment’s joint applications to discharge communal wastewater to land from a 6-lot subdivision at Whangaimoana, South Wairarapa, has been appealed. The appeal has cited a condition on the subdivision consent requiring one lot (a possible additional disposal field) to be set aside until three-years of groundwater monitoring has been completed establishing whether there is a connection with the proposed disposal field. The appeal does not specifically cite the discharge permit, however we have in an unusual move joined the appeal as a (section 274) party to the appeal.

A timetable is yet to be confirmed for call-overs and mediation.

#### **Greater Wellington: Land and River Operations Department (LARO) – Scadden’s stopbank**

No further progress has been made on A J Barton’s appeal to the High Court on the Environment Court’s decision to uphold GW’s decision on LARO’s proposal to upgrade an existing stopbank adjacent to the Ruamahanga River. The appeal relates to the status and use of a paper road and implications of the stopbank upgrade.

#### **Masterton District Council**

This is an appeal against the Greater Wellington’s decision to approve a coastal protection sea wall at Castlepoint.

After a year of no progress and deferrals by Masterton District Council, the Court set down a further round of mediation, which took place on 30 April. A new timeframe and process was agreed by all parties in order to advance the Integrated

Management Plan for the Castlepoint coastal environment. MDC will lead the development of this plan over the next six months.

## **2.4 Compliance and Enforcement**

### 2.4.1 General

Routine and follow-up inspections of dairyshed discharges across Wellington Region continue, and we have issued a significant number of advisory notices to consent holders who are not complying with their consents. At the same time we are likely to be at least serving infringement fines on a small number of consent holders at this stage, on the basis of poor discharge practice.

### 2.4.2 Specific Compliance Issues

#### **Carterton District Council – consent requiring effective inspection programme**

This concerns a land-based wastewater discharge trial which has been operating without a current resource consent in place, for the second time in less than five years.

I verbally reported to the May meeting that these consents have now been processed. It will be vital that CDC comply fully with all conditions including monitoring conditions. Monitoring information will be vital leading up to the replacement of the wastewater treatment plant consents in two years time. As such we will be approaching CDC shortly to commence discussions for pre-application work.

### 2.4.3 Abatement Notices

One abatement notice was issued in the last period to Robin Borthwick, to remove illegal concrete slab structures from Kuripuni Stream, Masterton.

### 2.4.4 Infringement notices

Four infringement notices were issued in the period to:

- Graham Hodder of Totara Grove Farm, Featherston, for excessive discharges of dairy effluent onto land, in a manner where contaminants may enter groundwater, as well as for direct discharges into a waterbody.
- Robin Borthwick of Kuripuni, Masterton, for placing concrete slabs in Kuripuni Stream.
- Selwyn Donald of Arran Farm, Featherston, for excessive discharges of dairy effluent onto land, in a manner where contaminants may enter groundwater, as well as for direct discharges to an unnamed tributary of Tauhernikau River.
- Selwyn Donald of Arran Farm, Featherston, for dumping demolition waste, including scrap metal, into land where contaminants may enter water.

#### 2.4.5 Prosecution and Enforcement Orders

No prosecutions or enforcement orders have been issued in the period since the last Committee meeting.

### 2.5 Pollution Control

#### 2.5.1 Significant Incidents

##### **Illegal rubbish dumping in Wairarapa**

In the May meeting I reported on illegal dumping in the Gladstone area. Following efforts by Carterton Mayor, Gary McPhee, and the land owner, the affected site has been cleaned up with all rubbish removed to Carterton landfill for transfer. The ongoing support from Mayor McPhee and a desire to see the problem fixed has been integral to finding a realistic solution to one of the more extensive illegal dumps.

##### **Odours from spray-painting operation – Masterton**

Following numerous complaints in April, members of the Pollution Control team have met with the owner of the Bentley Street spray-painting operation and various residents from the area. Residents have been asked to keep odour logs, and we are conducting proactive odour monitoring while monitoring equipment will be installed at the spray-painting operation to more accurately measure discharges. This is positive progress in terms of mutual cooperation to gather further information about the effects of the spray-painting activity, led by the pollution control team.

Other significant incidents for the period are discussed in the Pollution Control Report to the Environment Committee (report 07.346).

### 3. Environmental Policy (Murray McLea)

#### 3.1 Regional policies and plans

##### 3.1.1 Regional Policy Statement review

The last of six workshops with Councillors on the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) was held on 22 May 2007. At this workshop, staff presented the new approach to methods and “non-regulatory” policies, in response to concerns raised by Councillors at earlier workshops. Staff also updated Councillors on the provisions that have been changed. The approach that is being developed for an introductory section of the RPS to integrate, and provide an overview of provisions was also discussed.

Having achieved a level of comfort with the draft provisions, these have now been made publicly available and comments sought from a wide range of interested parties. On Friday 8 June the second RPS newsletter, with a summary of the draft provisions, was sent to a number of individuals and organisations. Greater Wellington’s website was also updated with further information, including full copies of the draft provisions. A complete set of draft provisions were also sent to

Mayors and staff of all city and district councils in the region, Ara Tahi members and key stakeholders. During June and early July, Councillors Chris Turver and Sally Baber are visiting each city and district council in the region, to raise awareness of the draft RPS provisions with councillors, and encourage their feedback.

Comments on the draft RPS will be received through to mid-July. Once received and assessed, staff will report back to Council on comments and recommended changes at a workshop(s) in August this year. Staff will then prepare a proposed RPS to be reported to the September 2007 meeting of the Policy, Strategy and Finance Committee for approval to publicly notify.

### 3.1.2 Plan Change 3 to the Regional Freshwater Plan

Plan change 3 to the Regional Freshwater Plan was publicly notified on 26 May 2007 following approval to release the document by the Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee. This plan change limits the taking of additional water from three groundwater zones and eight streams in the Wairarapa. The plan change was advertised in newspapers and sent to affected consent holders and other interested people. The period for submissions on the plan change closes on 29 June 2007.

## 3.2 Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan

Hearings for the plan are scheduled to start on 3 July 2007 and progress through to 24 August. Greater Wellington is preparing material on various chapters of the proposed plan in anticipation of the hearing.

Staff are continuing to participate in working groups to progress concerns about two contentious issues in the proposed plan before the hearings. These issues are the vegetation clearance rule and the flood hazard area rule. There have been two meetings on the vegetation clearance rule involving Greater Wellington, Federated Farmers, the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society and the Department of Conservation, and good progress is being made. One of the meetings was held at a farm property where the rule could be applied.

## 3.3 Resource consents

Resource consent applications received by territorial authorities and Greater Wellington's responses are set out below:

### 3.3.1 Carterton District Council

<b>Notified</b>	<b>Action</b>
I Campbell	6 lot subdivision, Gladstone Road. No submission.
I Campbell	4 lot subdivision, Francis Line & Dorset Road. Submission with concerns that groundwater and surface water is fully allocated

**Non Notified**

Ashcroft and Graham

M A Wither

**Action**

2 lot subdivision, Hinau Gully Road. No comments.

2 lot subdivision, 3 Hughes Line. In progress.

1.1.2 Masterton District Council

No notified applications were received.

1.1.3 South Wairarapa District Council

**Notified**

K H Trass

**Action**

2 lot subdivision, 144 Dublin Street, Featherston. No submission.

**Non Notified**

A P Wilkinson

Sustainable Produce NZ Ltd

**Action**

2 lot subdivision, Haurangi Road, Martinborough. No comments.

4 lot subdivision, Martinborough-Awhea & Fraters Road, Martinborough. In progress.