

Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from 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 28 March 2000.

2. Divisional Matters

2.1 Long Term Financial Strategy

The Council's proposed Ten Year Plan 2000-2010 document entitled "Towards a Greater Wellington" is currently available for public submissions. This document incorporates the proposed Annual Plan for the 2000/01 financial year. Submissions close on 22 May and will be considered by Council in early June.

2.2 Bovine Tb Rate

The Special Order relating to the proposed change in the differential for the Bovine Tb rate has been considered by Council and was advertised last weekend. The Council will consider any submissions at the meeting scheduled for 29 June.

2.3 Staff Changes

Ron Corbett, Accounts Officer, retired at the end of March after 21 years with the Council and the former Wairarapa Catchment Board. Michelle Carson has commenced recently as a part time Support Officer.

Nicola Saunders, Resource Advisor, and Wendy Saunders, Hazard and Emergency Management Officer, have both resigned to move to the South Island (two different places and they are not related despite the surname).

3. Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)

3.1 Conservation Woodlot Applications

Applications closed on 20 April 2000. A total of 31 applications were received covering 226 hectares. Since 1996, sufficient funds have been allocated to establish 200 hectares on an annual basis.

A start will be made on planting in June, and subject to final funding allocations in the 2000/2001 Annual Plan, the balance will be completed in July and August. Sustainability Plans account for one third of the planting, the balance is covered by Conservation Plans.

3.2 Resource Consents for River Management

A resource consent for routine river maintenance activities for the Waiohine, Waipoua, and Upper Ruamahanga River Management Schemes is being sought by the Operations Department. Consultation is progressing well with Tangata Whenua, and has been successfully concluded with Fish and Game NZ and the Department of Conservation. Once completed the draft Assessment of Environmental Effects will be circulated for comment, and it is expected that the application will be lodged early next financial year.

A resource consent with a 20 year term was recently obtained enabling the removal of gravel from the Kaipatangata Stream near Carterton. It was agreed with Fish and Game NZ that in recognition of the trout spawning value of this stream, a riparian enhancement programme would be implemented over the term of the consent.

A resource consent has been obtained for a 20 year term covering the operation and maintenance of the Barrage Gates at the outlet of Lake Wairarapa. The gate operating regime has been modified to improve fish passage, and a fish monitoring programme has been agreed with the Department of Conservation.

3.3 Advisory Committee Meetings

The monthly meeting of the Waiohine Floodplain Advisory Committee was held in late April. The main issues discussed at the meeting were progress with the SH2 Bridge upgrade investigation, the proposed new rural rating classification, and a suggested consultation programme.

Advisory Committee meetings were held for the Taueru and Whangaehu River Management Schemes. The main issues addressed were annual reports for the current financial year, and works programmes and rating levels for next financial year.

Meetings were also held for the East Pukio and Turanganui/Pouawha Wards of the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Schemes.

3.4 Whakawiriwiri Stream Culvert Upgrade

The upgrade of the culverts at the Barton property on the Whakawiriwiri Stream has finally been completed. The background to this work goes back to 1983 and unfortunately the costs of obtaining a suitable consent have been several times the costs of the construction work.

Matters relating to any wetland enhancement and the rating classification on the property are still to be resolved.

3.5 Mahaki Floodgate Upgrade

The upgrade of the Tawaha floodgate structure under the Ruamahanga river stopbank has been completed at a cost of \$60,000. An innovative construction technique consisting of key blocks and reinforced earth was used. The upgrade was required to stabilise a dangerously steep section of stopbank.

3.6 River Activities and Surveys

Activities completed include –

- Waiohine River reclassification – compilation of data into G.I.S. maps and schedules for the floodplain committee.
- Waiohine River investigation – completion of stopbank surveys to determine estimates of quantities for proposed new stopbanks.
- River surveys – completion of the 5 year re-survey of the Ruamahanga River from Wardells Bridge to the Waiohine River confluence and 6 monthly monitoring of river beds in the Waingawa River and at Waihenga in the Ruamahanga River. Establishment of a new set of cross-sections on the Taunui River.
- Survey at Hidden Lakes to monitor any earth movement. Normally an annual survey is undertaken at this time because of the recent large earthquake.

4. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

4.1 Bovine Tb Update

The Bovine Tb programme is now running slightly behind schedule but is expected to be completed by financial year end. Currently there are 10,000 hectares (4.6% of the operational area) under prefeed or toxic baits and until the land can be released for restocking it is not deemed completed. The trial ferret control operations are also taking longer to complete than envisaged. One of the ferret surveys (Otaki) was a late request from the Animal Health Board. It was agreed to

undertake this extra operation to coincide with a similar survey undertaken on our northern boundary by Horizons.mw.

Of the 36 operational areas, 13 are completed, 13 are operational and 10 are still to commence. Five of the operations still to be done are second or third maintenance operations and therefore subject to less intensive control. It is usual for only specific areas of a property to be targeted during second and third maintenance phases.

	Treatment Area (ha)	%	Area Completed (ha)	%
Bovine Unit	218,854	81.0	142,828	52.9
Private Contractor	51,254	19.0	50,200	18.5
	270,108	100.0	193,028	71.5

4.2 External Contractors

All external contracts have been completed except Mataikona No.3. This is well advanced and will be completed to schedule. The Bideford contract is still awaiting a post operational performance monitor on 6,156 hectares. It is expected that the contractor will achieve a satisfactory result.

4.3 Carterton West Operation

In spite of low possum numbers following the initial control in 1996/97 this area continued to have a residual Tb problem in cattle and farmed deer. It was decided to intensify possum control over succeeding years to achieve extremely low possum densities and thus try to break the Tb cycle. The following RTC results were achieved in spite of the close proximity of the area to the Tararua Ranges and the impending re-invasion problems.

1997/98	4.2%
1998/99	0.6%
1999/00	0.0%

There are currently three infected herds (2 reactor cattle, 1 NVL) in the area; a decrease from six herds (21 reactor cattle) in 1995/96. Two of the currently infected herds have had one clear test. Few areas have required this intensity of possum control to start reducing the incidence of Tb.

4.4 Ferret Control

Ferret control is being undertaken in four operational areas over 22,500 hectares. The Otaki area (2,000 ha) was a late addition but has been completed with only 17 ferrets (1 ferret per 118 ha.) captured. The

other operations are continuing with low ferret tallies. External possum contractors on Bovine Tb operations capture mustelids, mostly ferrets. Although mustelids have not been targeted particularly, the average catch-rate is one mustelid per 313 hectares.

4.5 Magpie Research

The culling of magpies continues at the 1,400 hectare Woodside study site. To date, 726 magpies have been captured. The main method has been the use of Larsen traps but a firearm has been used more recently to cull magpies that are apparently trap-shy. Most of the study area has been covered now and catch rates have started to decline. It is intended to continue the cull for at least another six weeks to endeavour to have a low residual population prior to nesting. Magpies have one of the longest breeding seasons of feral birds in New Zealand and are known to nest through the period June to December. The purpose of the trial is to test the hypothesis that maximum control of magpies will increase the numbers of other birds.

A workshop has been scheduled in Hamilton for 4th May so that people involved in the replicate trials throughout NZ can discuss control strategies and review the project to date. There is also an option to involve a PhD student supported by Waikato University. The availability of a student would allow a more in-depth study into topics such as re-invasion and behavioural aspects.

4.6 Regional Pest Management Strategy Review Update

The initial discussion process is proceeding well. To date, the following material has been prepared :

- Discussion document
- Summary Pamphlet
- “Elements” page (back page)

The April edition of Elements is scheduled to be delivered from 29th April. The edition will include a response form where readers can request a copy of either the discussion document or the summary pamphlet. It is intended to mail out a copy of the discussion document to a range of interested parties to arrive approximately five days after Elements is distributed. Interested parties include previous submitters, councillors and appointed members, district and city councils, relevant non-governmental organisations and affected Crown agencies. Copies will also be sent to a range of libraries to further enhance public exposure. A press release is planned for 1st May.

4.7 Biological Control

During March and April, staff have been involved in the distribution and release of three bio-control agents and assisted with research into the possibility of bio-control for two other plant species.

1. Ragwort Flea Beetle.

Approximately 10,000 beetles were collected by motorised leaf suckers from a dairy property south east of Carterton. These were counted into collections of 300, being the number recommended to establish a new site. Where ragwort infestation was high double releases were made. In total, 20 new sites have been established - 10 each in the West and Wairarapa zones. Further releases will be made during May.

2. Gorse Pod Moth.

The larvae of this small moth establish in gorse seed-pods feeding on and destroying the developing seed. Releases are made during the autumn flowering period. Since 1996 six releases have established at various sites throughout the Region. During March and April 2000, Landcare Research supplied 10 release populations for further site establishment. The following releases were made; Porirua 1, Wainuiomata 1, Kaitoke 1, Wellington City 1, Masterton District 3, and South Wairarapa 3.

3. Old Man's Beard Fungus.

The spores of this pathogen are mixed in water and applied to OMB foliage as a spray. Since 1998 five releases by knapsack application have been made, three in Wellington City and two in South Wairarapa. The Wellington releases have established and several minor sites have been noted some distance from the original releases. Only minimal OMB damage has been noted probably because each release involved a small amount of material.

In an attempt to improve the effectiveness of Old Man's Beard Fungus, 240 litres of mix was purchased from HortResearch in Palmerston North and applied by helicopter on 31 March. One hundred and twenty litres were applied to an infestation of OMB on a very steep site at Mangaroa east of Upper Hutt. The remaining 120 litres was then applied to two infestations on the west bank of the Ruamahanga River 6 kms upstream of Martinborough.

4. Staff have assisted an entomologist from Landcare Research to determine if possible insect agents for the control of Banana Passionfruit and Boneseed are present in the Region. Inspections of several sites of these species was also carried out to ascertain what predator insects are present and the possible effect they may have on a future control agent.

4.8 Old Man's Beard Control

The development of a self contained spray unit by an Upper Hutt aerial operator that can be suspended variable distances below a helicopter has enabled large and difficult to access infestations of Old Man's Beard to be more economically controlled. This unit which is based on a sixty-litre aluminium beer keg is pressurised by a small compressor forcing spray through a ring of nozzles surrounding the container. The pilot is able to lower the unit into an infestation and has excellent control over placement of the spray thus limiting drift damage to non-target species.

Plants staff have arranged for this unit to be used recently on several OMB control operations. Some have been reasonably close to residential areas where conventional aerial application would be impractical. This unit was also used for the recent aerial applications of OMB Fungus.

5. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

5.1 Environmental Incidents

<i>Date of Report</i>	<i>Incident</i>	<i>Details</i>
21/03/00	Landowner complained of cows in Bartons Lagoon disturbing water quality.	No response was given to calls made to the complainant by Council staff; hence no further action was taken.
21/03/00	Landowner reported effluent polluting water race near Carterton.	Effluent was entering race due to groundwater seepage. Samples taken showed the discharge to be having a significant effect. Further action being followed up by Consents staff.
21/03/00	Dust from local sawmill causing problems for surrounding neighbours.	No visible signs of dust discharge found.
7/04/00	Dead cow in Mangatarere Stream.	Flood moved carcass on within 24 hours of report being received.
7/04/00	Dust problems from neighbouring industries, Masterton	Ongoing problem. Still being worked on.
10/04/00	Oil slick seen on Kuripuni Stream, Masterton.	Source not traced. Slick was not present when investigated.
10/04/00	Major fly problem at rural property.	Still being worked on – may be related to resource consent for effluent spreading.
17/04/00	Report of contractor extracting gravel from the Waiohine River in the weekend.	Contractor has resource consent for the extraction but excludes extraction in the weekend. Letter written to contractor outlining our concerns.
17/04/00	Water pollution in urban stream, Masterton.	Source not found. Suspected to be paint washings.

17/04/00	Digger working in Makoura Stream.	When investigated, complaint found to be relating to damage to fence caused by contractor. Contractor has subsequently repaired fence.
18/04/00	Major fly infestation, South Wairarapa.	No action taken. Complainant was going to ring back if the problem persisted.
19/04/00	Polluted water in Masterton stream.	Source not found, suspected to be paint washings.
26/04/00	Pigs polluting water, Rural Masterton.	Still being investigated.
27/04/00	Odour from industrial emission causing nuisance effects, Masterton.	Still being investigated.

5.2 Compliance

One abatement notice was issued relating to insufficient spreading of dairy effluent. An abatement notice remains in force for an unconsented culvert with removal and consented reinstatement to take place. Upstream owners have expressed considerable concern at the back up effect on property drainage.

5.3 Notified Consents

JNL – Air Discharge Variation	Advertised and 27 submissions received. Consent now on hold while applicant determines whether to include fungicide in the application.
Greytown Sewage – Discharge	Heard on 27 March by Councillors Long, Buchanan, and McQueen. Consent granted for seven-year term. Period for appeal closes on 11 May.
Craggy Range Vineyard – Water Take	Application on hold with further information on surface water effects to be provided. No further action by applicant.
Martinborough Sewage – Discharge	Comment provided to consultants on draft AEE. Consultation to then be followed by a revised application.
Featherston Sewage – Discharge	On hold awaiting full assessment of effects and consultation. Agreed lower priority than Martinborough.
Masterton Sewage – Discharge	On hold. Consultants are proceeding with development of proposals. Consent application scheduled for August 2000.

5.4 Appeals

Ruamahanga Gravel Consent	Two mediations and three subsequent meetings held to agree Memorandum of Understanding establishing a Gravel Guardians group. Ngati Kahungunu have now withdrawn from mediation on Treaty/gravel ownership grounds. The Environment Court mediator has been advised of the current position.
---------------------------	--

DTS Riddiford – Marine Farm - Consent Charges Boulder Wall	Second callover held. Mr Riddiford did not appear. Court has agreed to both appeals being heard at one hearing and a date is to be set. Subsequent offer made by Mr Riddiford to withdraw both appeals provided Council accepted \$100 payment. Offer has been declined.
Flat Point (Carterton District Council)	Consultants report on new individual sewage treatment system received. Amended conditions prepared by staff, and following consultation, accepted by both Carterton District Council and the applicant. Appeal by Maori interests remain unresolved at this time.

5.5 Maori Consultation

Ngati Kahungunu have asked for comment on a proposal for them to recover costs from applicants when they provide comment on proposals that require resource consents. Council comments to the proposal have been provided. Depending on the outcome, cessation, or changes to the current system under which iwi comment is sought on non-notified consent applications may be necessary.

5.6 Dairy Discharges

Steady progress continues to be made with only six properties still under discussion. For the 32 other properties:

- 13 are discharging to land, or will be by next season
- 17 are committed to changing to land within 3 years
- 2 have stopped using their sheds and withdrawn their consents.

5.7 South Wairarapa Landfills

A joint inspection has been undertaken with South Wairarapa District Council staff of current and closed landfills. Consent requirements and information needs are currently being reviewed. Required investigations, revised applications and consent processing will then follow.

5.8 Groundwaters of New Zealand

Matthew Morgan has authored the Wairarapa chapter for this book. This has passed the technical review phase and publication is now awaited. The book will form part of a series published by the New Zealand Hydrological Society.

5.9 Wairarapa Irrigation Study

Agmardt funding has been approved for this study, and the consultants will shortly commence their work. A background paper setting out the current knowledge of our water resources and their allocation has been

prepared as a basis to their work. This study will involve a large input from the Resource Investigations Section.

5.10 Hazard Studies

As part of the Wairarapa Engineering Lifelines Association (WELA), fieldwork has been completed on two studies:

- Detailed field mapping of the Carterton and Masterton faults
- Penetrometer testing for soil liquefaction potential at twenty sites.

The reports arising from these studies are now awaited with interest.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

-

Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa