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**Report 00.514**

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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 12 June 2000.

### **2. Divisional Matters**

#### **2.1 Long Term Financial Strategy**

Council finalised the new Ten Year Long Term Financial Strategy on 29 June. This means we now have a firm direction for the next three financial years as a minimum.

For the Wairarapa Division there will be a continuation of present activities with enhanced programmes in a number of areas plus some new activities which are aimed at assisting with "turning the tide" to protect native biodiversity. Staff in the Division are keen to get on with the new financial year's programmes and challenges.

#### **2.2 Financial Year End**

In the meantime, numbers are still being processed for the financial year end position and therefore there is no financial report for this Committee meeting. However, the Division overall has completed virtually all programmes and performance indicators for the year and finished about \$300,000 under budget. Full details will be provided later through the normal channels.

### **2.3 Wairarapa Irrigation Study**

Work on this study has begun recently with a variety of climate and soils information having been assembled and sent to the consultants, Lincoln Environmental. The initial part of the project involves the overlaying of soil and climate data.

On a related note, I have recently had a discussion with Mr Bob Francis about the possibility of a separate but related project along the lines of the Crops for Southland and the Southland Topoclimate Projects. Mr Francis is keen to investigate whether a project of this nature may be able to be partially funded through the Industry NZ Regional Partnership Programme. However, before this happens there will need to be further investigation and discussions with other interested organisations in the Wairarapa.

### **2.4 Staffing**

Three replacement staff have begun work in the Planning & Resources Department within the last week.

Steven Veix and Grant Kneebone are Resource Advisors dealing with Consents & Compliance matters, while Mathew Paterson is the Hazards and Emergency Management Officer. Steven and Matthew have come to us from university studies although Matthew has earlier worked as a consultant. Grant has experience in resource planning and engineering and comes from the Waikato.

## **3. Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)**

### **3.1 Lower Tauherenikau River**

River engineering consultant, Gary Williams, has been working jointly with staff to investigate options for the future management of the lower Tauherenikau River. The flood capacity of the river reach from SH53 downstream to Lake Wairarapa has reduced over the years due to a build up of gravel in the riverbed. The risk of flooding to adjoining properties has been increasing, as have river channel and stopbank maintenance costs.

A special meeting of the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Advisory Committee was held in late June to discuss options for the future management of the lower Tauherenikau River. Gary Williams presented a number of broad options, and advised that medium term relief could be obtained by a combination of gravel extraction, channel development and maintenance, stopbank construction and maintenance, and drainage improvements.

The Advisory Committee requested that further investigation of long term options, such as the managed diversion of the river, be investigated. This additional investigation work is in progress and the results will be reported to the Advisory Committee and the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee in due course.

Following the special meeting of the LWVDS Advisory Committee staff have become aware that the Tauherenikau River delta has been identified by both the Lake Wairarapa Wetlands Action Plan and the Department of Conservation Protected Natural Areas as a significant indigenous habitat. At the present time Council does not have a policy on development in such areas.

### **3.2 Asset Management Plans**

The asset management plans for the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme, and the Waiohine-Mangatarere, Waingawa, Waipoua and Upper Ruamahanga River management schemes, are currently being reviewed and updated. A report on the status of these schemes in relation to the asset management plans will be presented to the next Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee meeting.

### **3.3 Global Resource Consents**

Negotiations are continuing to secure a global resource consent for routine maintenance activities within the Waiohine-Mangatarere, Waipoua and Upper Ruamahanga River management schemes. Conditional consent sign-off has been obtained from three key agencies; Department of Conservation, Fish & Game NZ, and Rangitaane o Wairarapa Inc. The aim is to obtain the consent by 1 September 2000.

### **3.4 Seedling and Pole Planting**

A start has been made on both seedling and pole planting programmes. Ground conditions are quite suitable for seedling planting. However, careful selection of pole planting sites is required as many areas are still relatively dry. Helicopter schedules are being prepared for mid-July. Poles will be lifted into a range of sites throughout the Wairarapa, particularly where access is difficult.

Extremely strong winds during June have caused toppling of 2-3 year old pine trees on wetter sites exposed to the south. Remedial work has been undertaken on stands where toppling is likely to effect the selection of crop trees. To date this involves some seven properties.

### **3.5 River Edge Stabilisation Planting Trial – Otaki River**

In conjunction with the Rivers Department a number of pole planting options are being trialled along the Otaki River. Pole material from the



and additional aerial control at Bideford. The Animal Health Board has approved the Allsops Bay ferret operation to be undertaken during the 2000/2001 financial year.

**(2) Bovine Tb Contracts - 2000/01**

Tenders from external contractors have been called for 72,975 hectares over eight operations. These range in size from 466 to 25,320 hectares. The tenders close on Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> July and should be let by mid-July.

Operations offered for tender include:

Stronvar	Ponatahi Longbush
Otaki Crown	Mount Bruce Reserve Crown
Featherston Crown	Pakowhai
East Alfredton	Tinui

Monitoring results will determine if a further 30,000 hectares is let for tender in the Martinborough and/or Taueru Maungaraki Extension operations.

**4.3 Pest Animals**

**(1) Magpie Research**

Ten additional multi-catch magpie traps have been manufactured for the second round of control at the Woodside magpie research area. This will increase the total number of available traps to 35 and provide a broader coverage with reduced trap servicing.

Thought is being given to the idea of starting some maintenance trapping in mid to late August. This will coincide with the breeding season. Magpies tend to be most defensive of their territories and are more aggressive at this time.

Landowners within the control area at Woodside have been provided with a log sheet for the recording (on a 12 monthly basis) of different bird species seen or heard on their property.

**(2) 1999/2000 Rook Control Operations**

Ground control rook poisoning operations were down this year on last. There were only 9 operations carried out in total. All were in response to complaints of crop damage reported by farmers in the Wairarapa.

From visual observations of baiting lines it was estimated that there were approximately 895 birds poisoned.

The annual rook nest count survey to be undertaken in the last week of September 2000 will provide a more accurate account of these control operations. It should also reveal the success or otherwise of the aerial nest baiting undertaken during the last breeding season. The largest flock of birds observed was approximately 220. As usual birds were often seen flying in over the Mount Bruce saddle from the Tararua District.

Autumn ground baiting of rooks has traditionally been unsuccessful in previous years but the trend appears to be changing. Last year rooks were baited and poisoned in June and once again it appears that we may achieve a reasonable level of success.

**(3) Illegal Cyanide Use**

Three separate incidents of the illegal laying of cyanide paste occurred at Redrocks (near Sinclair Head) Karori Park and the Akatarawa Forest. Members of the public notified the Council of these incidents which were then referred to the Medical Officer of Health. Biosecurity staff assisted the public health officials with the risk management of the Akatarawa area. The dangerous use of cyanide was probably promoted by the current demand for possum fur. Unfortunately, these incidents negatively affect the public perception of WRC pesticide use.

**(4) Karori Wildlife Sanctuary**

Staff were invited to attend a land mark day at the Karori Sanctuary to celebrate the completion of the pest eradication phase. This was commemorated by the release of eight North Island Weka in the lower dam area. Subsequently, four of the rare Little Spotted Kiwi were released into the Sanctuary on 4<sup>th</sup> July. These releases were truly significant steps in the restoration programme.

**(5) Seasonal Wasp Data**

Dr David Stony of the Wellington School of Medicine was supplied with our seasonal wasp data to complete a study on a public Health issue. The study is looking at the correlation between wasp numbers and incidence of wasp stings in people. The Regional Council has collected data on the population trends of wasps since 1992.

**(6) Chinese Delegation**

A presentation (via an interpreter) was given by Ken Wright to a seven strong delegation about possum control in the

Wellington Region. The delegation, hosted by the Wellington Chamber of Commerce, comprised business people and bankers. They were interested in setting up a possum recovery business to utilise meat and fur. It was explained to the delegation that the Council had both short and long term plans to reduce possums to very low levels.

**(7) Research Published**

Rachel Helson, from the Upper Hutt office, has recently completed a research study of residual brodifacoum in possum livers following a possum control operation using experimental bait with a concentration of 50 mg.kg<sup>-1</sup> brodifacoum. The possums were poisoned as part of the eradication operation at Karori Wildlife Sanctuary in Wellington City.

The study will soon be published in a scientific journal. This will be the fifth research study undertaken by Biosecurity staff to be published.

**4.5 Pest Plants**

**(1) Hornwort**

A meeting of representatives from affected parties has been arranged for 12 July to discuss options for controlling Hornwort in the vicinity of Lake Wairarapa. This Working Party represents Iwi, DoC, Fish and Game, South Wairarapa District Council, local farmers and WRC. This meeting follows a meeting in June which outlined the main issues and set up the working group.

The aim of the Working Party is to prepare recommendations for the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee at the August meeting. The report will consider:

1. whether practical options exist to control Hornwort in the Lake Wairarapa area with currently available methods, and
2. if control is to be implemented, which methods are recommended and the scale and timeframe for the work.

**(2) Mistflower**

Mistflower (*Ageratina riparia*) is increasingly being located in urban gardens and adjacent waste areas in the Hutt Valley. The Eastbourne area, in particular, has high infestation levels. It is now common on road reserve in Days Bay.

This attractive perennial herb is listed as a National Surveillance pest plant. It is recognised as an extremely widespread and invasive pest plant in the northern regions of the North Island.

Landcare Research, on behalf of Auckland Regional Council, gained approval in 1998 to release a fungus as a biological control agent for the control of Mistflower. This fungus is showing some promise as a control agent in the Auckland Region. It is now available to other regions.

There is a trend that plant species that were first recognised as pests in the north of the North Island will, over time, often develop similar characteristics in frost-free areas of the Wellington region. Mist Flower is expected to follow that trend. Whilst it is considered an attractive garden plant by some, consideration will need to be given to its status under the new RPMS.

Whilst Mist Flower does not currently require control, staff would like to trial release the fungus. Obviously, this will require the co-operation of the landowners concerned.

The importation of another agent for Mist Flower is currently under consideration by ERMA. This is a Gall Fly and importation for release is proposed by Landcare Research for Auckland Regional Council.

### **(3) Notices**

The number of notices issued for the control of pest plants for the 99/00 year is double those issued for the previous year. This increase can be attributed to the introduction of random inspections of Old Mans Beard sites in previously surveyed areas of Wellington City. Owners of all recorded sites were advised by letter in October 1999 that random inspections were being initiated and that notices of direction would be issued for any site where plants were found.

A total of 99 notices of direction have been served for the Region covering the following species-

Old Mans Beard	-	86 Notices of Direction
Gorse	-	5
Cathedral Bells	-	4
Ragwort	-	4



## 5. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

### 5.1 Environmental Incidents

<i>Date &amp; Time</i>	<i>Incident</i>	<i>Details</i>
2/06/2000 10:40:00	Four dead cows dumped in stream bed by farmer, South Wairarapa	Abatement notice and Infringement Notice served. Currently under appeal.
6/06/2000 14:30:00	Complaint that farmer had dug large pit and intended filling it with old oil drums and pesticides	Still being investigated
9/06/2000 09:00:00	Complaint of smoke from Masterton landfill.	Found to be naturally occurring steam from compost operation.
12/06/2000 14:50:00	Dead sheep in Riversdale lagoon.	Removed by Regional Council
13/06/2000 15:10:00	Large quantities of smoke being produced from source in rural Carterton	Found to be burn-off of green shelterbelt trimmings. Permitted activity under the Air Plan.
14/06/2000 10:00:00	A landowner reported that the drain from the J K Donald Reserve required cleaning out.	The drain was inspected and the managers of the reserve were requested to clean the drain by mid July
16/06/2000 09:00:00	Rubbish being dumped on river bank.	Still to be investigated
16/06/2000 15:20:00	Smell of burning rubber caused concern to neighbour.	Found to be person burning rubbish in backyard incinerator. Given list of acceptable materials to be burned.
19/06/2000 13:30:00	Smell of raw sewage in the air, Riversdale.	Found to be cleaning of drain dredging up a quantity of anoxic sediment. No further action taken
24/06/2000 09:15:00	Odour emissions from industrial site, Masterton	Complaint verified. Council currently working with company to find long-term solution.
27/06/2000 09:00:00	Complaint of piggery effluent overflowing into neighbours property, rural Carterton	Still under investigation.
28/06/2000 10:30:00	A member of the public reported that an asbestos tank was been removed from an industrial premises in Masterton and there was concern about dust particles getting into the environment	Incident passed to MDC Dangerous Goods Inspector.
29/06/2000 14:50:00	Rubbish being dumped over river gorge in view of farmstay opposite river.	Still under investigation

3/07/2000 16:00:00	Foul odour from industrial premise, Carterton	Still under investigation
4/07/2000 16:45:00	Gravel extractors seen extracting gravel from Ruamahanga River, Possible unconsented work	Under investigation

## 5.2 Compliance

Two abatement notices were issued.

The first required Tranzrail to clean up and fill in a rubbish dump that had been formed at Masterton rail yard. This has been satisfactorily remedied.

The second notice required a farmer to remove four dead cattle that had been dragged into the bed of the Opouawe River. The carcasses were not removed by the specified date and consequently an infringement notice was issued with a fine of \$500. The abatement notice has been subsequently appealed to the Environment Court.

## 5.3 Contaminated Site

Excavation of a drain on swampy land west of Masterton rail yard has indicated the site is possibly contaminated by industrial waste. The drain has been dammed to prevent contamination of a nearby stream and the Council's Contaminated Sites Officer, Mary Manastyrski, has taken responsibility for the issue. Samples have been taken and a more detailed site investigation is likely to be required.

## 5.4 Notified Consents

JNL – Air Discharge Variation	A further variation has been lodged to include fungicide as well as insecticide in the application.
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.

## 5.5 Appeals

Ruamahanga Gravel Consent	Ngati Kahungunu have declined further mediation. Environment Court Hearing to be set.
Greytown Sewage - Discharge	Court advice awaited. Notice still not served on Council.
DTS Riddiford – Marine Farm - Consent Charges Boulder Wall	Environment Court hearing to be set.
Flat Point (Carterton District Council)	Issues resolved and conditions agreed. Consent orders yet to be prepared and signed.

## 5.6 Floodwarning

It has been the quietest year for some time in terms of floodwarning. Warnings were issued to distributors on only 28 occasions and road closure procedures were not needed. Comparative records are:

Year	1999/00	1998/99	1997/98	1996/97
Number of Flood Events	10	18	23	19
No. of Times Lists Issued Warnings	28	109	70	104

## 5.7 Bore Permits

1999 proved to be a busy year for bore permits with 72 permits issued. This continues an upward trend since 1996 when only half that number were issued. Previous peak years were 1985 – 78 permits and 1989 – 72 permits

## 5.8 Riversdale Sanitary Survey

The last water quality sampling run has been completed and analysis and a draft report of the findings is underway. The report will be presented initially to the Committee, then to interested parties.

## 5.9 District Planning

Currently there are three District Plans in the Wairarapa that vary in their requirements. Progress is being made by the District Councils towards seeking commonality within plans, with a longer term possibility that there may eventually be one District Plan for the Wairarapa.

The first step in this process was a consultant's review of the three plans to identify commonality and difference. More recently a meeting was held with District Council representatives, Wairarapa consultants, and Regional Council staff to further progress these changes.

Comment was made at the meeting on the level of assistance given by District Councils to some applicants for resource consents when it is work they should be doing themselves or through consultants that they engage.

## **6. Recommendation**

*That the report be received and its contents noted.*

Colin Wright  
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa