

Report to the Landcare Committee
From Geoff Dick, Manager, Flood Protection (Operations)

Kapiti Minor Watercourses

1. Purpose

To advise the Landcare Committee of recent issues regarding the management of the Waitohu Stream and to advise the Committee that a review of this Council's management policy for all Kapiti minor watercourses is now appropriate.

2. Background

In 1989, following local government reform, the Wellington Regional Council assumed responsibility for the management of the Otaki and Waikanae Rivers, and a significant number of minor watercourses from the Manawatu Catchment Board. As a result of this reform the Regional Council now manages, and undertakes maintenance in, the following minor Kapiti watercourses:

- Waimeha Stream (Waikanae)
- Mangoane Stream and attached drains (Te Horo)
- Pahiko and Katihiku drains (south bank of the Otaki River)
- Rangiuru and Ngatoko Streams (north bank of the Otaki River)
- Mangapouri Stream (Otaki township)
- Waitohu Stream (north of the Otaki River)
- Ngatotara Drain (a tributary of the Waitohu Stream)

Recently a number of landowners, and other stakeholders, have questioned this Council's management regime and policy for these watercourses. The total maintenance budget for Kapiti watercourses is approximately \$58,000 per annum.

At present the major issues relate to the Waitohu Stream where a long-term resource consent for ongoing maintenance work is sought, however, questions have also recently been raised regarding the Waimeha, Mangaone and Mangapouri Streams, and the Pahiko Drain.

Since 1989, officers have managed Kapiti watercourses in line with the Manawatu Catchment Board management policy in place at the time. In other words we have continued with the commitments in place in 1989. This has served both the Regional Council and landowners/residents well. However, now that the Otaki and Waikanae River floodplain management plans are complete it is appropriate that the management policy for these minor watercourses is reviewed. The number of enquiries, many policy related, now being received reinforces this view.

In July 1991 an agreement was signed with the Kapiti Coast District Council to confirm administrative responsibilities for all minor watercourses in the Kapiti District. This agreement remains unchanged, however the agreement did indicate the possibility that some of the minor watercourses currently being managed by the Regional Council could be transferred to the Kapiti Coast District Council by mutual agreement. This could be one outcome from a review.

3. **Waitohu Stream**

The Waitohu Stream lies on the northern boundary of the Regional Council's district and is the largest of the minor Kapiti watercourses. This Council manages the stream from the Waterworks Bridge downstream to the mouth. A budget of \$22,000 per annum is set aside for maintenance work.

In recent years, a number of localised flood events have caused significant problems for adjacent property owners. Impacts have included flooding and erosion of farm land, an erosion threat to the John's house on the upper stream, flooded houses in Convent Road and exacerbated erosion of sand dunes at the stream mouth.

The Waitohu Stream used to be managed as part of the Otaki River Scheme by the Manawatu Catchment Board. However, this scheme has now been disestablished and the Otaki Floodplain Management Plan does not specifically address the management of the Waitohu Stream.

The objectives for managing Waitohu Stream are set out in the "Report on Proposed River Control and Drainage Scheme – Otaki Area" prepared by the Manawatu Catchment Board in 1948. This management policy remains essentially unchanged today, the last review having been completed as part of the 1979-1982 Otaki Scheme Review.

Current management issues for the Waitohu Stream include:

- Difficulties obtaining a long-term resource consent for routine maintenance work and the impact this has had on work programmes.
- Meeting expectations of some landowners regarding the amount of maintenance work undertaken, and hence level of flood and erosion service provided. At least one submission to "Investing in the Future" on this issue can be expected.
- Risk of flooding to a number of houses in Covent Road, Otaki from overflows from the Waitohu Stream. This issue is addressed by the Otaki FMP but the works are not included in the proposed Flood Protection 10 year plan.
- Iwi issues.

- The long-term management of the stream mouth and estuary, particularly under what conditions and where any stream mouth cutting should occur; north and south bank residents currently having differing views.
- Water quality, particularly in the stream estuary.
- The wish expressed by some local residents for the Council to take a more holistic view of Waitohu Stream management, and include some environmental objectives as well as flooding and erosion objectives.

A number of initiatives have been taken or are proposed in response to issues raised. These were discussed at a meeting attended by Councillor Turver and John Gilbert, and Flood Protection staff on 15 February 2000. The initiatives include:

- Reallocating \$25,000 from this year's Flood Protection programme to undertake additional investigations to support the maintenance resource consent investigation. This to include an Iwi status report, an environmental baseline survey, and an independent review of the appropriateness and likely effects of a further 10 years of the proposed maintenance works.
- Additional investigations at the Waitohu Stream mouth including mapping historic stream mouth locations, and a boundary survey of the Sims property. Once complete, a meeting between and north and south bank residents will be held to try and determine an agreed management regime for the mouth.
- Bringing forward, and expanding, the scope of the Waitohu Flood Hazard Investigation, as part of the Council's Long-term Financial Strategy (LTFS) preparation. The investigation will now include a review of stream management and is programmed for financial years 2002/03 and 2003/04 respectively.
- A proposal to set up a stream management group, along the lines of the Wairarapa Schemes, with direct input into ongoing stream management, including the maintenance programme. Current thoughts are to have an initial meeting in June or July this year.
- The Environment Division has set up a Stream Care Group and is currently undertaking some research to try and identify potential sources of pollution.

4. Other Kapiti Minor Watercourses

There are other Kapiti watercourse where issues are arising and a management review is probably now appropriate. Some of the issues arising in the other watercourses include:

- level of maintenance undertaken.
- difficulty of access for maintenance.
- changes of land holdings to lifestyle blocks and changing expectations.
- Mangaone Stream bed degradation downstream of the State Highway 1 culvert.
- timing of the Mangapouri Stream improvements construction proposed in the Otaki Floodplain Management Plan.

- appropriateness of the Regional Council continuing to manage each stream and related funding issues.

Most of the calls from residents arise after the seemingly frequent flood events occurring on the Kapiti Coast. The above issues however can only be fully addressed by a comprehensive management review.

5. **Watercourse Reviews**

The current draft of the Council's LTFS includes budget provision to review the management of the Waitohu Stream, 2002/03 - 2003/04. However, there is no specific funding set-aside for the remaining Kapiti minor watercourses.

Funding is included in next financial year, 2000/01, to undertake a flood hazard assessment of the Mangaone Stream and adjacent floodplain. However, it is not proposed to undertake a review of the day to day management of the Mangaone Stream and side drains, as part of this study.

It is probably appropriate that the Kapiti watercourses, with perhaps the exception of the Waitohu Stream, be reviewed at the same time. This will ensure consistency of policy, particularly regarding funding and continuing Regional Council management.

A review of the watercourses could include:

- A status report.
- Options for future management including consultation.
- Selection of preferred option and final consultation.
- Council to adopt new stream management policy.
- Policy implementation.

The first step is to complete a Kapiti watercourses status report. Operations staff have already done some work towards this. Though, given existing workloads completing the October 1998 flood damage repairs, there is no spare capacity this financial year. However this job could be given a high priority in 2000/01. A deadline to complete this report and present to the Landcare Committee in February 2001 is achievable.

The status report should enable any subsequent phases of the review to be mapped out with some detail. Subsequent phases are also likely to require specific additional budget, particularly if significant consultation is appropriate. The status report can be completed using existing staff resources for which budget provision has been made.

6. **Communication**

The Committee resolutions and a copy of this report will be sent to the interested parties on the Waitohu Stream, and other Kapiti watercourses.

A general press release is not considered necessary at this stage.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- (1) Receive this report and note its contents.*
- (2) Note the issues that have arisen recently regarding management of the Waitohu Stream and endorse the proposed initiatives outlined in Section 3 of this report in response.*
- (3) Agree that a review of the Regional Council's management of Kapiti minor watercourses is now appropriate, and note that a watercourse status report is proposed for the Committee by February 2001.*

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission:

GEOFF DICK
Manager, Flood Protection (Operations)

ANDREW ANNAKIN
Divisional Manager, Landcare