

**Flood Protection
Strategy and Assets
Manager : Brendan Paul**

Report for Period Ending 26 January 2001

1. Waikanae River Floodplain Management [Graeme Campbell]

1.1 Friends of the Waikanae River

Establishment of the group is complete and they are now able to concentrate on the many exciting facets of their role. A business plan has been prepared and they have prepared their first newsletter. A copy of the newsletter will be distributed through the Councillors Bulletin.

1.2 State Highway 1 to Maple Lane Opening and Public Day

The open day for the new walkway and protection works was held at Edgewater Park on 11 November 2000. The weather was perfect and about 150 people attended the formal unveiling of the sign by the Chairman and Huriata Ropata Tangahoe, the artist involved in design of the walkway map and sign. A number of people completed the full circuit up to and across the state highway bridge, down to Otaihanga and back up to Edgewater Park. The new sign will be replicated at Otaihanga Domain, and a number of intermediary signs installed along the way; this work in conjunction with KCDC, as funds permit.

2. Otaki River Floodplain Management Plan [Graeme Campbell]

2.1 Friends of the Otaki River

Two further meetings of the Otaki Friends group have been held since the last report. Both meetings focused on identifying projects the group can undertake over the coming year. The group decided not to apply for Care Group funding at this stage, as it wants to consolidate and concentrate its efforts on establishing itself as effective working group before seeking further funding. The Flood Protection Group will support the Friends contribution to the management of the Chrystalls Bend Environmental Area, and will ensure they can actively participate in the development of a proposal for the river mouth nature reserve.

2.2 Mouth to State Highway 1 Bank Edge Protection Work

Work is well underway on the Liethbridge and Winstones protections works. Additional funding was approved by the Committee at its 16 November 2000 meeting. Survey and preliminary design work has been completed and tenders for the supply of 7,500 tonnes of rock rip-rap called for. A non-notified resource consent application has been prepared and should be lodged by 1 February 2001. Construction is programmed for April 2001.

2.3 Convent Road Deflector Bank Design

Following a meeting with the local community on 25 October, it was agreed that a deflector bank would be investigated; this would reduce flooding in the Convent Road area by cutting off flow between the eastern abutment of the Old Coach Road bridge and higher ground. Survey and preliminary design are complete and estimates now being prepared; we plan to report back to the community in February 2001. Councillors will be informed of meetings through the Councillors Bulletin.

2.4 Rangiuru Outlet Structure

Consultants have been appointed for design and construction supervision of the new outlet structure and floodgates. All work should be completed within budget and on programme by June 2001, as planned.

3. Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan (HRFMP) [Daya Atapattu]

3.1 Drafting the Plan

Plan preparation is on track to complete a “consultation draft” for Advisory Committee endorsement at its meeting on 8 March 2001. The HRFMP “working draft” (the stage before the “consultation draft”) is being managed by Resource Planner, Alistair Cross, and is substantially complete.

Iwi and Environmental Planner Trecia Smith have prepared “Nga Tikanga Maori” the Maori section of the plan, which addresses Tangata Whenua values and aspirations for the Hutt River. Mark Te One, of the Wellington Tenth Trust, has composed a “Mihi” for the HRFMP “working draft”.

The “working draft” will be sent to Hutt City and Upper Hutt City Council officers for their comment by 26 January 2001. Regional Council officers and other advisors will comprehensively review the “working draft”.

3.2 Design Standard Implementation

Ava Railway Crossing Investigations

To eliminate uncertainties, the Ava Railway crossing feasibility study will be carried out in two stages. This approach was agreed with Holmes Consulting Group who were appointed in December 2000 to Stage 1 of the study; to be completed by April 2001. It will investigate and evaluate selected options, and recommend at least two preferred options for further evaluation. Stage 2 will further evaluate and refine the two preferred options, and will recommend an option for implementation. Stage 2 will commence in April 2001 and be completed by June 2001.

A Memorandum of Understanding to define an upgrading strategy for the crossing, acceptable to both Tranz Rail and the WRC, will be completed in the 2001/02 financial year.

Ava to Ewen Preliminary Design and Resource Consents

A Professional Services tender for survey, preliminary design and resource consents for upgrading works in the Ava to Ewen reach was advertised in mid January. Tenders close on 2 February 2001. Provided the tenders are straight forward, a consultant will be appointed by 16 February 2001. The target date for completing the preliminary design and lodging the consent applications is June 2001.

The Ava to Ewen reach upgrading includes, channel relocation, edge protections, stopbank upgrades and other associated works. A physical model study and detailed designs are programmed for the 2001/02 financial year. Construction will commence in the 2002/03 financial year.

3.3 Environmental Strategy

On 16 November 2000, the Committee endorsed the Hutt River Environmental Strategy for publishing. Document editing and layout changes are being managed by Trecia Smith. The document is on track for publishing by mid February 2001. Hutt City and Upper Hutt City Council officers have accepted minor editing changes to the draft.

4. Porirua Stream [Phillip Purves / Geoff Dick]

4.1 Porirua City Centre Reach

A bed level survey of the Porirua Stream, along the Porirua City centre reach, was carried out at the end of 1999/2000. The results indicated a reasonably significant build-up of gravels. In July Porirua City Council questioned whether the design standard for the city centre flood defences has been compromised. The original scheme's hydraulic designers, Connell Wagner Limited, were accordingly commissioned to investigate the effects of the gravel build-up on flood levels and their report has just been received. The results of that investigation, together with our analysis of the gravel build-up, will be used to produce a gravel management report that will form the basis for any future action.

4.2 Findlay Street Realignment Works

This project is a longstanding annual plan provision to realign the Porirua Stream behind eight residential properties at Findlay Street Tawa. Houses on the three properties owned by Council will be relocated to the front of the site, to allow the stream to be realigned parallel and adjacent to the railway line. The works also impact on Wellington City's Linden Park. All land "agreements in principle" are in place. Easements will be formalised when the work is complete. The project will substantially reduce flood levels in lower Findlay Street.

A request for professional services to complete final design, request tenders and manage construction was recently advertised and tenders close on 2 February 2001. Professional services tender outcomes will be reported to the next Committee meeting .

5. **Mangaone Stream Flood Hazard Assessment [Phillip Purves]**

A scoping report for the Mangaone Stream Flood Hazard Assessment is complete and documents prepared for a professional services contract to carry out the full programme of investigations. The scope of services for the proposed contract includes a similar, but single, package to that carried out for the Wainuiomata Flood Hazard Assessment. Major investigation components include: hydrology, survey, hydraulic modeling, flood and erosion hazard mapping, and preparation of a brief environmental database for the catchment.

The proposed programme will see the work completed before the end of the 2000/01 financial year.

6. **Planning and Development Services [Phillip Purves]**

The following summarises the formal, written requests for information or advice attended to during the first second quarter of 2000/01:

	<u>Oct/Nov/Dec</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Requests brought forward	39	13
Additional requests received	45	100
Responses provided	47	76
Outstanding requests	37	37

The Flood Protection Group contributed to the WRC's submission to the Hutt City Council, and provided evidence to a hearing in late November 2000, on the City Council's proposal to revoke the reserve status of the raceway portion of Hutt Park. WRC requested that HCC give consideration to the floodable nature of the site and its future potential for flood mitigation in the Waiwhetu and Awamutu Stream catchments.

Although flood mitigation options for the Waiwhetu Stream have not yet been investigated, the Hutt Park Raceway comprises a significant part of the overall area that can be flooded and its present reserve status sits well with current priorities for flood mitigation investigations. The WRC's submission also raised the issue of public access along this reach of the stream and access for channel maintenance purposes.

7. **Manager's Comment**

The New Year generally signals a busy period for all Council groups. In January the first drafts of the business plan and *Towards a Greater Wellington* are due, the six monthly review process provides the first good opportunity to gauge progress against targets, and reports for our normal cycle of reporting to the Landcare Committee are required. For Flood Protection, *Strategy and Assets*, recruitment to fill four vacant engineering positions is an urgent matter. Advertisements advising potential candidates of the positions will be placed in regional and national newspapers on Saturday 27 January and Wednesday 31 January. Applications close on 14 February.

As I have noted all crucial work is underway; our dedicated staffs are particularly focussed and provided there are not too many hiccups our achievements at 30 June will be highly acceptable.

BRENDAN PAUL

Manager, Flood Protection (Strategy and Assets)

Flood Protection Operations Manager : Geoff Dick

Report for Period Ending 26 January 2001

Flood Protection Operations and Maintenance [Geoff Dick]

1. Hutt River

October 2000 Flood Damage Repairs

We are making good progress with the October 2000 flood damage repairs. Work completed includes the channel shaping work (cross-blading), topping up of damaged rock linings and groynes, and clean up of the river berms and access tracks. Materials including rock and concrete blocks are being delivered in preparation for the bank edge stabilisation repairs required at Mary Huse Grove (Manor Park) and at Maoribank.

Rock Supply

The Wharfe Quarry at Pauatahanui is now closed following Porirua City Council declining to renew the necessary resource consents. Rock for this year's maintenance and flood damage work is now being obtained from the Wairarapa or Linton, Palmerston North; additional transport costs have increased the cost of rock by about 25 percent.

The closure of the Wharfe Quarry means there is now no local source for large quantities of rock rip-rap. This will impact on the cost of works proposed in the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan. Consideration will be given to whether Council facilitating a new local source can be justified.

Owen Street Groynes

Construction of the Owen Street groynes is underway with two of the three large rock groynes completed. Restoration of the adjacent berm area is also underway. Construction of the third groyne will follow when the remaining required rock has been obtained. The work is expected to be substantively complete by May.

Maintenance Work

The maintenance cross-blading programme for this financial year is now complete with work carried out at Melling, Kennedy Good Bridge, Owen Street, Pomare and at Taita Gorge, a total river distance of 755 metres. The operational resource consent for the Hutt River permits cross-blading over a length of 800 metres in any one year. The high figure reflects repair of the October flood damage.

Similarly, topping up and repair of Hutt River rock linings and groynes is complete. Approximately 1,200 tonnes of rock from existing stockpiles was placed to ensure these bank protection works are maintained to design standards.

Berm mowing is now largely under control, now that the spring grass growth is largely over. Our contractor's resources were severely stretched, and on several occasions areas were mown with the Council's own tractor to 'speed things up'.

We are continuing to employ a security company to patrol the river berms. We believe the patrols are reducing negative behaviours including rubbish dumping, vehicle damage and nuisance.

2. **Kapiti Rivers**

October 2000 Flood Damage Repairs

Some good progress was made with the October 2000 flood damage repair work.

A temporary diversion and partial reinstatement of the eroded berm on the left bank of the Otaki River opposite Winstone Aggregates batching plant (downstream of the bridges) was completed. This work is a temporary holding measure until the new permanent rock lining is constructed. At Chrystalls, the berm and debris fence repairs behind the rock extension were completed. The extraction haul road at Hughes' was retreated and reinstated.

On the Waikanae River the rock for the State Highway 1 to Maple Lane repairs has been purchased, and the repair design commissioned. Cross-blading was completed to stop the river flow outflanking the Maple Lane bed control weir.

Maintenance Work

A channel diversion was commenced at Thurley's on the upper Otaki River. The work is aimed at reducing the ongoing erosion of the south bank cliff faces.

Two test holes were dug in the lower Waikanae River at Otaihanga in preparation for proposed works adjacent to the Boating Club. It is proposed to realign the low flow channel and construct a short section of new rock lining to stabilise the southern river bank. The test holes showed gravels that can be safely worked with a bulldozer.

An area of cracked willows were removed from the Waikanae River berm on the left bank opposite Pukekawa Reserve. The willows are being replaced with native trees and shrubs as a community project. Improvements were also undertaken to the adjacent walking track.

Some large poplars were removed from the Otaki River berm on the south bank, downstream of the bridges. The poplars posed a danger to staff and the general public.

3. **Water Courses**

Clearing runs were carried out in the Wainuiomata River, Mangaroa River, Pinehaven Stream, Collins Stream, and the Waimeha and Mangapouri Streams.

The Stebbings Dam area was mown, the intake cleared, and some bank shaping work carried out.

In the Waiwhetu Stream, periodic detention workers have not made as much progress as hoped in clearing aquatic weed. In order to speed progress, local iwi were engaged to hand clear the Te Whiti Park section, and the Haywards Terrace section was cleared by excavator. The situation will be monitored. If insufficient progress is made with clearing the weed in the remaining sections of the stream prior to winter, a spray run may be necessary.

4. **Otaki River Mouth**

Letters have been sent to Ngati Raukawa, the Katihiku X Trust, and the Logan Whanau outlining the proposed diversion of the Otaki River mouth to the north. No response has been received to date. The first stage of the work is extraction of gravel along the upstream part of the realigned channel. It is hoped that this work can commence in February.

5. **Hutt River Trail**

Flood Protection (Operations) staff now maintain the Hutt River trail, on a contract basis with Parks and Forests. Flood Protection staff are better able to routinely monitor the condition of the trail as it is in their normal work area and can undertake the necessary work.

A work programme has been agreed with Parks & Forests and good progress made. Prior to the Christmas break, we completed the upgrading of the section through the Taita Gorge including flood damage repairs. This section of the trail is very popular and the resurfacing and reshaping has been well received by users. The 'Hutt News' ran a complimentary article on the work.

6. **Work for Others**

In addition to the Hutt River trail work, we carried out several projects for other Departments in the period. Work for Resource Investigations included the construction of a solar panel for the Mangaone recorder, and the installation of an air quality hut at Lower Hutt. Staff also cleared growth from the Beacon Hill site for the Harbours Department.

7. Kapiti Minor Watercourses Review

We were due to report to the Committee on the status of Kapiti minor watercourses at the 8 February meeting. Unfortunately the review has been delayed by the October 2000 floods and staff vacancies. My commitment is to now report to the 29 March 2001 Committee meeting.

8. Gravel Extraction

Gravel extraction for the Upper Rahui project is due to be completed next month (February 2001). This will complete this successful project.

We received four registrations of interest for gravel extraction for each of the Hutt and Waikanae Rivers following recent advertising. Selecting preferred contractors will commence shortly, and we anticipate letting acceptable contracts.

Gravel extraction figures for the period ending 31 December 2000 are set out below.

			Period Year 2000/2001 (cubic metres)		Year 1999/2000 (cubic metres)
River	Area	Contractor	Period	Year	Full Year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	10,962	21,217	46,966
	River		0	0	927
Otaki	River	Winstones & G Holland (99/00)	4,110	4,460	71,492
	Upper Rahui	Winstones	11,760	30,910	46,350
Waikanae	River		Nil	Nil	1,484
TOTALS			26,832	56,587	167,219

9. General Comment

The full team is now back on deck after a well deserved Christmas break.

GEOFF DICK
Manager, Flood Protection (Operations)

Regional Parks (Strategy & Marketing)

Manager : Susan Edwards

Report for Period Ending 26 January 2001

1. Manager's Comments (Susan Edwards)

December and January are always busy times for managers preparing the business plan for the up-coming financial year and the Six Month Financial Review. This work has taken up a large percentage of my time. It has been an exciting time otherwise for us, getting into the new Long-term Financial Strategy projects and community connections work. Some aspects of work that stand out for me have been the *Regional Outdoors Summer Events Programme* and the various environmental enhancement projects we have underway. These appear to be very successful and have provided officers (including those in other Council Divisions) with some interesting and very worthwhile projects to be involved in.

2. Resource Management and Planning Issues (Anne Manley, Graham Laws, Ross Jackson & Philippa Crisp)

Concessions

We have received a number of concession applications during the last few months. These include applications to run motorised tours/events and horse treks in the parks and forests. Filming applications continue to flow in for a variety of productions requiring a wide range of locations. Anne Manley recently attended a meeting with film companies and regional territorial authorities to discuss ways of becoming more "film friendly" and improving the way film applications are processed. Feedback from industry representatives was positive on how councils deal with the filming companies and filming activities in their areas.

Pest Plant Strategy

We are making good progress mapping pest plant infestations in Kaitoke Regional Park. Work is still continuing in the other Parks and Forests. Philippa Crisp will develop a strategy for dealing with pest plants once the extent of infestations is identified. The strategy will include developing service levels for pest plant control for inclusion in the Parks and Forests Environmental Asset Management Plan.

Pest Animal Control in the Water Collection Areas

Philippa Crisp analysed the information received from monitoring over the last few years on forest condition in the water collection areas. This work has formed the basis of recommendations for animal pest control operations. A separate report on this Order Paper outlines the work Philippa has undertaken.

3. **Community Connections and Marketing (Graham Laws, Anne Manley)**

Marketing Strategy - "*Regional Outdoors*" Programme Underway

"Regional Outdoors Summer Events", a programme of events in our Regional Parks and Forests, commenced in December and runs through to March. The programme offers people the chance to relax in the outdoors, learn about the rich cultural history of our region and understand more about plants, animals and the environment. Many of the activities are run in conjunction with clubs and volunteer groups involved in the parks, (e.g., Maara Roa, Tramways Museum). Officers from other Council Divisions have also helped the Rangers with specialised, informative, talks.

Events have included: guided walks, talks on mountain biking skills and secrets, power pramming (walks with baby buggies), history talks, a 4WD sunset tour, a hands-on pest control session, horse-care and maintenance, a walk the dog day, and a beginner's guide to the rainforest.

We have distributed 5000 copies of the *Regional Outdoors* programme through public libraries and visitor information centres and by mail to callers. The programme is also on our web-site. Newspaper advertising and informal radio interviews with park rangers have generated keen interest in the events. There has been good attendance throughout. We also believe the programme targets different types of people to those who normally use the parks and forests, for example the "power prammers". A survey undertaken at one event showed that two-thirds of those who filled out the questionnaires had never visited that forest before and many of them did not know it existed prior to seeing the event in the programme.

Tane's Track KiwiWalk Launched

On 22 January, as part of the *Regional Outdoors* programme, we launched the second WRC *KiwiWalk* - Tane's Track at Tunnel Gully Recreation Area in the Pakuratahi Forest. Councillor Werry, together with speakers from Sport Wellington Region and Hillary Commission, welcomed over 250 participants, including a large group of "power-prammers" to the walk. Councillors Shields, Laidlaw and Gibson also attended the event.

KiwiWalks are part of an on-going campaign by the Hillary Commission to get New Zealanders "off the couch" and into 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day. The walks are easily accessible, suitable for most ages and fitness levels, maintained by the local council, free to public use and can be completed in an hour or less.

Wainuiomata-Orongorongo Water Collection Area Access, 2000/01

Implementation of the Wainuiomata-Orongorongo Water Collection Area Access Plan is progressing well. The first group to go into the area was the Tararua Tramping Club on Sunday 17 December.

Chris Horne, from the Club, reported that the group had a fantastic day and was well briefed by Gareth Cooper, the mobile ranger, before entering the area. He said that Club members enjoyed the opportunity to ask questions of the rangers and to learn a bit about the catchment and water supply issues. The Club spent the day botanising on the Wainuiomata Valley floor (walking tours are limited to the Wainuiomata Catchment at this stage; access excludes the Orongorongo Catchment.) It was largely a botany education trip for Club members. However, they did find four species of plants not been previously recorded in the area. Chris wanted his appreciation recorded and acknowledged the value of having our rangers (Gareth, Fraser Oliver and Owen Spearpoint) along on the trip. (Groups have been booked to take tours in the catchment on all of the allocated access days until 30 June 2001.)

A formal “launch” of the Access Plan is scheduled for 25 February. This will be fairly low key event (not open to the public) involving Councillors, local iwi and some Water Group and Landcare staff members in conjunction with a visit by the Farm Forestry Institute on what is one of the approved access days. The “launch” was noted in the Councillor Bulletin in December and invitations will be distributed next week.

4. **Capital Works Projects (Graham Laws & Anne Manley)**

We have a number of capital works projects programmed for this financial year.

Road Resealing Queen Elizabeth Park and Kaitoke Regional Park

The resealing project at Queen Elizabeth Park was tendered during December. Pre-sealing work is occurring in January with re-sealing work happening in April. The Kaitoke resealing work is being undertaken by Technical Services, of Utility Services Division. The work is due for completion in May.

Akatarawa Forest Bridge Restoration – Karapoti Gorge

Upper Hutt City Council has decided not to transfer control and management of the Karapoti Gorge to WRC. Therefore, we will not be undertaking restoration of the bridges in that area this year as planned.

Restoration of Rimutaka Incline Walkway Bridges

All the timber for the three-year bridge restoration programme has arrived. We lodged the resource and Historic Places Trust consents, and tendered the Pakuratahi Bridge restoration contract in November. Work should commence in February. Purchasing all the timber up-front means that the 3 three-metre bridges programmed for restoration this year will be deferred until next year.

Replacing Paekakariki Beach Toilet, Queen Elizabeth Park

We are replacing the existing toilet at Paekakariki Beach further inland to the same design as the one at Whareroa Beach. Iwi have agreed to the chosen site and an Historic Places Trust authority obtained in case any archaeological features are disturbed during construction. Consultants have completed the design and gained resource consents. Tenders are currently being called, with construction planned to start in March, after peak summer visitation.

Replacing Whareroa Stream Bridge, Queen Elizabeth Park

We have completed site investigations for replacing the footbridge over Whareroa Stream. Consultants are preparing detailed designs and seeking resource consents. The chosen site is further upstream to keep the track away from the Whareroa Pa site and associated archaeological features. Iwi have agreed to the site and the consultant archaeologist advises that an Historic Places Trust authority will not be needed.

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Workshop

Design work was completed for the Battle Hill workshop and tenders called prior to Christmas. The tenders have come in significantly over budget. However, the preferred tenderer has been approached to work with the architect to reduce the scope of the project and the associated costs before construction begins.

5. Environmental Enhancement and Volunteer Projects (Ross Jackson)

“Learnwell” Environmental Education Programmes on Council lands

Parks and Forests and the Environmental Education Co-ordinators have made progress identifying the base sites on Council lands for the environmental education trails. The Environmental Education Co-ordinators have outlined their additional infrastructural requirements for the sites. We have costed the proposed works and determined priorities for spending funds allocated for this work through the Long-term Financial Strategy.

An architect is preparing plans for the additions to the Stratton Street woolshed. Tane’s Track at Tunnel Gully Recreation Area was upgraded to meet the standards required for the environmental trails. Work is progressing on fitting out the Ken Gray Education Centre at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park to meet the Environmental Co-ordinators needs. Work is also underway at the Wainuiomata Recreation Area.

Biodiversity Projects Underway

Consultation and initial planning is continuing with community groups at Queen Elizabeth Park on wetland restoration and remnant forest restoration. Good progress is being made on this project. A consultant is working on the Queen Elizabeth Park dune restoration project. Cannons Creek forest restoration is also progressing well with Friends of Maara Roa and Porirua City Council. A consultant is working on designs for the Rimutaka Incline Riparian Planting project. We have undertaken initial investigations on the Battle Hill Wetlands project and will shortly engage a consultant to carry out the design work.

Parks and Forests (Operations) Department

Manager: Bruce Andrell

Report for Period Ending 26 January 2001

1. Manager's Comments

Blair Ewington's Resignation - Western Mobile Ranger

Blair Ewington resigned from his position as Western Mobile Ranger to travel and work abroad. Blair will be missed by both his colleagues and management alike. We wish him well in his travels. Chris Muller has been appointed to replace Blair and will commence work on 23 January 2001.

Recruitment of Remaining Maintenance Team Vacancies

Senior staff have been busy recruiting the four Assistant Ranger vacancies to complete the Parks and Forests (Operations) structure. The following staff have been appointed:

- Janeen Collings Assistant Ranger, Western Sector
- Simon Griffin Assistant Ranger, Western Sector
- Andy Marriott Team Leader, Western Carpenter

The remaining position is expected to be filled in February 2001.

2. Battle Hill Farm Forest Park (John Bissell)

Pony Club Storage Shed Official Opening

The Pony Club storage shed was officially opened on Sunday, 17 December. Councillor Shaw and Porirua City Councillor Woodhouse attended along with some 60 people. Members of the combined Wellington pony clubs thanked the Regional Council for its support and making the venture possible. The shed will act as a secure storage area for equestrian events equipment and a base for event days.

Spring Visits Programme

The Battle Hill Spring Visits Education Programme has proven a real hit with children from all over the Wellington Region. Aimed at pre-school to year-three pupils, the programme provides an introduction to farming with 'a hands on experience' theme.

1,000 children participated in the programme during November and December. The programme is provided free of charge to promote environmental education and community connection. Parents and caregivers have applauded this policy because they often struggle to cover transport costs alone. The programme has been extended into the New Year to accommodate groups unable to book a space prior to Christmas.

Porirua Rotary Club Christmas Party for Underprivileged Children

John helped the Porirua Rotary Club run a Christmas Party in the Park for underprivileged children. The day was a big success featuring: a Ranger talk, a treasure hunt utilising a whole paddock, and a BBQ. Santa was popular with his tinsel covered sleigh (faintly resembling the Ranger's quad) towing a trailer full of presents.

Outdoor Event Programme

Programmes run on Battle Hill as part of the Regional Outdoors summer events programme have gone down a treat with the public. The 4WD sunset trip to the top of Battle Hill was booked out with 60 participants and approximately another 60 were turned away. We will run another trip for these people.

3. Belmont Regional Park (Chris Wootton)

Kilmister Block Track Opened

The Kilmister Block track was opened in December. There was a good turnout from members of the public wanting to walk the track, or simply curious about the Kilmister Block. Councillors Shields, Werry and Laidlaw attended the opening. MP for Ohariu Peter Dunne started runners, walkers and mountain bikes on the track.

Korokoro Dam 100 Years Old....Almost

The Korokoro Dam is an historic structure situated below the Oakleigh Street entrance to the Park. The Regional Council has been approached by a group of retired engineers who wish to survey the structure and assess its engineering importance. This is timely, as the dam was constructed in 1903 and is approaching its 100th year in existence. The dam has national importance as being the first concrete gravity fed dam constructed in New Zealand; serving Petone for many years as a water supply. Another lower dam provided Petone Woollen Mills, Cornish Street, with water. We are assisting in clearing vegetation from the face of the dam to allow surveying of the structure to be undertaken. We will continue working with the volunteer group to see if the structure and associated history can be better interpreted for the public.

Fire Ban Results in Curious Request

The recent fire ban imposed on parts of the Region resulted in some interesting requests for exemptions. Cloud 9 is currently filming the second series of "Dark Knight", using parts of Belmont Regional Park for outdoor locations. Cloud 9 requested an exemption from the fire ban to allow Ivanhoe to fire a flaming arrow into a straw mannequin. This request was granted with the proviso that careful precautions were taken and that Regional Council staff attended with fire fighting equipment. Ivanhoe proved a pretty poor shot, after about 15 takes the mannequin had been hit only once and failed to ignite as planned!

4. **Forest Lands (Dean Hearfield)**

Events

A successful two-day Police search and rescue familiarisation and training exercise was held during December in the Akatarawa Forest. Ranger staff provided local knowledge and assistance.

The Rimutaka Incline Walkway fun run attracted 1,600 participants on 18 November.

Rimutaka Incline Walkway Potholes Addressed

Rimutaka Prison inmates have been busy filling potholes on the Rimutaka Incline Walkway during December. Ten large truckloads of 40mm road metal were shovelled and compacted into the potholes, from the entrance gate to the Summit yards. A grader completed the job resulting in an improved track surface for users.

Rural Fire Training

The majority of Ranger staff successfully completed rural fire control training, under the new Fire and Rescue Services Industry Training Scheme. The week long course, run by the Department of Conservation, was held at Wainuiomata. Our Ranger staff are qualified to basic fire-fighter level and will comply with the requirement to have personnel trained and registered on the NZQA framework by the year 2002.

5. **Kaitoke Regional Park (Steve Edwards)**

Broken Leg

A swimmer broke his leg after falling from the Kaitoke weir on 18 December. Two Rangers and the Wellington Free Ambulance attended the incident. The Westpac Trust Rescue Helicopter airlifted the man to Wellington Hospital.

Weir Walk Closed

The Weir Walk remains closed due to the hazard of three unstable trees above the road. Staff will remove the trees as soon as practical.

Press Coverage

The Park has received some very positive press coverage over the period, with several articles in both the *Evening Post* and *Upper Hutt Leader*. One article placed Kaitoke Regional Park as one of the top 10 places to spend New Year's Eve in Wellington.

The northern rata had a very good flowering season and added a vibrant red colour to the Park environs during the Christmas/New Year period.

Outdoor Programme

Five events have been run in the Park as part of the Regional Outdoors programme. The family treasure hunt/nature discovery day attracted over 50 participants. Other activities such as the *Beginner's Guide to the Rainforest* have also been well supported. In all over 130 people have attended the events so far. Steve also gave talks to over 50 school children on Kaitoke Regional Park during the period.

Homicide

An Upper Hutt woman was killed while picnicking in the Park on 13 January. Steve arrived on the scene within 20 minutes by which time Police and Ambulance officers were in attendance. He provided Police with maps and information regarding the Park. Briefing notes on the incident were provided in the Councillors Bulletin.

6. Queen Elizabeth Park (Nola Urquhart)

A wetland restoration workshop within the Park was held during November; Department of Conservation, Kapiti Environmental Action group, Forest and Bird and Tramway's group took part.

Events of Note

The National Young Riders Championship was held at MacKays Crossing in November. Olympian Mark Todd presented the winner with the 'Charisma Trophy'.

The 'Regional Outdoors' events have been a success. Over 100 people enjoyed power pramming, horse-care, the archaeological walk and a Tramway tour of the Park.

The Lord of the Rings production came to Queen Elizabeth Park during November for a week's filming. This created a lot of interest within the Park, some of which was due to a large elephant shaped structure 'grazing' in the paddocks.

Work of Note

A groyne was repaired adjacent to the Wainui stream to help prevent erosion damaging the nearby Surf-life Clubrooms and foreshore.

The Conservation Corps spent two weeks in the Park releasing native plants and doing pest plant control work.

Park Incidents

There was a spate of serious incidents within the Park within the Christmas/New Year period. Five cases of indecent exposure and numerous car break-ins occurred. Park Ranger and Police patrols have increased to help counter the repeat offending.

7. Wainuiomata Water Collection Area (Scott Farrell)

Animal Control Operation

A goat control operation in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchment started on 15 January. The contract cullers (Pro-hunt) are a well established and professional outfit, who use a variety of methods to target goats. They successfully culled 101 goats, 15 deer and 24 pigs. Another operation is being scheduled before the end of the financial year.

Pre-hunt monitoring was carried out in December by Landcare Rangers. Scott has been working closely with Philippa Crisp, Landcare's Environmental Advisor with planning and managing the operation.

Catchment Guided Tour

Although not the official opening tour, which is to be held on 25 February, a preliminary tour into the Wainuiomata catchment took place on 17 December. Hutt Valley Tramping Club members were given a brief guided tour into the catchment by Landcare Rangers. Members of the Wellington Botanical Society within the tramping club, enjoyed themselves so much that a number of hours were added to the walk time (no plant goes undocumented!). At least two new species were added to previous Botanical Society records. By all accounts, a great day was had by all.

Removal of Plants

Over the past few months some people (beside the Botanical Society) have shown a keen interest in native plants. Rangers apprehended two people, on separate occasions, removing plants from the Wainuiomata Recreation Area.

Dark Knights Come Early

The Wainuiomata Recreation Area is a popular film location for the 'Dark Knight' television series. The film crew was back in December to shoot another episode of the popular TV series.

8. Visitor Numbers

December

	Battle Hill Farm Forest Park	Belmont Regional Park	Kaitoke Regional Park	Queen Elizabeth Park	Rimutaka Incline	Tunnel Gully
1999/00	10,784	9,978	33,581	50,701	3,022	5,850
2000/01	8,353	8,500	20,995	26,079	2,629	5,068
Variance	-2,430	-1,428	-12,586	-24,622	-394	-782

Variable December weather conditions kept park visitors away from all areas.

Year to Date

	Battle Hill Farm Forest Park	Belmont Regional Park	Kaitoke Regional Park	Queen Elizabeth Park	Rimutaka Incline	Tunnel Gully
1999/00	24,188	45,880	86,527	139,812	15,432	23,959
2000/01	21,340	40,677	71,073	130,143	15,780	19,833
Variance	-2,848	-5,204	-15,454	-9,670	348	-4,127

Visitor statistics are down on last year's figures due to the exceptional weather experienced during the 1999/00 summer.

BRUCE ANDRELL
Manager, Parks and Forests (Operations)