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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 1 October 2002.

2. Divisional Matters

2.1 Seasons Greetings

It seems terribly early, but this is the last scheduled meeting of the Committee for 2002. Accordingly, on behalf of the staff of the Division, I would like to wish you well for the coming Christmas and holiday season. No doubt 2003 will bring new challenges.

2.2 Economic Summit

Go Wairarapa is holding a two day Wairarapa Economic Summit on 13 and 14 November. This follows very soon after this Committee's endorsement of the Wairarapa Economic Strategy at the last meeting. Several members of the Committee will be attending this Summit.

2.3 Long Term Plan

As Committee members are well aware, work on the Council's new Ten Year Plan is proceeding steadily. Specific consultations in the Wairarapa on the proposed regional outcomes were held with the South Wairarapa and Carterton District Councils, and with Forest & Bird, and representatives of Central Government departments. While these meetings were interesting, it was clear that they will be more

productive in the future when there is a better overall understanding of the proposed new Local Government Act requirements.

2.4 Councillor Walkover – Wairarapa

Council was well represented at its first walkover of the Wairarapa rohe on 25 September. 11 Councillors, 2 Rural Services & Wairarapa Committee appointed members, and 5 staff accepted the invitation to meet with Iwi representatives and respected Kaumatua of both Ngati Kahungunu and Rangitaane Iwi.

Initially a powhiri that included elders from both Iwi was held at the Rangitaane office in Masterton. The group then visited the Okautete Marae where local elders spoke about the history of the area, the local projects where the Council was involved, and the future visions of the local hapu. Lunch was at Riversdale and then the group visited the Tauweru Urupa before travelling back home.

2.5 Sub-Committee

In the previous triennium a small sub-committee was established to make decisions with regard to ongoing difficulties with the Whakawirwiri Drain in the Tawaha-Hikinui area. This sub-committee automatically dissolved at the end of the last triennium but there are still some remaining difficulties with one landowner over his associated Lower Valley Scheme rates.

In order to finalise this matter, I would like to re-establish this sub-committee which consisted of Cr Buchanan, the Wairarapa Divisional Manager, and Cr Tony Draper, who is a South Wairarapa District Councillor, but more importantly, on this matter, is the Chairman of the Lower Wairarapa Valley Scheme Advisory Committee.

Recommendation:

That a Whaka Drain Sub-Committee consisting of Cr Ian Buchanan, Cr Tony Draper, and the Divisional Manager, Wairarapa be established with power to act to resolve current issues, including rating, relating to the Whakawirwiri Drain.

2.6 Staffing

Diederik Meenken, Senior Biosecurity Officer, Investigations has resigned effective from 15 November. Diederik has been a big contributor to the significant advances made in our biosecurity work in the past decade. His scientific input will be missed.

Chris Loader and Eddie Jephson have left our Biosecurity Monitoring Section to become independent monitoring contractors. Terry Blackburn has recently left the Bovine Tb Unit.

Colleen Sayer has transferred to the Planning and Resources Department and is now providing administration assistance to the Consents and Compliance Section. Nicky Detheridge-Davies is our new Masterton receptionist to replace Colleen. Nicky previously worked for the Hatuma Lime Co.

Brenda Clapp, Hydrologist, has resigned from the resource Investigations Section to take up employment with the Tasman District Council.

Karen Brewster, Section Leader, Policy and Planning is to take one year's maternity leave from Christmas. The vacancy is currently being advertised as a contract position.

3. Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)

3.1 Farm Environment Awards 2003

After a very successful programme in 2002, the Farm Environment Awards for 2003 were launched on 1st November 2002. Attendees included Councillors, staff, past entrants and judges, media representatives, sponsors and supporters. Cr Buchanan gave a short speech on behalf of the Council. Entry forms have now been circulated through the rural delivery system, as well as through a range of networks established during the running of last year's awards.

Organisers for this year's event include Adie Long, Wellington Co-ordinator, and Jamie Strang, Judges Co-ordinator. These two provided most of the administration last year and it is great to have them involved again. The programme for the 2003 awards culminates with the Awards evening on Thursday, 10 April 2003, and a Field Day on the winners property in early May.

A total of fifteen entries were received last year and the organisers have set themselves a target of thirty for this year. While this will put a strain on the judging process, it is heartening to see a number of last years entrants volunteer for judging duties. One of the major aims of the Awards is to foster the sharing of knowledge and the continued involvement of past entrants certainly enhances this philosophy.

3.2 Akura Conservation Centre

Sales through the winter have been above budgeted levels. This applies in particular to seedlings and poles. Pole numbers have exceeded expectations by 10%. In addition the number of stakes sold is well above budgeted levels. This is mainly due to the establishment of fodder blocks as part of the trial work being undertaken at Massey University's Riverside Farm.

Nursery management is up to date. Fertiliser has been applied, and all necessary pruning has been completed. New cuttings are somewhat slow to move, a result of the cooler temperatures experienced through October. Soil moisture recording is about to commence and will be closely monitored to assess water application rates, should lower than normal rainfall be experienced.

3.3 QE II National Trust Covenants

In 1999 funding was approved for three years to assist landowners and the QE II National Trust to protect areas of remnant bush throughout the region. In the two years to 30 June 2002 a total of 333.5 hectares of bush has been protected on private land. The Council's contribution to this has been \$80,000. In the current year \$35,000 has already been assigned to fencing and survey of 71 hectares. The total budget for this year is \$65,000.

The criteria for protection is that the remnant bush meet QE II National Trust standards. In the main the costs of fencing is shared between Council, QE II and the landowner, and the costs of survey are shared between Council and QE II. This has proven to be a very successful partnership arrangement, culminating in some of the region's significant pieces of bush being protected in perpetuity.

3.4 Technical Services Activities

The main area of work to report is the completion of a 250 ha topographical survey at the proposed Te Muna irrigation dam site and ponding area. Plans have been produced for Lincoln Ventures, the engineers for the project.

A start on the next major GPS survey project has been made, this involves surveying in 120 lower valley bench markers so that the Wairarapa GIS survey map coverage can be completed.

Meetings continue with Go Wairarapa on the development of a Wairarapa Information System, a new internet site to provide information on physical resources, land use models and market information for the Wairarapa region. This was followed by a further meeting with EcoAgriLogic on what information the Wellington Regional Council can provide to the project.

A large amount of mapping has been completed for the Coastal Strategy project with the production of Landuse and Development maps, Landuse Capability maps, Slope of Land maps and Heritage maps showing Wairarapa Pre European history.

3.5 Tauanui Access Progress

Terms for access to Tauanui have been agreed with the Trustees of Pirinoa 8B and the Maori Trustee on behalf of the owners of Pirinoa

Blocks 7 and 8A. Signatures are required on the various documents following a hui with the Maori landowners.

3.6 Silviculture

There has been steady work on the silviculture programme at Stoney Creek with a total of 135 hectares of pruning and 226 hectares of thinning completed in the year to date.

3.7 Gorse Spraying

On calm days gorse spraying at Hiwinui on the Dixon boundary and harvested areas has been completed. A chemical that is suitable for spraying without damaging replanted seedlings is not as spectacularly apparent as some of the other gorse control sprays, but is effective with persistence.

3.8 Rural Fire

Staff were involved in the running of a major Rural Fire Training Day in early October. Approximately 160 fire fighters were trained in working in conjunction with an Air Force Iroquois helicopter as a mode of transport to remote sites and direct fire attack using a monsoon bucket.

Ongoing work towards an amalgamated Wairarapa Rural Fire District is continuing on the basis of positive encouragement from the CEO's of the three Wairarapa District Councils.

Local co-ordination of Rural Fire Research to develop a technique for grassland curing as a measure of fire hazard assessment is also continuing. Objective measurements of grass curing are tied in with soil moisture and other weather parameters from a NIWA station near Martinborough.

3.9 Waiohine Road Bridge Replacement

Councillors and staff from South Wairarapa District Council, Carterton District Council and Wellington Regional Council have recently met. The representatives agreed in principle that the Councils should contribute the \$300,000 required to construct a longer road bridge. Such a road bridge will make the Apple Barrel Floodway redundant except for extremely large events.

A letter signed by the two Mayors and the Chairman of the Rural Services & Wairarapa Committee has been forwarded to Transit NZ outlining the position and requesting an update on when the bridge will proceed. In the meantime each agency is investigating a variety of funding options.

3.10 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme

A scheme meeting and inspection was completed in early October. The inspection viewed the wave lap erosion of the stopbanks occurring downstream of the Barrage Gates. An engineering student will investigate options over the summer. Background information for the review will also be collated.

Work continues on the hydraulic model of the scheme by a consultant, Phil Wallace.

3.11 Works Programme

Willow lopping and planting is almost complete. For the first time contractors have been engaged to assist in the completion of the large willow lopping programme.

3.12 Resource Consents

The gravel extraction on the Minnell-Johnson reach of the Waingawa River is almost complete. This work will assist in the realignment of the Waingawa River and so reduce the threat of erosion at this site.

A resource consent has been recently granted to control the grass Spartina. The area of Spartina has increased over the years on the Onoke stopbank, opposite Lake Ferry.

3.13 Rivers Biodiversity

Staff involved in the development and implementation of the Riparian Strategy, Planning & Resources Dept staff and Alex Benton, recently attended a meeting with a Fonterra representative, Charlotte Rutherford. Charlotte outlined the recent initiative by Fonterra for the development of riparian margins. She indicated that the initiative to require “streams wider than a stride and deeper than Red Band” to be fenced off was running into resistance from shareholders in some areas as the shareholders believe the initiative is doing Regional Council work.

Charlotte believed that in the Wairarapa there were more shareholders for than against the initiative.

Staff indicated they would consider ways to support the Fonterra initiative.

3.14 Whatarangi Blue Disc Subdivision

Coastal erosion continues at this subdivision. Recently a meeting was held between local representatives from the subdivision, South Wairarapa District Council, and the Wellington Regional Council.

Factors contributing to the erosion are:

- Influence of wave action
- Subterranean underflow
- Overflows within the subdivision from roofs and septic tanks.

The local residents are keen to see the South Wairarapa District Council control the underflow. South Wairarapa District Council believe that the influence of wave action is the greatest. SWDC are likely to test a pilot drain to control the underflow next winter. They have requested a contribution from the Regional Council. At this time it has been indicated that the Regional Council does not have any funds to contribute to the pilot drain.

4. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

4.1 Old Mans Beard

Tenders have been accepted for two contracts controlling Old Mans Beard on both banks of the Ruamahanga River from Wardells Bridge to the Kokatau Bridge. They are due for completion prior to 31 December 2002.

4.2 Biological Control

A release of the agent Old Mans Beard Sawfly has been made in the Wellington suburb of Newtown. This is the second release of this agent in the Region with the first made in April this year at Mangaroa, Upper Hutt. Like most biological control releases it will take two or more years to determine establishment and effectiveness.

4.3 Service Delivery Control

The Regional Pest Management Strategy determines that the Council is responsible for controlling all Eradication Species and, in some situations, a number of Containment Species. Staff generally control minor infestations but arrange for contractors to clear larger and more difficult areas where specialised equipment is required.

Since the end of August 2002, contractors have completed 13 operations to control a range of species on both private and public land. Species controlled include Boneseed, Climbing Asparagus, Buckthorn, Sweet Pea Shrub, Blue Passion Flower, Smilax, Hornwort, and Madeira Vine. All work was carried out to quoted prices and the total cost to date is over \$30,100.

4.4 Communications

Biosecurity staff arranged a major display at the Wellington Home and Garden Show held at the Westpac Stadium from 27 to 29 September. An estimated 15,000 to 18,000 people attended the show and there was a high level of interest in the Biosecurity display. The Plants display focus was on the identification and control of aquatic pest plants and Banana Passionfruit. The issue of illegal dumping of garden waste was also highlighted.

4.5 Hornwort

The area of Hornwort infesting Forest Lake at Otaki was sprayed with Diquat herbicide on 9 October. A Rotorua contractor using an airboat fitted with a boom spray application unit carried out the work. A NIWA scientist, Dr. Paul Champion will survey the lake on 4 November to determine the level of success.

4.6 Rook Control

The latest rook population census has just been completed. The population has reduced by 34% over the past year from an estimated 892 rooks to 612. Breeding rookeries have reduced from 18 to 15. A small rookery (3 nests) was found on Pikarere Farm, just south of Titahi Bay. This was a surprise as there was confidence that the whole Western Zone was free of rooks. Once reported, the rookery was treated immediately.

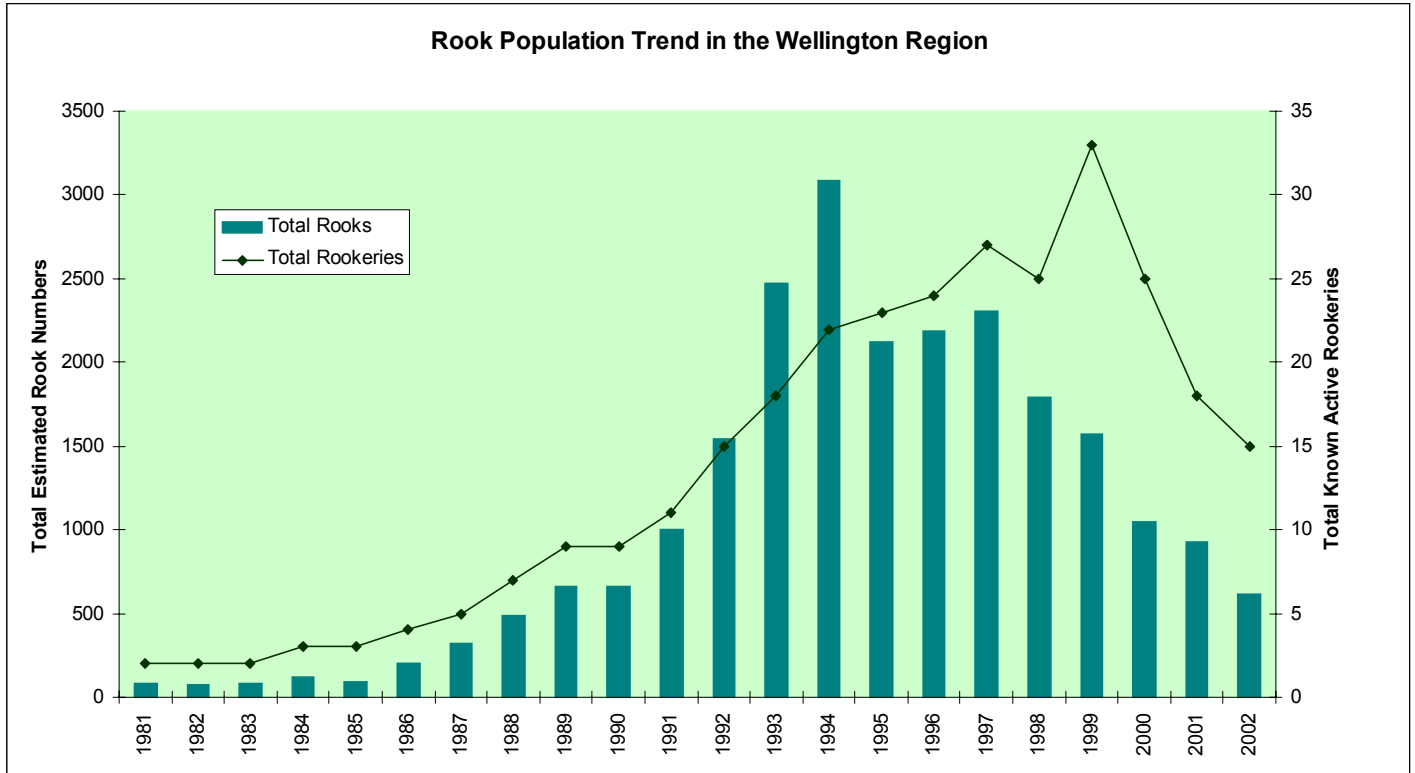
It has been traditional to undertake the annual Spring survey by trying to count nests from the ground. Two counters are used to provide more accurate data. The ground based exercise disclosed only 134 nests compared to the 175 nests sighted from the helicopter. In future it is intended to rely solely on the helicopter survey. Inspection from a helicopter also provides more accurate information about the seasonal variations in breeding in different parts of the region. Rooks may be in varying stages of nest building at some sites and have fully developed chicks at others. Knowing this information is critical to planning the helicopter nest-baiting programme. Nest baiting was undertaken in two stages this year with the last on 29 October.

Trials were undertaken this year using 'half strength' bait at three selected rookeries. The toxin (DRC1339) in the bait gel is the most costly ingredient at \$3.60 a gram. Indications to date are that the 'half strength' bait is just as effective as the normal 'full strength' bait. Canterbury Regional Council conducted a similar trial last year and had similar favourable results. There is no intention to reduce the toxicity of the traditional ground poisoning baits such as bread, maize or walnuts.

A close working relationship has been maintained with Horizons.mw regarding rook control. Horizons.mw have treated at least 900 nests (an

estimated 3150 rooks) in the Tararua District, working from the common regional council boundary northwards. This should assist in stemming rook migration into our region.

Hawkes Bay Regional Council is also undertaking a large-scale rook nest-baiting programme using information and techniques provided by this Council. HBRC staff and contractor visited the Masterton office in September and were provided guidance on the most proficient techniques, safe operating procedures and contractual documentation.



4.7 Bovine Tb – Operational Progress

It is intended to treat 366,473 hectares for vector control during the 2002/03 year.

Possum Control	343,948 hectares
Ferret Control	22,525 hectares

Total: 366,473 hectares

To date, approximately 320,000 hectares has been contracted. Tenders close for the remaining 46,000 hectares at the end of November.

4.8 Areas Completed to Date

The following areas are completed and have been monitored or are currently being monitored. To date 25,160 hectares have been completed.

	Hectares Treated	%
WRC Bovine Unit	8,676	4.2
Professional Guiding Service	-	0.0
Trappersnz	9,073	24.9
J McCaslin	7,411	21.6
Target Pests	0	0.0

All contractors (except Target Pests) are currently undertaking control within the region. It is expected that many more hectares have been completed or are under control. However, the above table only considers hectares where a formal performance monitor has been completed.

4.9 Monitoring Results

The following trend and performance monitors have been completed:

(1) Trend Monitors

All the trend monitors listed below consider operational areas that were last treated 1-2.5 years ago. Of significance is the maintenance of low RTCs in areas where aerial 1080 applications have occurred.

Bideford	Area 1	6.0%
	Area 2	5.0%
	Area 3	3.0%
	Area 4	0.0%

These areas do not relate to specific strata. However, Area 4 was predominantly 1080 aerial control last time it was treated.

Te Wharau	MR 1	4.0%	
	MR 3	9.1%	
	MR 5	1.5%	(control 1080 aerial)
Tinui	MR 5	1.3%	(control 1080 aerial)
Whangaehu	HR 1	12.7%	
	HR 2	3.9%	
	MR 1	9.2%	
	MR 2	10.8%	

(2) Performance Monitors

Kahutara-Pirinoa	HR 2	0.2%	WRC Bovine Unit
Martinborough	MR 1, 2	0.7%	Trappersnz
Ponatahi-Longbush	MR 1	1.3%	J McCaslin

4.10 Mangaroa-Kaitoke

This operation is currently progressing very slowly. Wind has delayed the application of aerial 1080 pellets. However, prefeed has been applied to approximately 8,400 hectares.

Ground control has been completed over approximately 4,000 hectares using Brodifacoum, Cyanide and traps.

4.11 Contractor Market

To date, 19 contracts have been let and 68 tenders received:

Average tenders per contract:	3.6
Number of tenderers	6

5. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)**5.1 Environmental Incidents**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Complaint</i>	<i>Details</i>
23/09/2002	Dumping of building waste in river bed, South Wairarapa	Unable to trace offender.
24/09/2002	Dust from industrial site, Masterton	Under investigation.
3/10/2002	Odour from neighbouring offal pit, Masterton	Neighbour asked to cover dead animals in the pit with soil.
9/10/2002	Flooding of septic tank, rural Masterton	Septic tank sited in flood prone area. Advised to divert floodwater from immediately around the area.
11/10/2002	Discoloured water and dying weed in stream, South Wairarapa	Weed damage caused by frost. Could not trace source of discoloured water, but suspected to be related to stock access upstream.
14/10/2002	Rubbish dumped in Waiohine riverbed, Greytown	Under investigation.
19/10/2002	Car seen dumping rubbish on riverbed, Greytown	Under investigation.
21/10/2002	Dust from nearby industrial area, Masterton .	Offender was asked to water down yard
23/10/2002	Abnormally low water level in Kuripuni Stream	Unable to ascertain cause of low streamflow.

24/10/2002	Smoke nuisance from burning green vegetation, Masterton	One off incident. Person responsible was spoken to and gave an undertaking not to burn large amounts of greenwaste in future. No further action required.
24/10/2002	Pet eels missing from Kuripuni Stream, Masterton	Unable to determine cause.
26/10/2002	Smoke from burning garden waste near the road restricting visibility for passing motorists, Masterton	At time of inspection, smoke was not obscuring visibility. No further action required.
27/10/2002	Odour from restaurant, Greytown	No odour from premises at time of inspection. Prevailing wind was away from complainant's address, no further action required.

5.2 Enforcement

Waingawa Chemical Spill

The joint prosecution has been heard by the Environment Court and a copy of the decision is awaited.

5.3 Notified Consents

Carterton - Kaipatangata water take	Submissions closed 23 May 2002. Pre hearing meeting held and verbal agreement reached as to fish passage and reduced term. Granting should be achieved without a hearing.
Featherston Sewage – discharge	Draft AEE completed. Consultation proceeding with initial site meeting held.
Masterton Sewage – discharge	Hearing adjourned after three days to allow consideration and comment on MDC proposed conditions. Decision to follow.
Water Races - 6 Masterton, Carterton, and South Wairarapa District Councils	Applications received for all races. Some final information to be supplied before notification, planned for late November.

5.4 Coastal Strategy

The Group met on 22 October to consider the issues and options that have arisen from submissions and the draft technical reports. A workshop is to be held on 18 November to consider the technical reports. Eight reports have been prepared covering:

- Landscape
- Ecology and Natural Environment
- Heritage
- Coastal Hazards
- Recreation and Access
- Land Use and Development
- Built Environment and Infrastructure
- Planning Context and Methods

Preparations are being made for the public consultation programme to take place this summer.

5.5 Iwi Projects

Ngati Hamua Sites of Significance

Good progress is being made by Rangitaane staff identifying sites and recording them in a GIS database. Protocols are being developed covering the use of the information by council staff.

Okautete Wetland

The fencing of the wetland has been completed with willow removal and minor wetland work to follow. The site will then be left for a year before decisions are made as to water level control options.

5.6 Water Meters

Inspections are proceeding to ensure the required water meters have been installed on the 38 irrigation bores in stressed underground water zones. Huangaroa and Martinborough bores are now all metered whilst six meters remain to be installed in Kahutara and Parkvale. These are being followed up.

5.7 Coastal Sewage

Riversdale

The District Council's project group decided to cancel the public meeting originally planned for Labour Weekend, allowing more time for the consultants and Technical Group to work on options and scheme extent.

Lake Ferry

Site survey and identification and soil testing of potential disposal areas has been completed. The full proposal is planned for completion by January.

5.8 Gladstone River Recording Site

A river level recording site for floodwarning has been re-established at Gladstone Bridge following requests from river scheme property owners. A new type of instrument has been used, which involves "cone radar" to measure water levels, as opposed to traditional float or pressure methods. It is not suitable for measuring low flows.

The site was previously withdrawn following a review of hydro sites. The new equipment should overcome difficulties associated with the

previous installation. An agreement with the Operations Department covers operating and maintenance costs.

5.9 Underground Aquifer Reviews

Reviews are in progress for the Parkvale and Rathkeale aquifers. These will review information gained from past monitoring, bore testing and usage and provide revised safe yields for each aquifer. This information will then be used in future consent applications and renewals to ensure sustainable use of each resource.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa