



Report 04.204
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Committee Rural Services and Wairarapa
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Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of current activities and provide information of interest since the previous meeting held on 16 March 2004.

2. Divisional Matters

2.1 Wairarapa Coastal Strategy

The launch of the Coastal Strategy and Guidelines was held at aratoi on 16 April. This function was attended by 50 guests largely from the organisations involved in the formulation of the Strategy, i.e. the three Wairarapa district councils, the two Wairarapa Iwi, and Greater Wellington. This launch marked the end of this comprehensive three year project and saw the formal handing over of the documents to the three district councils and Greater Wellington for follow up action.

Copies of the Strategy and Guidelines have been provided to all district councillors and members of this Committee and are also available from all council offices. The Guidelines have also been sent to all coastal property owners.

The Wairarapa Joint Planning Committee has formally resolved to include the relevant policies and recommendations from the Coastal Strategy in the Draft Wairarapa District Plan.

The completion of the Strategy project is an opportune time to record the efforts of those from this organisation who have been involved in the process. Councillors Buchanan and Long represented the Council on the Coastal Strategy Group, while several staff were involved in a number of aspects of the project. Steve Blakemore was the overall project manager

and he kept the project on time and within budget. Major contributions were also made by Karen Williams, Rachel Hornsby, and Helen Marr (who has recently left the Council).

Rachel Hornsby was invited to present a paper at the recent Australian Coastal Conference in Tasmania. Entitled “Consultation and Cups of Tea – Development of a Community Based Coastal Strategy”, the paper covers the process for community input that was followed throughout the project.

2.2 Farm Environment Awards

The 2004 Farm Environment Awards presentations were made at a function at the Copthorne Resort Solway Park, Masterton, on 15 April. This was an opportunity to recognise the contribution to these awards by the various commercial sponsors, the judges, and of course, the entrants.

Particular mention must be made of the efforts of Dave Cameron from the Council who has overseen these awards since their beginning in this region in 2001.

The Supreme winners were Richard and Karen Kershaw who farm a 279 ha block at Moiki, Martinborough, and a 192 ha block at Ruakokopatuna. They run an extensive cropping and seed production business at the home farm and use the Ruakokopatuna property as a breeding and fattening operation.

A Field Day is to be held on the Kershaw’s Moiki Road property on Wednesday, 5 May, beginning at 1.00 pm. Councillors and Committee members are welcome to attend.

Other awards presented on the night included categories for nutrient management, habitat improvement, and innovation.

2.3 Taskforce Green Workers

Following the February flood events the Government has funded clean-up work by Taskforce Green workers. Greater Wellington agreed to be the employing and supervising agency for these workers in the Wairarapa.

Kevin Burdan from the Council has been managing two Taskforce Green gangs of five workers each. They have worked in both the north and south Wairarapa. The workload is now decreasing and one gang has been laid off.

Kevin has handled the workers in a professional manner and has received many positive comments from farmers who have used their labour. Kevin observes in any future recovery programmes that it might be more appropriate to include Taskforce Green workers with established labour forces such as fencers. If this occurred the workers would learn new skills.

2.4 Bio Works

The Bovine Business Unit has been given a new name – Greater Wellington Bio Works.

This unit has been referred to as the Bovine Unit for a number of years. The name change is intended to emphasise to staff and others that the situation has now changed from a works unit within a department to a stand-alone business unit with its own manager (Scott Forbes).

The name change is also intended to convey the unit's function (i.e. to undertake works for biodiversity and biosecurity reasons) with a short name that is easily remembered. A name was also sought that did not restrict the unit to just Bovine Tb work as they are already undertaking some other animal pest control work.

2.5 Staffing Issues

Darryl Squires has been appointed as Resource Advisor in the Consents and Compliance Section. Darryl is completing an MSc at Victoria and was employed as a student during the summer.

3. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

Pest Animals

3.1 KNE

Maintenance continues in all KNE throughout Wellington, Porirua, Hutt and Upper Hutt City Councils and private areas.

Mustelid control is underway in Porirua Scenic Reserve along with possum and rat control.

Wild pigs have begun appearing in Wrights Hill Key Native Ecosystem management area. They have been causing concern to residents in Karori and south Karori coming down into back yards and doing a lot of damage in the reserve. Attempts to locate and control have proved unsuccessful to date.

The East Harbour predator control programme has started with rat and possum control. There is a huge volunteer input into this programme, which the Biosecurity Department is managing. This is the Department's largest ground control operation (in hectares) undertaken for intensive integrated pest control under the Regional Pest Management Strategy.

The Department is about to commence some control in Speedy's Reserve on behalf of the Parks and Forests Department.

The Tawa Bush care group has commenced filling bait stations in Wilf Mexted Bush.

The KNE private land prioritisation project is well underway with work currently involving policy development, developing a field survey form, mapping, and sending letters to affected occupiers for survey approval. This project is being undertaken as part of the proposed Land Ecosystem Action Plan. The project will include ground truthing the top 100 private land sites in the region to determine the level of assistance that Greater Wellington can provide.

3.2 Rooks

Traditionally the months from December to the end of March is the Department's window of opportunity to carry out ground based poison control operations for rooks that inflict damage to ripening cereal crops and re-sown winter crops. In almost every instance, a control programme is initiated following a client complaint. The past summer is the first since rook control regained momentum in the early 1990s, that we have received no requests to undertake control to protect agricultural crops.

The assumption made is that aerial nest baiting has played a leading role in lowering the rook population to the point that no assistance calls have been received. Rooks are still evident in traditional areas but they appear to be in low numbers that pose no real threats to the farming sector.

A few rooks have been sighted in Ohariu Valley, in a former rookery. Staff will be maintaining a close watch to determine future control options.

3.3 Rabbits

Wairarapa based staff are currently carrying out annual rabbit proneness surveys at some historical properties around the region. The general theme is that we are facing another year of suppressed rabbit numbers. A wetter than normal summer, combined with the RHD virus still being present and active, appear to be contributing factors.

3.4 Goats

Upper Hutt staff are receiving a number of calls from landowners about feral goats on private land and Wellington City Council land. Staff are currently negotiating goat control responsibilities with Wellington City under a Memorandum of Understanding.

3.5 QEII Covenants

Staff have commenced discussions with landowners in the Morisons Bush KNE management area to encourage them to consider having areas of remnant bush along the escarpment, legally protected under the QEII process. Presently only two covenanted areas exist within the operational area. There is a need to expand on this for the future benefit of the predator control programme, which has been in place since 1998.

Continued funding and support from Greater Wellington is largely reliant on legal protection. One large landowner in the Moiki Road area has been approached and seems willing to meet with the QEII representative to discuss possible covenanting options. There are plans to approach other landowners along the escarpment in the immediate future along with landowners not currently covenanted in the Tauherenikau predator control operation.

3.6 Coastal Ecological Surveys

Staff have recently completed undertaking coastal ecological survey work for the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy. Field assessments began in early February and were completed in late March. This involved checking that pre-identified ecological boundaries were correctly placed GPS co-ordinates were taken and vegetation species cross-referenced against any existing information currently available. Where errors existed, the appropriate changes were made and recorded.

3.7 Communications

Articles appeared in Hutt News and Eastbourne Herald about the East Harbour predator control programme. This operation includes treating part of East Harbour Regional Park and adjoining private land.

Two Biosecurity staff attended the Pauatahanui Farm and food festival on Sunday 14th March. This was attended by 3000 people and continues to grow each year.

A display was set up for Naturally Ngaio Day at Ngaio town hall on 28th March.

Large A1 signs have been erected to the three main entrances to Miramar Peninsula asking residents “Is Miramar Peninsula possum free?” and asking people to contact GW if they have seen or heard a possum. This will be followed up by some night counting with spotlight.

Brochures continue to be updated with rooks, KNE and rabbits being the next on the list to conform to the new branding.

Pest Plants

Eradication Species

3.7 Eelgrass

A site of eelgrass was reported by an occupier in Carterton. The site was contained to three artificial ponds in the backyard. The infestations have been removed.

3.8 Perennial Nettle

A letter was sent to DoC regarding the large infestation of perennial nettle on Sommes/Matuia Island. They have agreed to meet early May to outline a programme of control. Greater Wellington has offered to assist with the mapping and the drafting of a control programme. As a joint venture it should assist our future relationships with the Department.

3.9 African Feathergrass

A further site has been located at Karori cemetery. This has been added to the service delivery contract currently in operation in Wellington City.

Suppression Species

3.10 Old Man's Beard

There have been a steady number of queries and complaints, particularly in Wellington City where twenty-seven complaints have been received. Letters have been sent to all occupiers. Nine of these infestations were minor and were consequently controlled by Biosecurity staff. Two Notices of Direction have been served during this period. Nine new sites were located at Eastbourne.

3.11 Wild Ginger

Thirty-three new sites have been located throughout Eastbourne and Wellington City. Twenty-one of these sites were controlled by staff with the remainder being the responsibility of the occupiers.

3.12 Default Notices

Progress has been made with three Default Notices served under s129 of the Biosecurity Act 1993. Default Notices are only served after landowners have failed to take any action to control pests after being formally directed to by Biosecurity staff. Default action normally involves a private contractor being hired to complete the work and Greater Wellington recovering costs from the landowner.

In two cases, landowners agreed to contractors undertaking the work and being invoiced directly. In the third case, the landowner has been given a short time extension to complete the work. All three cases involved site visits and numerous discussions with the landowners concerned.

3.13 Publicity

Staff gave presentations to a large community group at Silverstream and to the Weltech Organic students on the Regional Pest Management Strategy and biological control of pests.

Staff also attended the Pauatahanui Food and Farm Festival.

Kapiti & Porirua Areas

3.14 Aquatic species

A new site of Egeria has recently been located. Staff are currently liaising with DoC who have offered their assistance in controlling the infestation. It is proposed that a pamphlet be developed in conjunction with DoC covering both aquatic pest plants and fish pests.

3.15 Eradication species

Two large sites of Madeira vine and sweet pea shrub have been included in the service delivery contract for Kapiti/Porirua and will be controlled before the end of May.

A difficult site of Woolly Nightshade in Paraparaumu has been controlled.

3.16 Containment Species

Evergreen Buckthorn: Enforcement work is currently being undertaken in Otaki. Notices of Direction are being forwarded to landowners.

Banana Passionfruit: Staff are currently undertaking enforcement work in Otaki.

Kapiti Coast District Council, Porirua City Council, and Transit NZ are completing control work on Banana Passionfruit and Old Man's Beard, as directed by Biosecurity staff.

3.17 Biological control

Ragwort: Two releases of Ragwort Flea Beetle have been made, one in Otaki and the other in Waikanae.

Bovine Tb

3.18 2003/04 Vector Management Programme

The approved programme for the 2003/04 year includes the following:

	AHB Approved Hectares
Possum control	333,783
Ferret control	31,770
Surveys	<u>44,942</u>
	410,495

Control Operations:

To date the following contractors have been issued control contracts for the 2003/04 year:

	Possum (ha)	Ferret (ha)	Survey (ha)	Total
GW Bovine Unit	185,814	23,828	22,344	231,991
Professional Guiding	41,894	2,874	3,102	47,867
J McCaslin	40,356	-	14,444	53,653
Target Pest Control	6,620	-	-	6,620
Horizons Regional Council	19,311	5,068	-	24,379
Central Trappers	4,700	-	-	4,700
Control Removed	31,476	-	5,047	36,520
Totals	333,783	31,770	44,942	410,495

3.19 2003/04 Programme Progress

To date, the following hectares have been completed –

- ◆ 137,675 hectares of possum control
- ◆ 19,845 hectares of ferret control
- ◆ 13,256 hectares of vector surveys.

203,199 hectares are still required to be completed. However, all contractors are working within the region and many contracts are nearing completion. At this stage, we have not been notified by contractors that they do not expect to complete their 2003/04 contracts.

Satisfactory vector control progress has been made in March and April following the difficult January / February weather patterns.

Areas Completed:

	Possum (ha)	Ferret (ha)	Survey (ha)	Total
GW Bovine Unit	71,906	11,903	7,316	91,125
Professional Guiding	25,259	2874	3,102	31,235
J McCaslin	33,293	-	2,838	36,131
Target Pest Control	5,147	-	-	5,147
Horizons Regional Council	2,043	5068	-	7,111
Central Trappers	-	-	-	-
Control Removed	31,476	-	5,047	36,520
Totals	137,675	19,845	13,256	170,776

3.20 Monitoring Results

The following recent monitoring results have been recorded.

Operation	Strata	RTC	Contractor
Bideford	MR 6	0.5	J McCaslin
Castlehill	HR 3	1.8	Horizons Regional Council
Castlehill	MR 1	0.3	Horizons Regional Council
East Alfredton	MR 1	0.3	Trend Monitor
Featherston	HR 1	2.5	GWRC (mean failure)
Holdsworth-Carterton	MR 1	1.7	Trend Monitor
Martinborough	HR 1	0.9	G Vermeer
Mt Bruce-Waipoua	MR 3	1.7	Trend Monitor
South East Wairarapa – Stage 1	HR 3	0.9	Target Pest
South East Wairarapa – Stage 1	HR 4	1.6	G Vermeer
South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	MR 3	4.7	GWRC (mean failure)
Taueru-Maungaraki	HR 1	0.2	G Vermeer
Taueru-Maungaraki	HR 2	0.0	Trend Monitor
Te Wharau	MR 2	1.0	Trend Monitor
Te Wharau	MR 7	0.3	Trend Monitor
Tinui	MR 2	2.5	Trend Monitor
Tinui	MR 3	3.2	Trend Monitor
Waingawa		2.0	GWRC (line failure)
Whangaehu-Mauriceville	HR 3	0.9	J McCaslin
Whangaehu-Mauriceville	MR 1	2.1	Trend Monitor
Whangaehu-Mauriceville	MR 2	0.7	J McCaslin
Whangaehu-Mauriceville	MR 3	1.9	J McCaslin

4. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

4.1 Environmental Incidents

Date	Incident	Outcome
2 March	Septic tank overflow, Carterton	Digger was brought in to make drainage improvements to the area.
8 March	Water pollution in stream, Greytown	Investigated, found likely to have been caused by cows having general access to the stream. No further action taken.
9 March	Dust from industrial site, Masterton.	Letter to company.
13 March	Non-cleanfill being dumped at site in Martinborough	Landowner has been advised what is acceptable cleanfill.
13 March	Spraydrift from Greytown orchard	Orchardist has been spoken and written to.
23 March	Odour from piggery, Carterton	As above.

24 March	Piggery discharging waste in an area where they have been asked to stop	Meeting held with piggery owner. Problems at the site are still being worked on by staff.
25 March	Smoke pollution from resident burning large amount of greenwaste, Carterton	Person responsible was asked not to burn the further green material which was stockpiled. Material has since been taken to recycling.
1 April	Odour from industrial site, Masterton	Explanation sought – malfunction of pollution control equipment. No further action taken.
15 April	Dust from industrial site, Masterton	Under investigation.

4.2 Notified Consents

<i>Consent Application</i>	<i>Status</i>
The Terrace – Martinborough Groundwater take.	Granted.
Sewage discharge. Application for variation – Carterton District	Submissions closed on 19/12/02. Application on hold at applicants request.
Water Races - Carterton District (2)	Awaiting further information from applicant's consultant and Court decision.
Water Races - South Wairarapa District (2)	Hearing to be scheduled.
Featherston Sewage – discharge	Hearing to be scheduled.
Hammond and Co. Ground Water Take – Papawai	Unable to get affected party sign off under limited notification. Hearing scheduled.
East Leigh Ltd – Riversdale. 140 lot subdivision. Land Use Consents (3), Water Permit, Discharge Permits (3)	Application to be jointly determined with Masterton District Council as the lead agency

4.3 Enforcement – Appeals

<i>Appellant</i>	Nature of Appeal	Status
I Alexander	Appeal of abatement notice requiring irrigation to cease	Heard before Judge Sheppard in October. Additional evidence accepted by Judge. Important jurisdiction issues involved. Decision awaited.

4.4 Road Closures Information

An internal debrief has been held with staff involved in the two February events with several improvements noted to be actioned. A subsequent meeting was held, attended by District Council roading staff, Transit NZ contractors and consultants, Fire and Ambulance personnel and Civil Defence officers.

The opportunity was taken to go over the events and the responses given, followed by Greater Wellington's agreed role and the information required from

and by agencies. There are a number of issues to be followed up and developed further. These include suggestions of:

- Greater Wellington co-ordinating information on all major road closure events, not just flooding.
- Greater Wellington extending its information to State Highways and alternative routes to Wellington, Palmerston North and Woodville.
- Use of telemetry to provide wind gust information on the Rimutakas and at Mt Bruce.
- District Councils ensuring priority route information is regularly updated.
- Improvements in the AA State Highway information system that is contracted to Transit NZ.

4.5 Masterton Sewage

A meeting was held with Masterton District Council staff and their consultants to discuss progress and issues related to their investigation reports. John Harding has recently been appointed as Project Manager to the sewage treatment upgrade project.

4.6 Take Charge

As part of Greater Wellington's "Take Charge" programme, a team is visiting all Wairarapa service stations, inspecting and going through a check list with each manager to ensure that suitable environmental practices and spill provisions are in place. This follows the successful approach used in Wellington to achieve good environmental management and protection on a co-operative basis.

4.7 Hydrology

Rainfall

Rainfall totals in the Wairarapa for March were below average in marked contrast to the rainfall statistics in February, where rainfall over the Wairarapa was over 400% the average.

The table below gives the rainfall figures for March 2004 and the previous month for three representative sites.

Site	Location	March		February		March	February
		mm	Average	mm	Average	% of Average	
Angle Knob	Tararua Ranges	306	448	1702	354	68	480
Alloa	Middle Valley	45	79	286	64	57	447
Tanawa Hut	Eastern Hills	43	101	329	75	43	439

Rivers

River flows for March were below average from the Tararua Ranges catchments, but above average at Waihenga (Martinborough Bridge).

The above average flow at Waihenga occurred although Tararua rainfall and upper tributary flows were below average. This is considered to be a continuation of reflection of the high base flows from the previous month.

March was a much "quieter" month than February where there were four floods in the Wairarapa, the event on the 15th - 16th February was the largest flood on record in the Lower Valley.

Site	March		February		March	February
	<i>m³/s</i>	Average	<i>m³/s</i>	Average	% of average	
Waiohine	13	18	65.4	15.8	72	413
Waihenga	61	49	323	40.2	124	803

Floodwarning

In stark contrast to February, no warnings were issued in March. Lake Onoke remained open to the sea throughout.

	March	Financial Year to Date	Previous Year to Date
No. of events	0	19	8
No. of Lists Issued	0	104	33

An internal flood warning debrief has been held with several items to be followed up or actioned. No complaints were received about warnings issued in the major event.

5. Land & River Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)

5.1 Cool Summer Affects Pole Production

Pole production at Akura and Mangapakeha nurseries has been seriously affected by cooler than average climate conditions from the middle of January through to the end of March. This is normally a period of rapid growth, however the high wind run, the low sunshine hours, and the cool soil temperatures have resulted in up to 30% of the anticipated pole production not meeting cutting specifications.

Annual pole production for 2004 was expected to be 23,000, however a recent count has suggested that the annual yield will now be only 15,000. This will certainly affect the winter pole planting programme on hill country farms and may also impact on the supply of poles suitable for river edge planting.

Windthrow damage has also occurred. The overall reduction in available numbers is a severe blow for planting programmes, particularly in light of the anticipated demand for poles following the very wet summer.

5.2 Barrage Gates Painting

Two gates have been repainted to date. The February flood events and set-up problems have delayed these works. Another two gates are now being sandblasted and painted. It is possible, dependent on weather conditions, that the repainting of the last two gates may have to be postponed until next financial year.

5.3 Upgrade of Stopbanks at Te Whiti

Staff are expecting work to commence in the next month to upgrade the stopbank at Te Whiti and realign the stopbank upstream of Ticehurst's on the Waiohine River.

The ideal upgrade in the Te Whiti area is to increase the length of the stopbank upstream. Further consultation with upstream neighbours will be required to achieve this. In the interim the stopbank will be 'topped up' to its 1940 level.

5.4 Flood Damage

Good progress is being made on flood damage repairs in the Lower Valley Development Scheme and the Waipoua River.

The Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Advisory Committee approved an increase in the flood damage schedule to \$770,000 (up \$158,000 on original estimates).

Meetings covering both flood damage and next year's annual programmes will be held shortly in the remaining river schemes.

It should be noted that there was significant scouring of the riverbed during the February flood events at the Waihenga Bridge, Ruamahanga River, near Martinborough. Records suggest that three piles may have been anchored in the riverbed by less than two metres of gravel. Staff are liaising with Transit's consultants on this matter.

5.5 Waiohine Road Bridge Upgrade

All parties have now signed off the funding arrangements for the upgrade of the SH2 Waiohine road bridge. Transit have yet to finally confirm next year's work programme although there is a strong expectation that the rebuilding of the new Waiohine road bridge will commence in the next financial year.

5.6 Renalls Sawmill, Masterton

Greater Wellington is a 'victim' in the recent decision to place Renalls Sawmill into receivership. Claims for the amounts owed have been lodged with the receivers.

The receivers have put the sawmill on the market. They wish to sell the sawmill as a 'going concern'. Logs currently being supplied to the mill are being given the status of 'secured creditors'.

Logging is likely to recommence at Tauanui Forest in May. Any logs going to Renalls sawmill will be on a contract basis which gives Greater Wellington 'secured creditor' status.

5.7 Technical Services Activities

The Technical Services workload has been largely in work generated by the February floods and the Lower Valley Development Scheme Review.

The February floods produced a large amount of requests for data collection, ranging from flood photos during the flood events, flood levels through the Lower Valley and Huangarua River, aerial photos of all Wairarapa rivers, and presentation of data to various groups.

The aerial photo process has been refined with a new approach to taking aerial digital photos, which replaces film photography, resulting in a cheaper and faster process with photography available to staff online the moment photography is downloaded.

The process of delivering the aerial photographs to the river engineers has been refined with the digital images taken into the Arc Map software and registered so that all river run photography is again available to all staff online or in house printed booklets for scheme managers and field supervisors.

This final product of river aerial photos being online in the Council's GIS system greatly improves the information that river engineers can obtain by being able to

layer over a photo all relevant property, river alignment and any other GIS layers to give them the most up to date resources available.

The Lower Valley Review project has involved new GPS field surveys being completed, which will allow for an improved geoid model to be developed to better model flooding in the Lower Valley.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa