

Flood Protection Manager's report for period ending 11 March 2005

1. Manager's comments

- 1.1 January and February were extremely busy months for the Department with the additional work caused by the January 5/6 flood event. The floods have caused a whole raft of issues requiring attention, in addition to the actual flood damage repairs. This work is far from complete. However meetings with the various communities most heavily impacted by the event finished following the Hathaway Avenue residents meeting on the 10 March.

At Otaihangā we now have a way forward for both house raising and are making good progress in developing an improved flood warning system. We still have work to do to assist landowners in Reikorangi with their river stream management issues. In Otaki the Convent Road residents remain very vulnerable to flooding. Hopefully a way forward can be found following completion of the Waitohu Stream study.

In the Hutt River the key issues are the speed of implementing the improvement works and gravel extraction from the lower river.

The floods have also raised the pressure to investigate other vulnerable areas including the Pinehaven Stream, and possibly the Pauatahanui Stream downstream of the Moonshine Rd/SH 58 intersection.

All the above matters will need to be carefully considered in preparing the new LTCCP.

- 1.2 Sam Richards, Flood Protection engineer, has resigned effective 24 March. Sam has made a big contribution to the Hutt capital works including supervising the Strand Park realignment contract and designing the proposed new Whirinaki Crescent stopbank. Sam is heading south to manage the family farm. We wish him all the very best for the future.

2. Waikanae River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]

2.1 Cross section survey

Work has now started on the analysis of the river cross section survey undertaken in 2004, and the sections resurveyed following the January 2005 floods. The results are expected to be reported to the Committee in May 2005.

2.2 Jim Cooke Park

Work on this project in 2005 has progressed more slowly than anticipated as a result of the January flood. A newsletter is to be sent out to the affected parties advising them of the delay in getting the final design detail to them.

The major issues relating to the floods have now been dealt with and work on the project is expected to gather momentum again. Construction is still programmed for the next summer (2005/06).

2.3 Community Consultation following the January floods

Two public meetings organised by the Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) in relation to the Waikanae River flooding were attended by Greater Wellington staff and Councillors.

These well attended meetings were organised to give the public an opportunity to air concerns relating to the January floods. Two main areas of concern were raised:

1. Flood warning for people living in Otaihanga, and other vulnerable areas of the floodplain.
2. A request for more GW assistance with river and stream works in Reikorangi (the upper catchment).

Otaihanga residents expressed considerable concern at the lack of warning they received for the flooding that occurred on January 5/6. Some residents in particular felt the KCDC should have sounded their civil defence siren. In response to the concerns a meeting was held with a group of residents to set up a community based flood warning system with input from GW and KCDC. The key input required from GW will be automatic advice to certain residents when either certain rainfall intensities or river levels are reached. The residents will be responsible for contacting the individuals in the community. A further meeting is programmed for mid March to hopefully finalise the system to be put in place. It is also intended that the El Rancho holiday camp join in on this improved flood warning system.

Concern was raised by many people at the Reikorangi meeting that GW only manages the scheme up to the SH1 bridge and they felt GW should be actively involved further up the catchment. The group was advised that their best course of action was to make a submission to the annual plan process at which time the issue could be addressed.

We have also had many other meetings with individual landowners and groups to discuss the damage caused by the floods and the GW response to it.

2.4 Otaihanga house raising

This matter was reported separately to the Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee on 8 March 2005 (Report No. 05.83) in order to allow time for any outcomes to be addressed as part of the six month review.

3. Otaki River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]

3.1 January 5/6 flooding

A public meeting for residents of the Otaki area, also arranged by the KCDC, was attended by staff and Cr Turver on 2 March 2005. The meeting, similar to the two Waikanae meetings was to give the community an opportunity to discuss the January 2005 floods.

The key area of concern was Convent Road which flooded from the Waitohu Stream. A number of houses in this area are very vulnerable to flooding, and flood levels from the January event were apparently higher than the 5 year return period event in the Waitohu Stream might indicate. Other areas of concern include drains needing cleaning, undersize culverts and willows blocking the waterway.

The event also caused major ponding in the Taylors Road area when a culvert on the Ngatotara drain blocked. A local resident, also raised an ongoing concern that houses adjacent to the Rangiuru stream remain vulnerable to flooding despite the floodgate duplication and the proposed South Waitohu stopbank.

3.2 Capital works

Work is progressing well on the Winstones rock lining extension contract. All of the required rock rip rap is now on site, and the channel diversion and berm reconstruction is

complete. The contractor started placing the rock during the week beginning 28 February 2005.

The design has been extended 40m further downstream in order to allow for erosion that occurred during the January 2005 flood. The actual length of extension constructed will be dependant on budget as additional filling was required following the flood.

4. Hutt River floodplain management [Daya Atapattu]

4.1 Ava to Ewen project

Construction of the Strand Park River realignment continues to progress well and is on track for completion by August 2005. The contractor has indicated that the Linton Quarry may struggle to supply the 2200 tonnes of larger rock required for groyne construction.

We have agreed with the contractor to obtain a part of the larger groyne rock from the Scotts, Field track quarry in Ohakune, if required. We will continue to closely monitor the rock supply and implement the contingency plan if the Linton Quarry is failing to meet the contractor's programme for completion of all structural works by 31 May 2005.

Opus International Consultants Ltd has sent the design alignment of the Ava Rail stopbank to Truebridge Callender Beach Ltd to enable them to proceed with the detailed design of the Opahu Stream pump station.

4.2 Belmont improvements

Mabey Road staff have commenced the extension of the rock groyne at the end of Charles Street. This work also involves the construction of eight reno mattresses and the reshaping of the river trail in that area.

Council's Engineering Consultancy Department is progressing the design of a gate arrangement for the Norfolk Street stopbank. Construction of the Charles Street stormwater pipe extension has not started yet.

4.3 Whirinaki Crescent upgrade

Upper Hutt City Council has agreed to our proposal that they retain the ownership of all land, existing and new, under the upgraded stopbank except for the Golf Club section. Peter O'Brien will now commence negotiations with the Silverstream College Board of Proprietors for a land purchase agreement. Peter will also talk to St Joseph's Home of Compassion regarding a small piece of land required from them.

4.4 District Plan measures

We are pleased to inform the committee that on 23 February 2005, the Hutt City Council's Strategy and Policy Committee approved the promulgation of a plan change to include the Hutt River flood hazard. HCC will soon notify the plan change.

In December 2004, Upper Hutt City Council resolved to begin work on a similar plan change. UHCC officers expect to begin consultation with the affected residents in May 2005.

4.5 Hutt River gravel management

Connell Wagner Limited has now completed a limited cross section survey to assess any changes to bed levels in the Ewen to Belmont reach of the Hutt River. The survey shows that the mean bed levels in this reach have risen on average by about 100 to 150 mm during the period from March 2004 to February 2005. This increases the risk of flooding of Hathaway Avenue, and to the Hutt and Boulcott golf courses.

A meeting has been arranged with the current gravel extraction contractor to look at further increasing the annual extraction volume. As a first step, we propose to ask Horokiwi Quarries to consider an increased extraction rate of 60,000 m³/year, double the current rate of 30,000 m³/year.

We will also explore the possibility of engaging other contractors on a short term basis until the riverbed levels are lowered to a safer level. We expect this will require a variation to our current consent conditions to enable extraction below low flow water levels (in the wet).

4.6 Hathaway Avenue flooding

After the 5/6 January flood, a number of Hathaway Avenue residents requested that Council bring forward the construction of the Hutt/Boulcott stopbank. These residents also made submissions on the same matter to the Hutt City Council's Strategy and Policy Committee on 23 March 2005.

We invited all Hathaway Avenue residents, and the Hutt and Boulcott Golf Clubs, to a meeting on 10 March 2005 to discuss GWRC's stopbank upgrade programme, and methods for managing the flood risk until the new stopbank is constructed.

About 50 people, including residents, representatives from the two Golf clubs and the Waimare Croquet club, and councillors and officers from both HCC and GWRC, attended the meeting. Residents and the Hutt Golf club were strongly canvassing for an immediate start of the process for constructing the new stopbank. Their preferred alignment for the new stopbank is along the Harcourt Werry Drive, which is not the preferred alignment from a security/capacity perspective.

The other main concern was the current 'high' bed levels in the Melling reach of the river. All those present wanted the GWRC to promptly lower the river bed levels by further increasing gravel extraction rates.

5. Planning and development services [Phillip Purves]

The following table summarises the situation in regard to the number of formal, written requests that have been attended to during February:

	March 2005	YTD
Requests brought forward	2	16
Additional requests received	12	93
Responses provided	6	101
Outstanding requests	8	8

Enquiries on flood issues, as a result of the January floods, have continued and many of these relate to watercourses that the department does not actively manage, so our detailed knowledge is limited. However, those enquiries, coupled with direct flood damage enquiries, are helping to build a picture of where additional attention may need to be directed by way of either future investigations or to provide direction for maintaining these watercourses.

6. Investigations [Phillip Purves]

6.1 Waiwhetu Stream floodplain management study

The cross section survey of the stream channels is largely complete. Modelling work will commence shortly.

The key tasks now is to get the Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Committee (WSAC) formally set up, and a project manager appointed.

A separate report recommending the WSAC be a subcommittee of the Landcare Committee, and containing a draft terms of reference is contained in this order paper in Report 05.104. A similar report recommending the WSAC be set up will be considered by Hutt City Council at their meeting on 8 March 2005.

The process for finding a project manager for the investigation is underway. The project manager will need to be externally resourced, and is likely to be seconded on a part-time basis from one of the major consulting firms with expertise in this area of work.

6.2 Waitohu flood hazard assessment

Work is underway on the preparation of the summary report and completion of this project. We aim to report to the Landcare and Environment Committees in May 2005.

6.3 Mangaroa River flood hazard assessment

Tenders for the professional services contract to carry out this investigation closed in early February and the contract has now been awarded to consultants Sinclair Knight Merz Ltd. The contract is for a total sum of \$137,654 (exclusive of GST) and is due to be completed in November 2005.

The hydrological review has been completed by the Resource Investigations Department and a project familiarisation meeting and site walkover are to be held soon with the consultant.

7. Operations

7.1 Wellington [Jeff Evans]

The 6th January flood damage repair works are in full swing. Staff are working long hours repairing flood damaged areas while the weather holds.

One of the more complex jobs is the repair of the basket works upstream of the Maoribank bend where staff are working in waist high water to undertake the repair.

The failed debris fences below Akatarawa Bridge have now been pulled out and removed from the active river channel.

Cross blading is underway at Avalon, where gravel is being pushed into the failed debris fences and groyne's. This will provide a platform for repairing the debris fences and a new rock line to be built upstream.

We are continuing to chase local quarries for rock rip-rap. While in short supply, we have had some luck with the purchase of 300 tonne from Kiwi Point Quarry. Unfortunately we still need a lot more to complete the flood repairs.

Hutt River trail

Repair of the flood damage is largely complete. Fixing the damage was given a high priority so the trail could be kept open, given the pressure from recreation users and with pre-planned events such as Bike the Trail 2005. Over 700 participants took part in this event held in late January. Maintenance also included the usual seasonal work such as cutting back regrowth, spraying, and debris removal.

Hutt River ranging services

Over this period ranging services provided included patrols and surveillance, public relations and organising the summer programme events held on the river. The summer programme on the river included Rip Rap, a river trash extravaganza held on the Belmont flats. Other events include the annual Hutt News fun run/walk along the lower reaches of the river and Bike the Trail 2005. There were also a number of smaller organised walks.

Installation of new signage, especially in the upper reaches, is ongoing.

Watercourses

We have removed the failed concrete retaining wall which was blocking the Pinehaven Stream at the Reynold's property and replaced it with a new concrete block lining and bed control weirs. This work was complicated by the limited room on site. The owners had to demolish a car port prior to us starting and there were also a number of services to re-route including a small foot bridge, the only access to the house.

The Mangaroa River and Collins Creek Stream runs have now been completed. A tree felling contractor was engaged to help us remove several dangerous trees.

Work for the other departments

Staff completed a major rebuild of the Akatarawa River recorder site following the January flood. The existing tower was retrieved, repositioned on a new foundation and new transducer pipes installed.

Staff also spent some time investigating a possible broken underground bore at the Queens Gate development. After tests on the water it was discovered that the water was storm water from a sump on Queens Drive.

7.2 Kapiti [Garry Baker]

A revised works programme has been compiled which includes outstanding "normal" works, together with the additional "flood damage" repair works. This revised programme will take until the end of next financial year to complete. However we feel reasonably confident that we are on track with the work scheduled to be completed by 30 June 2005.

Waikanae River

Nearly all the heavy flood debris has been removed out of the channel and off the berms. Flood damage repairs, comprising of concrete block reinforced willow edge protection, have been completed at three sites between Walnut Grove and Greenaway Road.

Excellent progress is being made with extracting gravel from the tidal reach of the river (eastern end of Otaihanga Domain down to the boat launching ramp).

A short section of the tidal reach was also cross-bladed. This work included reinstatement of a portion of the right bank walkway on behalf of the Kapiti Coast District Council, and the battering of a section of the left bank to allow KCDC staff to better manage the bank. The quality of this work has drawn criticism from some residents, but on the whole flood-affected Otaihanga residents are happy that we are getting on with the removal of gravel from the river bed. Some of the bank edges look quite “stark” at the moment, however re-vegetation in the form of grassing and planting out with natives will restore the overall appearance of the area.

Mangapouri Stream

A hand-clearing and edge spraying stream run was carried out along the majority of the stream at the rear of the residential properties. Some residents are requesting an increase to our normal level of service including removal of rubbish, better control of aquatic weeds and repairing bank-edge erosion.

Waitohu Stream

Gravel extraction has re-commenced out of the “deposition zone” on the Waitohu Stream.

7.3 Operations Support [Steve Murphy]

Glyphosate trial on the Waiwhetu Stream

Over the past twelve months, Excell Corporation Ltd has manually cleared both cape pondweed and willow weed from the Waiwhetu Stream with approximately 31 tonnes of weed and rubbish sent to landfill. While the contract has been successful, Flood Protection would like to eradicate Cape Pondweed or develop an improved control method that will reduce the level of manual work. Glyphosate (Roundup Renew Xtra) may provide this, and this trial will evaluate that.

To date, a 50 metre trial area has been pegged in a section of the stream adjacent to Cleary Street, with the first 10 metres of the stream sprayed with a specific concentration of glyphosate. It is still too early to determine whether or not the initial glyphosate spray has been successful and if further sprays will be required. We will keep the committee updated on the trial’s progress.

Porirua Gravel Extraction

Streambed levels through the scheme reach of the Porirua Stream have risen since the scheme was constructed in the early 1990s. This increase in levels reduces the stream’s flood carrying capacity.

Streambed levels were recently re-surveyed, and it was estimated that approximately 3,000 m³ of gravel should be extracted. The extraction operation is underway and will take about

three weeks to complete (end of March). This is the second round of extraction, with the first completed in March 2003.

Isolated works

As reported to the Committee previously, the flood event of 5/6 January caused considerable damage to rural properties, especially in the Akatarawa and Reikorangi Valleys.

All landowners with flood damage to their property in the Akatarawa and Reikorangi Valleys, have now had an initial visit, with many visited for a second time so preliminary designs can be finalised. We are now busy in the process of preparing sketches and recommendations for proposed works.

7.4 Gravel extraction

Gravel extraction figures to the end of January 2005 are set out below.

River	Area	Contractor	Period Year 2004/05 (cubic metres)		Year 2003/04 (cubic metres)
			Period	Year	Full Year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	3,654	28,518	40,698
	River	Horokiwi	0	3,617	10,380
Otaki	River	Winstones	1,862	13,962	28,088
Waikanae	Above Greenaway Road	Various	0	0	0
	Below Greenaway Road	Gary Holland Earthmoving	588	8180	7,310
TOTALS			6,104	46,915	86,476

Geoff Dick
Manager, Flood Protection

Parks and Forests Manager's report for period ending 11 March 2005

8. Manager's comments [Murray Waititi]

8.1 Parks professional coming to Wellington

Wellington will be hosting two major parks and recreation events this year:

8.1.1 The Parks Forum:

The Parks Forum was established in May 2004 and is the peak body for the Australian and New Zealand parks industries. The purpose of the Parks Forum is to support the development of the park industry, provide leadership in park management, and to improve the standing of the industry in the community. The Parks Forum provides an effective conduit for the sharing of information, studies and initiatives by leading agencies in the Australasian parks industry.

The Board of the Parks Forum meets every six months and the next round of board meetings is being held in Wellington from 21st to 23rd March, hosted by the Department of Conservation and Greater Wellington Council. The three day meeting will encompass field trips to local park sites, the Board Meeting itself, convening the four Standing Committees, and a seminar for local park providers regarding their programme "*Healthy Parks Healthy People*".

8.1.2 New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) 2005 Conference:

The New Zealand Recreation Association is a non-profit organisation and incorporated society committed to meeting the professional needs of people and organisations associated with all aspects of recreation, leisure, parks, open space management, aquatic, conservation and sport delivery.

This year, the annual NZRA Conference is going to be held in Wellington in November. It is typically the best opportunity during the year that recreation professionals get to cover current topical issues facing recreation providers at a strategic level. GWRC Councillors were represented by the Landcare Committee Chair at last year's conference. As the time grows nearer, I will approach the Committee to nominate a Councillor again to attend this conference on your behalf.

8.2 New Zealanders turning their backs on the outdoors

Some interesting research undertaken by Auckland Regional Council (ARC) about the public's experience in their parks highlights that New Zealanders are turning their backs on the outdoors because they have become so urbanised that they lack the confidence to tackle even the most basic outdoor activities like camping and tramping. This research is supported by research undertaken by SPARC in 2003 about the amount of physical activity being undertaken by NZers. While the ARC research specifically relates to Auckland, SPARC's research would suggest that NZer's apparent lack of confidence about the great outdoors affected people living in city areas throughout the country.

I am in the process of getting a copy of the research from ARC, and will put copies of it, and the SPARC research, in the Councillor's lounge for your information.

9. Planning and policy [Dr Philippa Crisp]

9.1 Pest Control Operations

The initial possum control operation for Speedy's Reserve in Belmont Regional Park has been completed. Possum numbers have fallen from 16.6% to 1.1% residual trap catch rate. A major goat control operation in the Hutt water collection area has resulted in the culling of 35 goats, 5 pigs and 2 deer and Judas goats have been released into the area.

- Pest plants controlled in the parks and forests include:
- Cathedral bells, bomarea and climbing asparagus in East Harbour Regional Park
- German ivy, brush wattle, climbing asparagus and Japanese honeysuckle in Belmont Regional Park
- Roadside weed dumpings at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park
- Buddleia in Pakuratahi Forest
- Tradescantia in Queen Elizabeth Park

9.2 Monitoring

Rodent and mustelid monitoring has been completed in East Harbour Regional Park. Rat prints have been recorded in 43% of the tracking tunnels. There was little tracking activity recorded around the Gollan's Valley area where intensive baiting and trapping is underway. Rodent and mustelid monitoring was also completed in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo water collection area last year, where rats were recorded in 42% of the tracking tunnels.

9.3 Management Planning

A workshop was held with Councillors on the Kaitoke Regional Park, Forest Lands and Queen Elizabeth Park Draft Management Plans on 16th February. A summary of the outcomes of this workshop was published in the Councillor's Bulletin in early March.

The next steps for the management plans are:

- Kaitoke Regional Park – final draft presented to the Landcare Committee at this meeting (see report 05.106).
- Forest Lands – A hearing for this plan was held on 18th March
- Queen Elizabeth Park – a first draft of the plan is to be prepared for the management plan workshop to be held hopefully in April.

Planning staff have also been working on concession applications, heritage work with iwi, and the renewable energy/wind project.

9.4 Capital works

As the last committee stated, tenders for the new Ranger's office at QEP have come in substantially over the assigned budget for this project. As a result, the building design has had to be changed to downscale the office and we are currently negotiating with the lowest tenderer to see if further savings can be made. The contractor has a gang available to start work this month, as soon as plans and contracts are finalised.

9.5 Asset Management

All the asset data is currently being rechecked and updated in the Asset Management database and on GIS. Field inspections will be carried out over the next three months to

verify the data and inspections will be carried out to assess the current condition of the park assets to see how it has changed since the last lot of condition inspections were carried out. Data about the hazards in the parks is also currently being updated.

10. Marketing and design [Amanda Cox]

10.1 Brochures

Incorporating Maori history about an area into our interpretation signs and brochures about the parks is an important part of the information we provide the public. At Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, we have asked Ngati Toa and the Wellington Tenth Trust to approve the final version of the brochure we are developing, given that it contains a significant account of events leading up to the confrontation in August 1846. In East Harbour Regional Park we are currently developing a first draft of a brochure and once the draft is completed, we will forward it to local iwi for their input.

10.2 Parks research framework

We have had our research framework peer reviewed by Rob Greenaway (an internationally known parks and recreation consultant). We are now working through the mechanics of running a pilot programme to test the framework, its logistics and practicalities. We will report to the Committee as soon as the results of the pilot programme are known.

10.3 Regional Outdoors Programme

The 2005 Regional Outdoors Programme has seen a marked increase in attendance levels over previous years, often attracting people who are new to the parks. Waiting lists are overflowing for guided walks, horse riding and four wheel drive events. Superb weather throughout the programme has put the icing on the cake, with only 3 out of 29 events cancelled in January and February.

We have had strong public interest in our first-time events which provide a new slant on showcasing some of our heritage and environment along with current developments in the network. *Taming the River* attracted 90 participants, *Walk Transmission Gully* was limited to 35 but had a waiting list nearing 100.

Another approach we tried this year to encouraging people to visit the parks was to include more cultural events. *RIP RAP! River Trash Extravaganza*, *Return to Rivendell* and *Poetry at the Pickle Pot* featured many performing artists

Popular events driving the programme include the East Harbour, Kaitoke, Belmont and Queen Elizabeth parks' guided walks; *Bike the Trail* (740); *Discover the Hidden Valley*, *Rimutaka Rail Trail* (54) and *Upper Hutt Heliflights* (113). Pakuratahi and Akatawara's 4WD, biking and *Paws in the Park* events are firm favourites, along with Battle Hill's *Haveago Horseriding* and *4WD Sunset Tours*.

Public feedback through our visitor satisfaction survey has been overwhelmingly positive, reflecting not only the organisation, interpretation, and environment but our quest for constructive suggestions so we can improve the public experience. Many people have asked for their details to be added to our database so they can receive programme information as soon as possible next year.

10.4 Website development

The Parks and Recreation section of the new GW site went live as planned on 1 February, with comprehensive information on all the parks and forests, and what you can do and expect to see there. We are now keen to explore options for an events calendar, a feature missing from the original scope of the website.

10.5 Community Liaison

The Friends groups from both Belmont Regional Park and Queen Elizabeth Park both met in February, with the key agenda items on both occasions being the pending sale of Landcorp land. Both groups are vigorously pursuing various means of promoting the retention of Whareroa and Waitangirua Farms in public ownership. The *Friends of Maara Roa*, who are restoring a 100ha regenerating bush block at Cannons Creek on Landcorp land, are also vitally concerned about the possible sale of Waitangirua Farm. Only 40ha of their restoration area is protected through conservation covenants.

Within Belmont Regional Park, the *Friends of Belmont Regional Park* have planned and successfully run three events with the help of Parks and Forests staff as part of the Regional Outdoors Programme. The *Friends of Maara Roa* is also running three guided walks through their restoration area.

Several meetings and site visits to the Pencarrow lakes have been held over the past few months to discuss development proposals for the area. Those involved include members of Forest and Bird, MIRO and DoC. Since the removal of stock nine months ago, the health of the vegetation around the lake margins has improved significantly.

10.6 MacKay's Crossing –State Highway 1 Upgrade

Staff have been working closely with Transit NZ on this project including attending regular partner meetings with all the organisations involved. Currently GWRC Engineering Services are designing a wetland/ drainage system in conjunction with a consultant Landscape Architect. Construction work on the wetland is expected to be carried out in March/April 2005 and we proposed to have an Arbor Day Planting on the site in June

10.7 Whareroa Stream Restoration Project

The Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park gave their approval to go ahead with the proposed restoration plans for a reach of the Whareroa Stream at their February 22nd meeting. Officers presented plans showing a wide vision from the headwaters to the sea then focused onto the immediate area for fencing, minor earthworks and planting. Plans included a schematic overall plan, restoration plan and cross sections. The next stages include obtaining the resource consent for earthworks, ordering plants and finalising contractors for fencing and earthworks.

10.8 Interpretation of Rimutaka Rail Trail

Late last month a workshop was held with rail historians, staff from DoC and GWRC to identify stories which could be told as part of a joint project to interpret the Rimutaka Rail Trail. These will be brought together in an overall interpretation plan. From there the stories will be developed into interpretation panels that will stretch from Kaitoke to Cross Creek. The GWRC side of the Incline is planned to be implemented in the 2005-2006 financial year.

10.9 Wainuiomata Information Panels

Due to vandalism in Wainuiomata we have had to replace two signs - one in East Harbour Regional Park and one at the Wainuiomata Recreation Area. We are trialling a polycarbonate cover over the panel in Wainuiomata to see whether this will protect the panel better.

11. Western Sector [Matt Ballantine]

11.1 Battle Hill Farm Forests Park

The Battle Hill swimming hole in the front paddocks is proving to be more popular than ever this summer (most people know it better as a swimming hole but it also serves as a water supply point for rural fire in the area). With shallow areas for the smaller children and good visibility for parents to supervise their kids, users are really enthusiastic about using the swimming hole. The surrounding trees also provide necessary shade while new picnic tables put in place prior to Christmas are certainly adding to the area's appeal to a wide variety of users. School groups are also making good use of the area with one school visit having 300 children finishing their visit of the park with a swim. Camping is booming with the onset of the dryer weather and most sites are occupied each weekend.

Education programmes remain steady with 400 to 500 children visiting the park each week at present.

The Regional Outdoors events have gone well with every event held at Battle Hill being at least booked out and many with long waiting lists. The most notable event was the Transmission Gully walk. It was blessed with fine weather and those on the trip got some great views of the gully from the top of the saddle. This was a great opportunity for people to get a good look at part of the proposed route and the comments heard were varied and interesting. Hopefully we will be able to run this trip again next year. We also ran another series of both the *Sunset Tour* and *Haveago Horse Riding* due to popular demand

11.2 Belmont Regional Park

On the Porirua side of the park, we have mown grass areas behind the Lakes Reserve at Cannons Creek to help reduce the fire risk in the area. Contractors have also been cutting possum bait station lines in the regenerating forest behind the Lakes Reserve. We have also been finalising a Memorandum of Understanding with Porirua City Council over maintenance of the Cannons Creek Lakes Reserve. The agreement will rationalise maintenance that is carried out by both Porirua City Council and Greater Wellington at the Cannons Creek Lakes entrance to Belmont Regional Park. We are also working with Porirua City Council to develop the entry area into the Lakes Reserve at Cannons Creek to improve accessibility and information for both local users of the reserve and people wanting to venture further into Belmont Regional Park.

On the Hutt Valley side of the park, contractors have now completed demolition of the fire damaged building at Dry Creek. This now allows us to begin reinstating the area guided by a landscape plan developed by Annabel Riley, our Landscape Architect.

Goat hunters have completed work in the park tracking Judas goats. Early reports from the hunters indicated greater than expected numbers of feral goats caught in the Korokoro Valley, perhaps a result of goats reinvading the area from reserve land at Grenada North bordering the Park.

We have been busy working on tracks through Hutt City Council owned land within the park. Tracks upgraded include a walkway between Stratton St and Cottle Park Drive, Normandale and the Sweetacres Reserve track.

The ranger has been assisting the police, fire service and Transpower staff to investigate and remove a number of large gas cylinders near a transmission line at Dry Creek. Someone had stacked a number of these gas bottles and attempted to make them explode by setting fire to them. The police are investigating the incident.

The Hutt Valley Orienteering Club held an event. The event was based at Stratton St, and utilised much of the rest of the park on Sunday February 27. St Xavier school attended a *Take Action* programme based at Stratton St.

11.3 Queen Elizabeth Park

Flood repair work caused during January 2005 has now been completed. This work included undertaking repairs and a general clean up of both the Whareroa and Wainui streams which burst their banks during the floods. Resurfacing work also had to be done on washed out tracks within the dune system.

Work is underway on relocating the horse-riding barn, which will be located next to the tramway buildings at MacKays Crossing. Relocating the barn to this site will enhance the recreational hub that is developing there. Wooden fences, corrals and water troughs are currently being constructed.

With the park situated in a “sand country” environment, the vegetation tends to dry up very quickly when we have a dry spell. This in turn significantly increases the fire risk. During these dry periods, we patrol the park regularly to ensure that park users are extra careful when barbequing (gas BBQs only), that no open fires are lit, and that cigarette butts are disposed of thoughtfully.

The mid summer season has been a typically busy one with a good mix of private functions and regional outdoors events. Highlights were the *Botany of the Dunes* and *Landscapes and Wetland* walks which continue to be popular. The NZ Juggling festival also returned to utilise the park’s facilities at Paekakariki. The festival took place over four days as accommodation is available at the campground. A huge range of juggling and circus acts were on display including juggling balls, acrobatics, mime and uni-cycling.

12. Eastern Sector (Fraser Oliver)

12.1 Akatarawa/ Pakuratahi Forest

As we are in the middle of a very nice summer, on most fine weekends there are large numbers of recreational users throughout the forests. This includes both consented recreational club trips and general public access. I am happy to report to there have been no reported conflicts between the different user groups. A large portion of our ranger’s time at present is being spent on coordinating these user groups and various events. The ranger has been contacting adjoining landowners that may be affected, liaising with our own internal departments to ensure the correct safety information is available about logging operations, pest control operations, vehicle movements as well as general liaison with recreational club users.

This time of year also includes our three largest publicly managed events:

- the *Karapoti Classic* Mountain Bike Race with a maximum of 1,250 competitors (including a few international competitors)
- the annual two day Motorcycle Endure event held by the Kapi-Mana Motorcycle Club which uses two thirds of the Akatarawa Forest, and
- the *Big Coast* Family Mountain Bike event which crosses through GWRC land (Tunnel Gully reserve, the Rimutaka Incline walkway, the Pencarrow Coast Road and the Lakes Block at East Harbour Regional Park).

To ensure safety for these large events, GWRC, via our weekly events calendar (distributed to GWRC staff and the majority of the motorised recreational clubs and motorcycle shops), we are able to pre-warn clubs and other users of these impending events so they are able to plan alternative routes for their use. We also ensure 2-3 weeks prior to an event that the event organisers advertise in relevant local papers and install signs at the public entry points to the areas they are using.

We have also had six club 4WD events, two Army training exercises, two driver training exercises, one club motorcycle event and four Summer Programme events (a Mount Climie 4WD trip, a night time Glow Worm Grotto walk and talk, helicopter flights and the Rimutaka Rail Trail walk).

12.1.1 Boundary Fences

Several boundary fences between private property and GWRC forests are in a bad state of repair. Some of the larger fences that are in poor condition are on the boundary of our plantation forests. In several cases the private landowner has a private plantation forest on their side of the fence.

As these areas are no longer being grazed by stock, neither party is particularly keen on spending money on fence maintenance. Unfortunately this does create problems as stock often infiltrate our forests through these areas as well as un-authorized motor vehicles and motor cycles. We continue to liaise with the landowners to find solutions acceptable to both parties.

12.2 Kaitoke Regional Park

The campground is still proving popular, however there has been a change of late in their pattern of use as most camping now is taking place on the weekends rather than being more evenly spread through the week over the January holiday period. There have also been several Girl Guide and Scout camps at the campground, and three schools have held their annual camps in the park.

The drama and excitement of the *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy was re-enacted with the "Return to Rivendell" event as part of the Regional Outdoors Programme. Over one hundred people enjoyed a guided walk and a performance by the eerie "Bush Ghosts". A catered meal was followed by sword fighting and horse riding displays including a terrifying Ringwraith. This event was run in partnership with the Upper Hutt City Council and attracted international visitors. Two evening tours have been held showcasing the wonders of Kaitoke at night. These trips included feeding eels, star gazing, roasting marshmallows and possum spotting. This trip has become an annual event for members of the Kiwi Conservation Club

Cross-blading work to protect the road bridge at the Waterworks Road entrance to the park has been undertaken.

12.3 Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area

The fine weather had a rather negative side this period. We suffered our worst period of vandalism to signs and property that the ranger has experienced since the ranging service began. New signs installed last year have had to be removed because of the damage they sustained. Nearly all this damage occurred on the hot days when up to 50 people were using the river for swimming. The Police were also called several times to help with incidents in the car park area.

During January and February, the Assistant Rangers completed some major improvements to the walking tracks in the Recreation Area. The Sledge Track loop walk has been re-metalled with new timber box culverts replacing old pipe culverts that were temporary installed when the track was originally constructed. A small bridge and boardwalk have been added to this walk to create a short loop, adding another interesting feature to it. Next financial year another new section of track will be created to compliment the new track network in the Recreation area. We have been developing these tracks with the vision of providing multi use tracks i.e. walking and mountain biking.

All tracks and culverts had weed spraying completed on time. The season started off to be quite wet but as we got into February the weather was great to complete maintenance work. Rangers have been assisting the contractors carrying out pest control line preparation work on the Mainland Island project. Ranging staff will also be assisting local DoC staff with upgrading of the East Whakanui tramping track that runs between the DoC land and the GWRC Southern boundary in the Orongorongo catchment.

Advertisements were placed in local papers regarding the Public ballot hunt to be held in the Catchment starting at Easter. The Police supervised draw was held on the 23rd of February in the Upper Hutt office with 72 applications received.

12.4 East Harbour Regional Park

A new, 12m long, 1.5 tonne pre-manufactured bridge was installed to replace the existing Butterfly Creek picnic area bridge. The bridge was constructed at the Upper Hutt depot and transported by truck to the beach south of Eastbourne. Five assistant rangers removed the old bridge and laid new concrete foundations prior to the new bridge being installed. The new bridge was air lifted by helicopter over the hill and lowered onto its new location. The timber and steel bridge blends in well with the bush surroundings and has received many positive comments. Together with four new picnic tables in Butterfly Creek, the bridge has considerably enhanced a key destination point at the southern end of the northern forest block.

Planning is underway to develop a network of tracks at the Lakes Block. Planning has involved the Department of Conservation and local conservation organisations e.g. Forest and Bird and MIRO. We are also looking at incorporating a new wetland boardwalk that links into a track network. We have begun cleaning up existing tracks that can be utilised.

As part of the Summer Events Programme the Eastbourne Forest Rangers (EFR) conducted a guided walk in conjunction with GWRC. This was a good way to get local community groups involved in events held at the park. The walk around the Butterfly Creek valley area was well attended.

Murray Waititi
Manager, Parks and Forests

Landcare Support, Divisional Accountant's report for period ending 11 March 2005

Year to date funding position

At the end of February 2005, Landcare has a net funding surplus of \$1,157,000 which is \$720,000 ahead of budget. The most notable variance in the results is the year to date savings of \$380,000 in debt repayment and interest costs resulting from the Mabey Rd sale. Of the balance of the variance, most is due to timing differences in operational projects and asset purchases.

Landcare Division					
Financial Summary Statement					
For the 8 months ending 28 February 2005					
\$000					
	Year to Date			Full Year	Full Year
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Budget	Forecast
External Revenue	9,554	9,370	183 F	14,133	14,157
Internal Revenue	628	718	(91) U	1,077	1,198
TOTAL REVENUE	10,181	10,088	93 F	15,210	15,355
Direct Expenditure	5,559	5,724	165 F	9,271	10,958
Indirect Expenditure	(569)	2,612	3,181 F	3,955	808
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE	4,990	8,336	3,346 F	13,225	11,765
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	5,191	1,752	3,439 F	1,985	3,590
Add back non cash items	(2,404)	622	(3,026) U	969	(2,032)
Net Asset Acquisitions	(3,355)	250	3,605 F	250	(3,260)
Capital Projects (loan funded)	2,462	3,151	689 F	4,647	5,339
Net Reserve/Investment Transfers	274	120	(154) U	354	(258)
Internal Debt Repayment	4,710	1,566	(3,144) U	2,350	5,273
NET FUNDING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	1,157	437	720 F	0	(197)

Impact of floods and storms

Our forecast year end position is a funding deficit of \$197,000. Although the majority of it will be funded by transfers from reserves for flood damage (\$737,000) and the Mabey Rd savings (\$690,000), we are estimating an operational overspend of \$1,687,000.

The clean up of flood and storm damages to both our Parks and Forests and Flood Protection assets makes up 90% of this cost (including bringing forward the house raising in Otaihanga). These costs are as follows:

Description	Cost
January 05 flood damages	\$1,140,000
Farm subsidies from damage caused by Feb 04 floods	\$47,000
Otaihanga house raising	\$120,000
<i>Total Flood Protection assets</i>	<i>\$1,307,000</i>

August 04 flood cleanup in regional Parks & Forests	\$54,000
Windthrow tree cleanup in Belmont and East Harbour	\$145,000
<i>Total Parks and Forests assets</i>	<i>\$199,000</i>
<i>Total Landcare flood/storm costs</i>	<i>\$1,506,000</i>

We were extremely fortunate this year to have the unbudgeted savings from the Mabey Rd sale available to partly fund this damage (these savings are budgeted from 2005/06 onwards). However, a significant draw has been made against the flood contingency and river rate reserves to fund the balance of the damage.

By year end 2004/05 we expect two reserves to have significant deficits – the Kapiti Coast river rate reserve and the Flood Contingency reserve. Both of these will need careful consideration on how to clear the deficits. We have recommended Council considers rating an additional amount over the next 3 years commencing 2005/06.

This next LTCCP commencing 2006/07 will be the opportune time for Council to also decide if the current level of contributions being made to these flood contingency funds is adequate. For Western Flood Protection, the community is currently contributing \$100,000 pa to the river rate reserves and \$100,000 pa to the flood contingency reserve. A further \$100,000 pa is put into the major flood recovery fund.

Debt levels

By using the proceeds from the sale of Mabey Rd land to repay debt, Flood Protection internal debt is currently at its lowest level since 1994 at \$20,530,000. This is currently projected to peak in 2008/09 at \$29,940,000.

Parks and Forests debt is \$1,693,000. This is currently projected to peak in 2009/10 at \$2,249,000.

2004/05 annual plan targets

Between Western Flood Protection and Parks and Forests, we have 8 annual plan targets to achieve.

Our expected performance against these targets by year end is:

Target	Progress
Flood Protection maintenance operations	Will be not be achieved due to effort required for January 05 flood damages
Hutt River ranger service	On target
Environmental asset management	Will be overspent due to completion of 2003/04 programme not rebudgeted to 2004/05
Infrastructural asset management	On target – will not include flood damage repairs in this indicator
Parks and Forests capital work programme	Will be overspent due to completion of 2003/04 programme not rebudgeted to 2004/05
Ranger services	On target

Environmental enhancement programme	On target
Marketing and promotion	On target

Tina Walker
Divisional Accountant, Landcare