

## Catchment Management Division Update for period ending 31 August 2007

---

### **Biosecurity (Wayne O'Donnell)**

#### **1. Pest Animals**

##### **1.1 Rook Control**

Planning is underway for the annual spring rook surveillance and nest baiting programme. This entails gaining approval from the Medical Officer of Health, consulting with iwi, updating and agreeing a contract for helicopter hire, updating Standard Operating Procedures with particular relevance to compliance with statutes and health and safety and assuring the availability of the toxin (there is only one supplier). The programme is also coordinated with Horizons Regional Council to get the best possible control outcome through a mutually agreed strategy.

##### **1.2 Further update on a proposal to regulate the sale and use of specified leg hold traps**

MAF Biosecurity has initiated a proposed policy changes for the use and sale of leg hold traps used for pest management. This follows a recommendation in 2002 by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) to the Minister of Agriculture that the importation, sale, and use of specified leg hold traps be prohibited in New Zealand. Greater Wellington submitted on this proposal and the outline of this submission was reported to the June 2007 meeting of the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee.

MAF Biosecurity has since provided a summary of submissions but has also requested answers to a series of questions. Questionnaires were sent to all submitters and generally sought more evidence to support the original submissions. Greater Wellington provided the required response which addressed issues relevant to our region.

One question reveals a mindset by MAF Biosecurity in favour of protecting domestic cats over proficient vertebrate pest control outcomes and has serious connotations for residual trap-catch possum control monitoring if a proposed 300m clearance zone around dwellings becomes law.

GW supported the continued use of Lanes Ace traps for rabbit control in specific areas (i.e. offshore islands or mainland islands where toxin use was restricted). We also supported the restricted use of Victor No.3 traps for feral pig and wallaby control. These are specialised applications currently in use in parts of NZ.

The MAF Biosecurity proposal in respect of companion animals seems founded on a very reasonable precept, that people are entitled to protection from having their companion animals inadvertently captured in leg hold traps. However, the proposal seems to be a "one size fits all", and departs significantly from previous [mostly

local authority] restrictions which applied quite differently in urban and rural settings.

A clearance distance of 300m around every dwelling is a significant area to remove from the control area and the post operational monitoring area. Furthermore traps are commonly used in preference to toxins within this distance of houses at the direct request of the occupier. It is noted that there is no 300m restriction on the use of toxins.

GW submitted that the proposed restrictions are prohibitive, and would seriously compromise both pest control and pest monitoring. Possum population monitoring with leg-hold traps is the tool used to manage the performance standards of possum control contracts and is a very significant component of the annual investment in possum control.

With these points in mind we suggested the following recommendations would achieve both protection of companion animals, and keep the option open for the continued and substantial reliance on traps in pest control and monitoring;

- (a) Allow trapping within any distance of a dwelling with consent of the occupier, and,
- (b) Where consent is not obtained, impose a 150 m clearance distance, and,
- (c) Impose a requirement for a warning signs where members of the general public would normally have access.

### **1.3 Starlings**

Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) have been reported to Greater Wellington as being a significant problem for orchardists, grape growers and grain growers in the Wairarapa since 1991. The biggest problem is with apple growers and is highlighted once again by a Greytown apple grower's recent attempt to destroy a large starling roost. Public outrage was significant because the control measure left huge numbers of birds wounded and helpless. In August last year the same apple grower made headlines with an attempt to control a starling roost with molasses sprayed from a helicopter.

These seemingly desperate measures convey the concern of the grower about the starling damage adversely affecting his business and the lack of cost efficient methods available to mitigate the problem.

In May 1998 a report was submitted to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee 'to inform the Committee of the current impacts of starlings on orchards and vineyards in the Wairarapa and to seek approval to investigate whether starlings satisfy the requirements of Section 72 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 for inclusion in the Regional Pest Management Strategy'. The recommendation was 'that the Committee approve the undertaking of a feasibility study as a prerequisite for a Section 72 analysis under the Biosecurity Act 1993.'

The Committee noted that no other regional council had been involved in eradicating starlings and that they had not been listed in any other Regional Pest

Management Strategy. It was resolved that staff be asked to advise interested parties that the Council considers the control of starlings to be an industry problem at the present time.

Greater Wellington has not had any direct involvement with control of starlings and has generally had a neutral stance on the starling problem except for expressions of concern by individual staff about inhumanness issues created by control methods.

Some Biosecurity staff consider it is again timely to organise a forum of interested parties to try and find solutions to the starling problem. The forum should include Greater Wellington, Wairarapa District Councils, affected growers, SPCA and other parties with interest or expertise.

One avenue might be to investigate utilising Part 4 (Injurious Birds) of the Wildlife Act 1953. The Act provides a means for a local authority to apply or raise funds for destruction of injurious birds. Injurious birds means any species of birds specified in the Act, by their habits or their excessive increase, have become or threaten to become injurious. Starlings are listed in the Act.

It further provides, subject to the approval of a control plan by the Director General of Agriculture, for a local authority to lay poisoned grain, seed, food, bait, lure, or other material on any roads or lands (whether public or private) within its district.

However, starlings have a world wide reputation of being extremely difficult to control. Methods such as repellents and scaring tactics, the use of traps, mist nets, shooting, toxic baits, contact poisons and thermoregulation have all been tried with mixed levels of success.

## **2. Pest Plants**

### **2.1 Control Requirements**

Biosecurity Officers are currently focused on inspecting a range of previously controlled sites to assess control requirements for this year. Sites will be assessed to determine whether they should be managed by staff, labour only (input) contractors or performance based contractors. Staff are likely to work more of the smaller eradication sites this year to allow 100% site inspection in conjunction with control work to save time taken in managing contracts. This will also allow contractors to concentrate efforts on larger and or more infested sites. Staff members have also been inspecting areas adjacent to controlled areas, with new, low level infestations being consistently found.

### **2.2 Surveillance**

Mike Ulrich and Ben Winder recently attended a two day MAF training course to gain Authorised Person status for inspection of Unwanted Organisms included on the National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) list.

## **2.3 Eradication Species**

### **African feather grass**

Biosecurity Officer's have inspected existing sites and adjacent areas to assess work requirements for this season.

Previous control work across the region has been successful with minimal re-growth found and a few plants found outside current control boundaries. No seed heads were found.

Some plants found were grubbed out at the time of inspection.

### **Bathurst bur**

Seedlings found in low numbers on inspections in Wairarapa and pulled out whilst onsite.

### **Climbing spindleberry**

New site at Ahiaruhe identified and dug out.

### **Eelgrass**

Sites inspected show good levels of control. A concentrated effort will be applied to remaining infestations.

### **Manchurian wild rice (MWR)**

Visiting Tasman District Council staff were shown the existing site in Waikanae for identification training.

A change in the existing GW resource consent is required to allow application of the recommended chemicals over plants in permanent water bodies.

MWR has been included by Biosecurity NZ as one of the 11 species to be included in MAF led national management programmes. Mike Urlich attended a Biosecurity NZ meeting to set down national control strategy and eradication timelines for each region. Biosecurity NZ's goal is to eradicate MWR from the Greater Wellington region by 2015 and conduct delimiting surveys to achieve 95% confidence by 30 June 2009.

### **Madeira vine**

Known sites of infestation were surveyed to assess work programmes for this year. Generally good levels of control of parent vines have been achieved, but numerous juvenile plants are appearing.

Smaller sites were controlled by staff during the survey.

### **Perennial nettle**

Known treatment areas have been inspected to assess work programmes for this year. First treatment areas have achieved a good result considering heavy companion growth spp (blackberry, bracken etc) in association with the target weed. Areas in open country have achieved very good results with little regeneration growth apparent.

### **Woolly nightshade**

Mature specimen found in central Wellington city by staff. The tree has been removed and surrounding area inspected for further specimens.

### **Moth plant**

Known sites were inspected for re-growth and seedlings. Some sites achieved Clear status but will continue to be monitored.

New sites have been reported by the public and by staff during inspections. Smaller infestations were controlled immediately by staff.

### **Smilax**

Previously controlled sites are being monitored for re-growth and a new rust blight that has been discovered in the region. Plants showing signs of blight are being monitored, along with other infestation sites found that have yet to be controlled. The impact of the blight varies by site.

An article on the rust blight has been prepared for the forthcoming Rural Services Newsletter.

## **2.4 Containment species**

### **Boneseed**

Sites were visited in July to assess seedling germination. Emergent specimens were found in larger numbers and better developed than expected.

Staff are combining forces with the help of two labour only contractors to cover ground previously completed on fixed rate contract. This will check effectiveness across the entire control area and survey/control beyond boundaries to follow last year's good work completed using a labour only contract.

The team will also cover accessible areas on escarpments and areas for abseilers to control.

Currently 1,583 plants have been removed at Lake Ferry and Western Lake Road, South Wairarapa. The plants are predominantly seedlings but some mature plants are still being located.

Helicopter control operations at Ngawi will be undertaken again this year with the area being extended.

One seedling specimen was found heavily defoliated with egg masses on the lower remaining leaves. Landcare Research were sent a sample for identification.

## **Hornwort**

NIWA has presented a draft report on the results from the Wairarapa trial using Endothall (Aquathol K and Aquathol Super K). Some of the findings based on chemical concentration, water flow, water temperature and volume of other weed spp have provided good direction for setting usage limits and future trial designs.

## **2.5 Notices**

Boundary control notices were served at Otaki in continuance of a concentrated old mans beard infestation among many residences.

A Default notice was served on a property in Wellington for control of old mans beard.

A Default notice was served in Lower Hutt for control of gorse.

## **2.6 KNE**

Most sites have been inspected by staff to view the outcomes of recent years work. Following these visits and discussions were held with Territorial Authority and Care Group representatives to discuss opportunities to better co-ordinate activities. The intention is to allow better timeframes for effective weed control prior to planting.

MOU's have been revised and new contracts let for many sites.

### **2.6.1 Tauherenikau**

Work by staff and South Featherston School pupils over three days enabled 650 new plants to be planted and protected. Follow-up release spraying will be completed in early Spring.

### **2.6.2 Management plans**

Staff have been working to develop draft management plans (pest plants) for new KNE's at Raroa Reserve, Porirua Park Bush and Keith George Memorial Park.

A meeting has been organised with all affected Territorial Authorities to formally thank them for their efforts under the MOU over the past year.

## **2.7 Publicity**

Staff have been involved in a number of public events over the past two months, including:

- Hosting a public display at the Otari Garden open day.
- Giving a presentation to Waihora Probus Group.
- Attending a Weedbusters meeting.

- All staff were involved in running the very successful Biosecurity Institute National Education & Training Seminar which was co-organised and hosted by GW in July. A number of staff gave presentations on activities undertaken by GW.

### 3. Bovine Tb

#### 3.1 Proposed 2007/08 Vector Control Programme

Earlier in 2007, the VM submitted a proposed programme to the Animal Health Board (AHB) for the 2007/08 year, with an approximate value of \$3.97M. The programme included the following:

- 269,387 ha of possum control;
- 966 ha of ferret control;
- 31,051 ha of possum and ferret surveys;
- 126,231 ha of pig surveys;
- trend and performance monitoring.

To date, the AHB has approved works to the value of \$3.15M with a final decision to be made once more monitoring results are available.

It is normal practice in this region to regularly review the proposed programme as new monitoring data becomes available. Based on recent monitoring data, the following changes have been proposed to the AHB:

- Remove possum control over 74,240 hectares
- Include additional possum control over 48,166 hectares (i.e. bring forward 2008/09 work).

Two pig surveys that were uncompleted in the 2006/07 year have been carried forward into the 2007/08 year:

- Akatarawa pig survey, 20,539ha
- Moonshine pig survey, 6,036ha

**Table 1** below summarises the areas already contracted for the 2007/08 year.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks	12,125		9,776		21,901
Professional Guiding	34,719				34,719
J G McCaslin	17,107				17,107
KBES					
T Oakly				152,816	152,816
To be determined	205,436	966	21,275		227,677
<b>Totals</b>	<b>269,387</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>31051</b>	<b>152,816</b>	<b>454,220</b>

Only a small amount of the 2007/08 vector (possum) control contracts have been tendered to date. Delays are due to ongoing negotiations between GW and the AHB regarding BioWorks, and the desire by the parties to increase the number of stable contractors in the Wellington region. An option currently being considered includes the use of two year preferred supplier contract for a set volume of work.

A second parcel of contracts is intended to be released for tender at the end of August or early September. It is planned to have the remainder of the programme agreed in the near future. It is likely that the final programme will be considerably less than originally planned.

### 3.2 Progressing the 2007/08 Programme

Only Professional Guiding Services and J McCaslin have commenced their 2007/08 programme but no areas have been completed to date.

BioWorks is currently completing their 2006/07 contracts carried forward.

### 3.3 2006/07 Operations to be completed

**Table 2** provides updates on possum contracts for the 2006/07 year which were not completed by July 2007.

<b>Operation</b>	<b>strata</b>	<b>strata ha</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>BioWorks</b>			
Mangaroa Kaitoke	HR 1	1770	Ground control underway
Mangaroa Kaitoke	HR 2	2023	Ground control underway
Mangaroa Kaitoke	HR 3	2252	Ground control underway
Mangaroa Kaitoke	HR 4	1307	Monitoring due to start soon
Mangaroa Kaitoke	HR 5	305	Monitoring passed
Mangaroa Kaitoke	HMR 1	1644	Ground control underway
Mangaroa Kaitoke	HMR 3	2009	Aerial control due to commence
Mangaroa Kaitoke	HMR 4	6288	Aerial control due to commence
Mangaroa Kaitoke	HMR 5	1256	Monitoring passed
Mangaroa Kaitoke	HMR 6	709	Aerial control due to commence
Tararua Range	MR 11	1113	Aerial control due to commence
Moorea Valley	HR 1	2509	Ground control underway
Otaki Buffer	HR 1	2403	Ground control underway
Otaki Buffer	HMR 1	3028	Monitoring due to start soon
Otaki Buffer	HMR 2	1587	Aerial prefeed completed

Otaki Crown	HMR 1	3483	Aerial prefeed completed
South East Wairarapa Stg 3	HR 5	3658	Access not available until Nov 2007
		<b>37344</b>	
<b>Target Pest</b>			
Carterton Flats	MR 1	3641	Contract and control terminated
Whangaehu Mauriceville	HR 3	2375	Contract and control terminated
		<b>6016</b>	
<b>Professional Guiding</b>			
South East Wairarapa Stg 2	HR 2	1150	Completed
<b>Totals</b>		<b>44510</b>	

#### 4. Monitoring & Investigations (Murray Hudson)

##### 4.1 Management Plan for Rewanui

Rewanui is a partly retired farm block purchased by the Trimble Foundation. The objectives for Rewanui include providing recreational opportunities in a park-like setting, providing a source of income through production forestry, providing trial areas for production forests of native species, continuing with some farmland grazing and fencing off some of the larger tracts of native bush for biodiversity enhancement.

This project presents a unique opportunity for Biosecurity Monitoring staff as the scope for a monitoring plan is significant. Monitoring staff made a recent visit to the site, guided by Stuart Orme from the Foundation, to understand the objectives and plans proposed for Rewanui. The initial interest is in the native forest ecosystems, the current health status of this system and the change in biodiversity over time. The threats to the site have been mainly covered through the pest plants and animals sections of the management plan. Monitoring will likely take a number of different threads including developing a base line, monitoring for specific indicator species, defining the changes to forest condition over time and detecting the effectiveness of any operations or activities.

Consideration may be given to a number of specific monitoring methods including bird, rodent, wax-tag for possums, foliar browse, and photo-points among others. Additional to this, Stuart Orme has asked that we consider other ideas that may contribute to the ecological, biodiversity, recreational, social and economic development of Rewanui. Consideration will be given to events such as holding a restoration type day similar to that at Tauherenikau, holding something similar to the Bioblitz at Otari Reserve in Wellington but on a smaller scale, developing public information signage, erecting weta houses along some of the bush walks for public interest, and labelling plant species on bush walks for public education like those in Fensham Reserve, Carterton.

In developing a plan the questions of why are we monitoring, what we to monitor are, how we to monitor are and when we are to monitor needs answering. Development of this plan in conjunction with the Foundation, will happen during September – October.

## **Flood Protection (Graeme Campbell)**

### **1. Manager's comments**

#### **1.1 General**

Department staff have made significant progress on a number of major projects over the last month. The major milestones have been:

- Approval of the Chrystalls Extended Stopbank Consents and Designation with no appeals
- Completion of the Hutt/Boulcott Stopbank workshop
- Finalisation of the Asset Revaluation and annual Audit of Assets
- Commencement of the Lake Wairarapa stopbank assessment
- Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Committee decision to proceed with planning approval for the contaminated sediment cleanup and channel improvements

Of the projects above the Waiwhetu project will provide the biggest challenge in the immediate future. A final decision on the government's level of contribution towards the clean up of the contaminated sediments has not been made at this point. The Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Committee acknowledged the importance of this work and has requested that planning for it should proceed without delay. Accommodating this request will require a delay of up to 12 months in the completion of the Flood Management Plan. Staff resources will concentrate on initiating the inter agency agreements and statutory approval process to remove both the contaminated sediments and increase the flood capacity of the lower reach of the Waiwhetu. Much of the detailed work will be able to be completed using contractors but the initial work and project management will be most efficiently undertaken in house.

Sharyn Westlake has been appointed to the position of Team Leader, Strategy and Technical Support. This is an internal appointment with Sharyn having filled the role in an acting capacity following the departure of Phil Purves in March 2007.

James Flanagan, an engineer working on the implementation of the Hutt Projects, has resigned to take up a position with Damwatch. James has been with us for 2 years and will be a loss to the department. He has helped to implement some major projects in the region and we wish him well in the future.

Vacancies for a senior engineer and an engineering position are currently being advertised with applications closing in mid September 2007.

## **2. Kapiti floodplain management [Kees Nauta]**

### **2.1 Otaki River**

Willow planting has been completed on the river. Staff have also been busy preparing planting sites for the friends groups. A mechanical trimmer has also been used to cut back Booth willow stands.

### **2.2 Waikanae River**

Planting is almost complete and a number of over-grown areas have been cleaned up in preparation for Friends group plants.

### **2.3 Friends of the Waikanae River (FOWR)**

The draft planting and landscape plan has been sent out for comment to all interested parties prior to finalisation.

### **2.4 Friends of the Otaki River (FOOR)**

Members of the FOOR Committee attended the Wellington Conservation Awards ceremony on Wednesday 8 August. They were honoured with a Conservation Award for their dedication and hard work on the Otaki River. This award is well deserved and will be displayed in Otaki in a yet to be decided location.

### **2.5 Chrystalls Extended Stopbank**

The appeal dates for the Notice of Requirement and Resource Consent have closed without any appeals being lodged.

The detailed design and tender documents were been completed and advertisements for tenders placed on 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2007. Tenders close on 27 August 2007. 17 sets of tender documents have been issued. A walkover site inspection with interested tenderers was held on 17 August to explain details of the works and answer questions. A very good turnout of over 20 contractors personal attended, indicating that there is a great deal of interest in this contract.

### **2.6 South Waitohu stopbank**

Work is progressing with the detailed design and resource consent application. The hydraulic analysis of the 100 year flood flows is currently being reviewed to ensure that properties upstream of the proposed stopbank will not be adversely affected by construction of the stopbank. Initial results show that the affects are minimal but a detailed assessment is required.

### **2.7 Annual Consents Reports**

The 2006/07 annual reports for the Otaki River, Waikanae River and Waitohu River were produced for Environmental Regulation as required by the conditions on the Resource Consents. Overall the 2006/07 was noted for having a significant number of “freshes” of less than the annual return period, particularly during July, October and November 2006. These caused some damage to the edge protection

assets, but were quickly repaired and funded from the operational budgets. There were no floods greater than the 2 year return period.

### **3. Hutt River floodplain management [Daya Atapattu]**

#### **3.1 Ava to Ewen project**

The contractor continues to make good progress on the Ava Rail contract works and the contract is now about 45% complete. By the end of July, the contractor has supplied and placed about 7,900 tonnes of rock out of a total of 15,000 tonnes. The contractor has also placed and compacted about 19,000 m<sup>3</sup> of fill materials out of a total of 31,000 m<sup>3</sup> required for reconstructing the stopbank. Installation of the stormwater pipe at the Rail Bridge is about 60% complete and the concreting under the Bridge is progressing.

#### **3.2 Boulcott/Hutt stopbank**

Phase 2 of the feasibility study to determine a preferred option for the Boulcott/Hutt stopbank is now complete. Outcomes from Phase 2 were presented to a well attended workshop of the Advisory Committee on 13 August 2007. A presentation to Hutt City Council is scheduled on 22 August 2007. A recommendation on a preferred alignment will be made to the Advisory Committee on 6 September 2007.

#### **3.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank**

Wellington Golf Club has agreed to proceed with an 'earthwork' option to replace the proposed stage 1 floodwall on the new sub division boundary. This earthwork option is less expensive than the floodwall and it is aimed to complete this option by Christmas, subject to obtaining resource consents.

Tenders for the Stage 2 stopbank works are now being evaluated. More information from two lowest tenderers has been requested to complete the evaluation. A contractor is expected to be appointed by mid September 2007.

#### **3.4 Maoribank Riverbed stabilisation**

A scope for completing the Stage 1 Risk assessment has been prepared and this work will commence in September 2007.

### **4. Western Operations [Jeff Evans]**

Over the last period staff have been fully occupied with the willow and native planting programmes, along the river berms. Willow rejuvenation work is also still in progress, on all the major river systems and many of the older booth willow stands have been mulched down to encourage increased growth.

An annual peer review was undertaken of river asset maintenance programmes on the Otaki and Waikanae Rivers on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2007. The peer review provides an audit of maintenance standards and procedures, at a number of specific sites along the rivers. No significant issues were raised as a result of the review.

#### 4.1 Hutt River

Work continues on berm development and planting site lines have been cleared in the Maori Bank reach of the river in preparation for survey work to help with the bed degradation assessment in the area.

Gravel extraction has continued in the Belmont reach of the river and staff have also been cutting and checking site line locations in the lower river.

#### 4.2 Hutt River Ranging Services

Patrols have continued over the last period. There has been extensive damage to both the berms and stop banks in the Taita and Pomare areas mainly caused by the public using vehicles in the river.

#### 4.3 Hutt River Trail

Maintenance of the trail over the last period has largely consisted of debris clearing and drainage work to assist water run off from the trail.

A Hutt River Trail community planting event was held on 25 July 2007 at Poets Park with 50 children from Fergusson Intermediate School. When the plants ran out they then spent an hour mulching all around the plantings. Their enthusiasm was infectious and everyone including the staff had a great day out. The plantings will increase wildlife habitat on the Hutt River and act as shelter for people enjoying the Hutt River Trail. A corporate planting day in the Belmont Domain resulted in 250 plants being planted in an inaccessible area for mowing.

#### 4.4 Watercourses

Stream checks have been undertaken on all watercourses in the region, and a number of wind fallen trees have been removed as a result of these checks.

#### 4.5 Gravel extraction

Gravel extraction figures to the end of July 2007 are set out below.

River	Area	Contractor	Period Year 2007/08 (cubic metres)		Year 2006/07 (cubic metres)
			Period	Year	Full Year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	4,116	4,116	46,100
	River	Horokiwi	6,849	6,849	46,890
Otaki	River	Winstones	3,866	3,866	40,929
Waikanae	Above Greenaway Road	Various	0	0	3,330
	Below Greenaway Road	Gary Holland Earthmoving	0	0	5,360
Waitohu	River	Mills Albert	2,502	2,502	2,500
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>17,333</b>	<b>17,333</b>	<b>145,109</b>

## **5. Wairarapa Operations [Mike Longworth]**

### **5.1 Wairarapa River Schemes**

#### **5.1.1 Annual Works Programmes**

The 2007/08 annual works programmes for the Wairarapa Rivers have commenced with planting, tree work and some island clearing on the Waiohine River. The heavy protective works will start in the period around October/November.

The new Kopuaranga River Scheme work has started with clearing willow blocks. Aerial spraying will be undertaken in the summer.

Staff have been preparing the documentation required for the schemes asset management plan reports.

#### **5.1.2 Drainage Schemes**

There are no significant issues to report. The mild winter to date has resulted in much lower power consumption compared to this time last year.

### **5.2 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Review (LWVDS)**

The LWVD scheme review committee plan to meet with in the next month before commencing the Special Consultative Procedure which is necessary before the new classification can be recommended to Council.

### **5.3 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Global Consent**

Work has continued on the LWVD Scheme Global Consent to get sign-offs from affected parties. Iwi have asked for some additional information before they agree to approve the documents.

### **5.4 Study of Private Stopbanks and Other Structures around Lake Wairarapa**

The proposed study of private stopbanks and other structures around Lake Wairarapa as outlined in the March meeting report has been started by Opus International Consultants (Michael Hewison). A letter advising of the scope of the study will be sent out to affected landowners. Michael will then be making contact with the land owners.

## **6. Strategy and Technical Support [Sharyn Westlake]**

The following table summarises the number of formal, written requests attended to from 1 August -20 August 2007:

	June 2007	YTD
Requests brought forward	3	3
Additional requests received	20	20
Responses provided	16	16
Outstanding requests	4	4

Policy work over this period included the Department's input to the Ministry of the Environment's National Policy Statement (NPS) on Flood Risk Management, regarding development of the NPS scope and content, and review of submissions received to date.

Flood Protection is holding four internal workshops before the end of 2007 to inform staff about best practice flood risk management, with the first one scheduled for mid September.

The Policy Team has also contributed to the options development of Phase 2 of the Waiwhetu Stream Project.

Staff met with members of the Tawa Rotary Club to discuss possible options for the creation of a walkway alongside the Porirua Stream through Tawa. The proposed walkway would potentially cross public and private land and there are a number of issues to work through before this project could be taken to the next stage.

Staff met with Fish and Game NZ to discuss issues with Flood Protection capital works and maintenance. Fish and Game are generally satisfied with how their interests are being catered for, and the Memorandum of Understanding between Flood Protection and Fish and Game will be rolled over for another three year period.

Staff responded to a request from Hutt City Council (HCC) to look at possible sites on the Hutt River and surrounds where a grove of Cherry Blossoms could be established in recognition of their sister city in Japan. Staff and several Councillors met with HCC staff and Mayor Ogden to discuss this. A number of possible sites were considered and HCC selected Avalon Park which they manage, as the most suitable option.

## **7. Investigations and Assets [John Eyles]**

### **7.1 Waiwhetu Stream floodplain management study**

The technical work required to complete Phase 2 was finished in June 2007 and has been reported to the Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Committee. This work included studies into:

1. Flood mitigation options in the upper Waiwhetu.
2. Channel Management
3. Bridge waterway improvements in the upper Waiwhetu.
4. Flood Proofing isolated properties.

5. Flood warning and evacuation.
6. Channel Morphology.
7. Assessment of easements and encroachments for the lower channel.

The next phase of the project is to complete option development, formal consultation, drafting the Flood Management Plan (FMP) and getting signoff from HCC and GW by the end of June 2008.

In late June, Hutt City Council and Greater Wellington confirmed a 33% local share (estimated to be \$2,000,000) towards the clean up costs of the contaminated sediments in the Waiwhetu Stream. At the same time, an application to the Contaminated Sites Remediation Fund (CSRF) for the remaining 67% (estimated to be \$4,000,000) was made.

A letter was received from the Ministry on 3 August. The funding the Ministry has offered is 50% (up to a maximum of \$2,929,500) over three years broken down as follows:

- 2007/08- \$1,000,000
- 2008/09- \$1,000,000
- 2009/10- \$929,500

This latest offer replaces an earlier offer from the Ministry to fund 40% (\$2.4M) that was received in May.

In the eyes of the Ministry, the project has not achieved “special” status worthy of a higher level of funding such as other high profile contaminated sites at Mapua and Tui Mine. We understand that an approach will be made by elected GW representatives to acting Minister for the Environment David Parker to consider additional funding from the CSRF. The offer will be discussed at the next WSAC meeting, scheduled for 22 August.

## **7.2 Asset management**

A reciprocal peer review of flood protection assets was undertaken with staff from the Wairarapa office in early August. The peer reviews provide the opportunity for staff in the Flood Protection Department (Wairarapa and Western Rivers) to compare and contrast asset maintenance practices across the region. A write up of the peer reviews is underway and the results will be reported in the annual Western Rivers Asset Management report at the September LCC.

Software provider SAP has been selected for further consideration in the organisation-wide asset management information system review. We are currently considering how the next stage of the assessment process will be resourced within Flood Protection.

## **Land Management (Dave Cameron)**

### **1.1 Managers comments**

#### **1.1 Winter Planting Programme**

The weather continues to have a significant impact on the winter planting programme. The drier conditions are very suitable for riparian and river management programmes, however they are causing a few concerns over the pole planting programme. While it is very easy to travel across properties the low soil moistures are likely to result in an early end to the planting season.

Rainfall for the seven months to the end of July at the Tanawa site (north of Tinui) is 589mm c.f long term average of 794mm. This represents rainfall at 74% of normal. Monthly rainfall to 28 August is 67mm. The long term average for August is 139mm.

#### **1.2 Land Management Officer Vacancy**

There has been no success to date in filling the vacant Land Management Officer position. In the interim a part-time position is being explored, primarily to assist with three key projects. These projects are important with respect to the next LTCCP and include a review of the Wind Erosion Control Scheme, the establishment of a Soil Erosion Monitoring programme, and a Review of Sustainability Plans.

The Land Management Officer position will be re-advertised in the latter part of the year and will strategically target recent graduates.

#### **1.3 Options for future Nursery Land**

In recent weeks there have been discussions with two parties with regard to future nursery land. Informal discussions have been held with Masterton District Council and RST Solutions who are the current lessees of the Aokautere Nursery in Palmerston North.

A formal approach has been made to Masterton District Council to begin preliminary discussions on the potential use of the Homebush treatment land.

The present owners of Aokautere Nursery, HortResearch, are looking to sell the site. This action may compromise the four year agreement with RST Solutions to supply poplar poles to Council. Until new owners are confirmed our current supply arrangements will continue.

#### **1.4 Catchment Schemes**

Catchment Scheme expenditure for the first month of the year reflects a quiet start to the year. Work is generally focussed on planting of both poles and seedlings.

The Homewood Catchment Scheme expenditure reflects the strong focus on pole planting. The other Schemes will incur most of their expenditure during the construction season in the spring and early summer.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget 07/08</b>	<b>Expenditure to Date</b>	<b>% Spent</b>
Awhea/Opouawe	40,000	3,655	9%
Whareama	20,000	2,594	13%
Homewood	12,200	5,659	46%
Mataikona/Whakataki	12,000	61	0.5%
Maungaraki	12,000	1,036	9%
Kaiwhata	12,000	575	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>108,200</b>	<b>13,580</b>	<b>13%</b>

## 2. Farm Plans (Don Bell)

### 2.1 New Plans, Reviews and Annual programmes

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Annual Plan Target</b>	<b>Total 10 Year Expenditure</b>
New Sustainability Plans	1	3	\$88,760
New Conservation Plans	1	2	\$25,690
Ten Year Reviews	1	20	\$32,200

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Annual Plan Target</b>	<b>Approved Expenditure</b>	<b>Annual Plan Budget</b>
Annual Programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability plans</li> <li>• Conservation plans</li> <li>• Shelter plans</li> </ul>	53	150	\$290,890	\$550,000
Isolated works	1	5	\$680	\$10,000

## 2.2 Comment

- Ten (of 18) retirement plantings have been completed totalling 28,500 trees (of an estimated 82,200 in total)
- Pole deliveries and plantings have been completed on all but the some of the Maungaraki – Longbush properties and those in the western foothills. The final two helicopter runs are planned to take place on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> August and plantings are likely to be completed by mid-September.
- Generally conditions for pole plantings have been adequate to marginal and consequently augers have been used in most areas. With the onset of dry conditions, an eye will kept on the need to re-ram poles where soil shrinkage is likely to occur.
- Land Management Officers have adopted a cautious approach to siting poles this year, in line with the late start and low soil moisture levels. Unless significant rain occurs this month, it is likely there will be an early closure to the season.
- Shelterbelt and biodiversity plantings have commenced, using the BioWorks crew as well as other regular contract crews. Soil moisture levels are ideal at present, especially where sites have been deep-ripped.
- The three teams involved in Land Management service delivery have been working intensely to prioritise and complete jobs in a rather compressed season. The situation has been made more difficult by a number of one-off factors, including:
  - Staff adapting to new roles as a result of the restructuring
  - New staff appointments in all three teams and for them to go straight into the firing line.
  - A shortage of suitably trained contractors, placing stress on the supervisors
  - Dry soil conditions which have resulted in reduced contract pole planting outputs
- The shortened season putting increased demands on Akura to meet pick-up and delivery schedules.

## 3. Akura Conservation Centre (Stan Braaksma)

### 3.1 Nursery Operations

- The three metre pole cutting for Land Management is almost completed and the last cradles from RST (Palmerston North) are being processed at present. There is current urgent demand for Flood Protection poles and stakes to be cut and bundled.
- All stump extraction is completed and the residue has been removed to a burning pile. Shortly these blocks will receive weed control and cultivation for new cuttings to be established. A total of 13,200 cuttings or 2.75 ha will be planted, 11,400 poplars and 1,800 willows. In addition Akura will supply 5,000 cuttings to Environment Canterbury.

- Our Bore permit and Consent for water extraction at Akura are up for renewal. As part of this process various options have been discussed looking at an upgrade to provide adequate irrigation for productive purposes. Most of the estimates for this upgrade are completed, and a report will be presented to the Akura Advisory Board.
- In the past five years pole demand has been increasing from the 2002 - 04 average of 17,000 3m poles/annum to 26,000 poles over the 2005 - 07 period. There is interest in further nursery land at Homebush, recently purchased by MDC. On the current production/ha, and a sustained requirement of 30,000 three metre poles per year, we require at least a further 10 ha of Nursery area. Depending on the options surrounding the sale of Mangapakeha Nursery from the production mix, then the requirement may be 20 ha.

### 3.2 Trading

- From a slow start Akura tree and plant sales now are at very high levels. All staff are very busy trying to move plant materials in the shortened winter period. Some lines of seedlings are starting to run out or are difficult to procure.
- The new owners of Morgans Road Nursery arrive at Akura for their first time next week to see our operation. We are their single biggest client. They have trialled sending all root trainers in wire cages (48's) instead of the previous cardboard boxing (68's). While we can unload easily with this system rain and moisture render these boxes unusable, with most sales requiring some repackaging.

### 3.3 Staffing

Our Nursery Assistant has handed in her notice and finishes 31 August. We have some options to fill this position, which runs until 28 September.

### 3.4 Budget

- The Akura Business Unit has returned solid trading figures for the first month of the new financial year. It will be October/November before a strong indication is gained of the overall trading operating surplus from the winter's operations.

Activity	Budget 2007/08 – Operating Surplus	July Operating Surplus 2007/08
Nurseries	26,600	(21,300)
Trading	(79,200)	(12,100)
<b>Total</b>	(52,600)	(33,400)

#### 4. Biodiversity (Megan Banks)

- Planting has been completed in the Otaki and Waitohu catchments. 3700 plants were planted at 10 different sites over a total length of 2.2km. Six of these are new sites, making up 1.5km, and four sites are replacement plantings covering 655 metres.
- Site preparation has been carried out in Wairarapa and Mangaroa Valley. Planting is ready to commence at Springlea in the Upper Ruamahanga catchment with 2000 plants over 700metres. Mangaroa has seven new sites to be planted within the next month and four that require maintenance planting. Weed control including some substantial barberry removal has been completed. A total of 5900 plants will be planted at these sites over a length of 3.1km.
- Details are being finalised for the Rural Living Field Day to be held in the Ohariu Valley on 8 September 2007. This day is aimed at communicating the condition of the waterways to the community and the opportunities available for landowners for improving water quality and biodiversity. It is a small community of around 200 residents but the research group is expecting a reasonable turn out on the day.

#### 5. Operations (Kevin Burdan)

##### 5.1 Silviculture Programmes

- Work in the first two months of this year has been minimal. This is not surprising as staff have been very heavily involved in supervising the winter planting programme. The planting programme, already under pressure from the late start is now under further pressure with a relatively dry August.
- The 12.5 hectares of thinning has been completed across 3 properties.

Activity	Completed (hectares)	Annual Plan Target (hectares)	Expenditure to date	Annual Plan Budget
Thinning	12.5	200	\$3,750	\$60,000
Pruning	0	200	\$0	\$120,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>\$3,750</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>

## 5.2 Conservation Programmes

- Pre-spray operations have been completed on 14.5 hectares. Contract planting has been completed on five properties covering 13.1 hectares. This planting is mainly *P. radiata*.
- Four helicopter flights dropping poles into isolated sites on farms have been completed. Approximately 7,500 poles have been planted on 21 properties.
- Works completed in the Soil Conservation Reserves include 4.3 hectares of pruning, 1.7 hectares of thinning and 2.2 hectares of planting.
- One more helicopter flight remains along with the contract planting of 12,000 poles and a further 29,000 seedlings.

## Integrated Catchment Management (Ian Gunn)

### 1.1 Ecologic Conference

I attended the recent conference called 'Northern Lights – Democracy, Markets & Sustainability – Resolving the Tensions'. Ecologic are an environmental research group headed by Guy Salmon.

They have just completed a four year research project comparing sustainable development in New Zealand and the Nordic countries. The Nordic countries have made better progress than New Zealand in reconciling their environmental and economic goals.

Collaborative governance and market based instruments were the parallel themes of the presentations. The Nordic countries work with all ideologies to resolve issues. All parties are involved in investigating and resolving issues. Consensus is achieved and this drives government policy. There is generally widespread political acceptance of the agreed policy resulting in consistent approaches regardless of the government in power. This flows down to regional government policies and practises and to a lesser extent local government.

The Nordic countries rank highly internationally in comparison with economic freedom and competitiveness. Their living standards and environmental policies are more impressive than New Zealand's.

How has this been achieved? Issues such as climate change have been investigated by working parties of up to 40 participants. The participants are funded to attend. They consider the issue until such time as a consensus is achieved. This can take 2-3 years. These multi-stakeholder deliberations are supported by a secretariat and have a specific budget. Targets and milestones are developed and monitoring/reviewing occurs to measure the agreed outputs.

The Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee is the first example of this Council empowering landowners to develop policy.

## **1.2 Total Catchment Management**

There is a broad consensus within staff that it would be beneficial to move to a total catchment management approach over time. A draft report is in preparation. It is likely to suggest the total catchment management approach be trialled on the Waikanae River and by the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee.