
Utilities and Services Group

June 2010

Parks

Review of operations for the period ended 30 June 2010

1. **Manager's comments**

There were two major highlights for Parks during the period:

- (1) Acquisition of 284 hectares at Baring Head. This Council, along with other funding parties, acquired a property at Baring Head for inclusion into East Harbour Regional Park. Officers and O'Brien Property Consultancy have spent the period finalising the purchase and assessing the property for immediate issues and long-term development options. A report regarding this is included in this Order Paper as Report No. 10.395.
- (2) Launch of Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Park. The formal launch of Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Park occurred in mid-June. Events to mark the launch included a book launch on tuna, an "open day" in Featherston, a planting day at Lake Domain and a formal launch ceremony at Kohunui Marae. The launch events themselves focused on improving the health of native flora and fauna, as well as opportunities for recreation and included a range of displays and mini lectures.

The consultant, Peter Handford, is in the final stages of completion of the Belmont Regional Park Sustainable Land Management Plan. Peter has also made good progress on the plan for Whitireia Park and has met with the Board and other interested parties to talk through possible changes to land use and restoration priorities in the park.

2. **Environmental Management**

2.1 **Pest control**

2.1.1 **Goat control**

A Contractor and his team spent 20 hunter days in early June carrying out goat control in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area. The time was spent hunting possible reinvasion sites, checking Judas goats and responding to goat sightings. This approach appears to be successfully keeping goat numbers low throughout most of the catchments, with only 10 goats being destroyed during the Contract. Very little sign of goats was found in the Wainuiomata Catchment. Most goats destroyed were found in the southern part of the Orongorongo Catchment.

2.1.2 **Plant control**

A contractor has controlled tradescantia, wild strawberry, Japanese honeysuckle, blackberry and broom in Te Marua Bush. This work will enhance the restoration work that members of the Wellington Botanical Society are doing in this forest remnant. During a recent working bee, members carried out pest plant control within their planted areas and helped the Kaitoke Regional Park Ranger remove a camp from within the bush.

At the Parangarahu Lakes Block follow-up spraying of gorse within the gorse exclusion zone on the coastal escarpment between the lakes has been completed. Gorse is being kept back from the coastal escarpments, as part of the restoration plan for the area.

2.1.3 Extension of the Mainland Island Restoration Organisation (MIRO) mainland island

The bait station network in the East Harbour Regional Park has been improved by increasing the number of bait stations in some areas and making a small extension to the northwest. This work is being carried out to try to achieve greater control of rat numbers within the mainland island and, therefore, enhance the breeding prospects of native birds, including the group of North Island robins released into the mainland island in 2008. Members of MIRO are working on plans to reintroduce another group of North Island robins being sourced from Kapiti Island. If plans fall into place quickly, this may be able to be done before the end of August this year but otherwise will take place in autumn next year.

2.1.4 Wainuiomata Mainland Island

The last of three pig hunts for the year was carried out by contractors in the Wainuiomata Mainland Island in early June. The hunters use what they call the “wall of death” method of hunting, which involves systematically hunting across the stream catchments with a team of hunters and dogs to minimise the chances of pigs escaping. Eighteen feral pigs were destroyed during the contract. The tally included more mature pigs than previous hunts, which is considered to be a sign that our hunting programme is successfully reducing the pig population within the Mainland Island and surrounding areas. This is because the tally indicates that fewer younger, more naïve, pigs are being encountered and more hunting pressure is being applied to older and wiser pigs.

2.2 Lake Wairarapa

Fencing has been completed at Lake Domain to keep stock out of wetland areas. While the grazing for the bulk of Lake Domain Reserve has ceased, there are still some lease areas that are next to wetlands. The fish survey work for the lake and surrounding wetlands is being finalised. One of the findings was that, while perch were present in a number of wetlands, they were not found in Barton’s Lagoon in Lake Domain. A design for a spray trial to slow accretion of the eastern lake shore has also been completed.

3. Western and Eastern Sectors

3.1 General

Unfortunately a wet and miserable month has seen fewer visitors and slowed the work programme. However, this has not caused too many problems with weather related park damage.

The Park Ranger and maintenance staff have been busy with end of financial year and the planning of our operational plans for the coming year.

3.2 Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forests

Forest usage remained steady during June, with 12 4WD events involving 85 vehicles, two motorcycle events involving 10 motorcycles, and two training events.

It has become necessary to replace not only the padlock (which has disappeared) but also the chain securing one of our internal gates leading to the Rimutaka Walkway. This is to prevent vehicles accessing inappropriately in making their way to the Rimutaka Incline walkway (access is often via adjoining landowners' properties).

In the past few months we have been regrouting some of the original brick work in the roof of the Maymorn Tunnel. The old grouting over the last 100 odd years had deteriorated in several places mainly because of the amount of in-ground moisture seeping through the brick wall of the tunnel. We have tried to improve drainage immediately above the tunnel as best we can but the serious drain holes within the walls would indicate the presence of this water at the time of construction. This work was identified during a routine engineer's inspection last year. The work will be completed in coming months.

3.3 Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

Lambing dates have been set for 9 August to 22 October. Parts of the farm will be closed over this period and the closure was advertised in *The Dominion Post*, *The Hutt News* and *Kapi-Mana* papers. It is also advertised on our website.

A blocked toilet discharge field at Battle Hill that has been causing problems for years has been replaced and should provide much better service to the public next summer. A similar job was completed last month at QEP.

A successful Arbor Day event was held at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, with over 100 students taking part.

3.4 Belmont Regional Park

The farmed areas at Belmont Regional Park will be closed from 20 August to 20 October. This closure was also adverted in the newspapers and on GWRC's website.

Eight hundred trees were planted through the Honda tree programme and Friends of Maara Roa. Hill Road residents also planted around 400 plants over two weekends in the upper part of Hill Road.

3.5 East Harbour Regional Park

Fencing material has been purchased to complete fencing along the Pencarrow Coast road to secure the Lakes Block from stock. Hutt City Council contributed half the cost for the materials and this work has commenced.

A contractor has been employed to undertake exotic pine removal at 19 Puriri Street, Wainuiomata where a number of trees were overhanging and threatening residential houses.

3.6 Kaitoke Regional Park

The *Kaitoke Regional Park Water Supply Public Health Risk Management Plan* was submitted to Ministry of Health. This is something that was done as best practice and has been a useful exercise, resulting in improvements being made to make the supply more secure. This is something we will do for Battle Hill Farm Forest Park and Queen Elizabeth Park in the coming year.

Upper Hutt City Council inspected Kaitoke campground as part of the annual registration process. We anticipate a registration renewal certificate arriving in the post soon.

A total of 12 totara were planted in the *Celebrate Life Grove* at Te Marua entrance

3.7 Queen Elizabeth Park

June has been a busy month with the beginning of the planting season.

Two more community plantings have taken place at Poplar Avenue wetland. The community plantings are filling in the wetland buffer areas D1 and D2 (see Figure 1 on page 9). The first on 13 June was completed in rainy weather but at least 30 volunteers helped to plant 1,200 plants. The second planting on 4 July was held in much better weather and again about 30 volunteers planted about 800 plants and put about 300 protectors on plants to protect them from both wind and pukeko (which have been enjoying pulling newly planted plants out of the ground). The Community Max team have planted over 7,000 plants in Area C and part of area D2 since the beginning of June. Future grants will be needed to be sought to enable the purchase of the plants required for Areas D3, D4 and D5.

Arbor Day was held on 3 June at Queen Elizabeth Park. A total of 150 children and teachers from Paekakariki, Raumati South and Te Horo Schools turned up in rainy conditions to plant 1,500 plants at the Arbor Day site. On 5 June a community spinifex planting was held in the Whopper Chopper area, with 672 plants planted by seven people.

On 11 June the New Zealand Defence Force arrived for a corporate planting, with 30 people for a barbecue lunch followed by a planting. They planted 1,500 plants on the Queen Elizabeth Park Whareroa Stream planting from the existing plantings towards the Northern Inland track.

Site preparation continues for the planting day on 15 August to celebrate 10 years of care groups.

Katiaki O’Naghre has been carrying out weed work in the southern part of the park, as well as planting 6,500 spinifex on the beach from the Whareroa Stream mouth north.

New rat bait stations have been installed in the Queen Elizabeth Park workshop and potting shed areas. A night shoot over the last month resulted in 11 hares, 19 rabbits and two possums being shot.

The Northern Farm Lease Block at Queen Elizabeth Park has been measured from the northern farm water supply to determine cost of replacement. The existing water lines are over 30 years old and are splitting and leaking. This may be a three year replacement project. Once replaced, all maintenance will be the responsibility of the farmer.

A meeting was held with the Kapiti Pony Club and Goodmans regarding the Northern Grazing Lease Block. The Kapiti Pony Club will take over the lease of this block on 1 July. They will be retaining some of the existing grazers until they are ready to move onto the land.

3.8 Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Catchment

In Wainuiomata 300 students took part in a school cross country running event. SAREX held a search and rescue exercise in the area, with 21 staff taking part. The final Wainuiomata Water Catchment tour for the season saw 12 attendees.

A new culvert pipe has been installed by our officers on Orongorongo Road as a solution to the blocked existing pipe.

Kaumatua Tramping Club completed Mainland Island monthly bait fill at Wainuiomata. The catchments were hunted for pigs, deer, and goats by professional hunters during a period of atrocious weather.

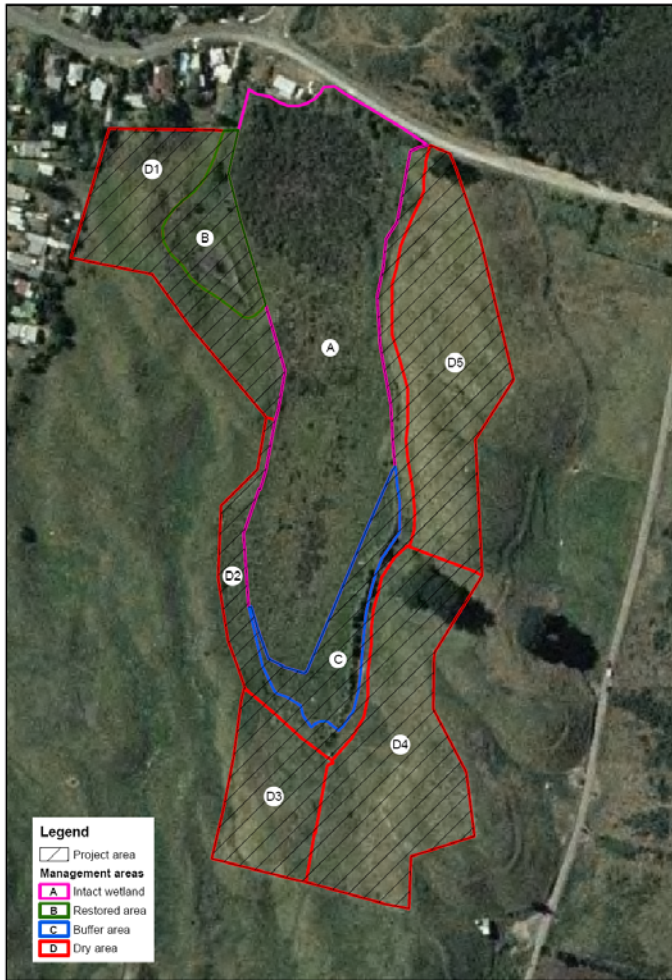


Figure 1 - Management areas of the Poplar Avenue wetland

Battle Hill



Queen Elizabeth Park



Children take part in Arbor Day at Battle Hill and Queen Elizabeth Park

Wainuiomata



Unloading pipes for the seismic repair stocks



New culvert pipe on the Orongorongo Road



Contract hunters lift dogs over the catchment fence at Wainuiomata



Historic 1880s pipes arranged for display at Wainuiomata

Marketing and Design

Review of operations for the period ended 30 June 2010

1. **Manager's comments**

It is pleasing to see that awareness and visitation of regional parks has remained reasonably consistent with recent years, despite the mediocre summer weather. It is interesting to see a significant amount of visitor "switching" between parks emerging through the research. While the recent community meetings discussing the draft Parks Network Management Plan have demonstrated the intimate knowledge many people have of "their" regional park, it is clear that regional residents are enjoying the variety of experiences available across our parks network.

2. **Water Supply**

2.1 **Educational resources**

The draft Year 4-6 Water Educational Resource has been completed. Our consultant is due to pilot the draft resource with two schools during the school's Term 4. If the piloting is successful, the Year 7-8 section of the resource will then be finalised. The water educational resource is due for completion by the end of June 2011.

3. **Parks**

3.1 **Events**

3.1.1 **Encore Awards**

During the period a graphic designer was briefed to develop a logo for the new Encore Awards. Concepts were presented and a final choice made by the GWRC and Committee Chairs, representatives from the Department of Conservation's (DoC) Wellington Hawke's Bay Conservancy and the Conservation Board. The new logo will be used in publicity relating to the awards, on certificates and other items as required.

Planning continues for the Awards, with judges representing GWRC and DoC recently approached to take part. The two judges will be assisted by an experienced staff member from either GWRC or DoC, depending on the Awards category.

3.1.2 **Buggy walks**

The July Buggy walk was held in fine weather at Poets Park on the Hutt River Trail, with 112 participants. The August walk is to be held on 5 August on the Ara Harakeke in Porirua.

3.1.3 **Community/corporate planting days**

Officers are working with rangers and groups to implement plantings in various parks, including a "feature" Friends of Maara Roa event on 26 June, Honda tree plantings, two separate plantings in the Queen Elizabeth Park bush remnant, a memorial planting for GWRC officer Ling Phang and Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Park opening planting.

Cor Associates invited staff and clients along to a planting day on 26 June at Queen Elizabeth Park. Thirty-five people attended, including teenagers and children, and all enjoyed the event.

Transpower also held a planting day with 15 people spending the morning at Queen Elizabeth Park.

We are still taking queries for corporate plantings for later in the year. Should we run out of plants we will be asking people to carry out releasing and other tasks in the parks.

Planning continues for the 10 years of care groups celebration at Queen Elizabeth Park on 15 August, with invitations issued, plant deliveries and other logistical details finalised for setup and the day itself.

3.1.4 Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Park launch

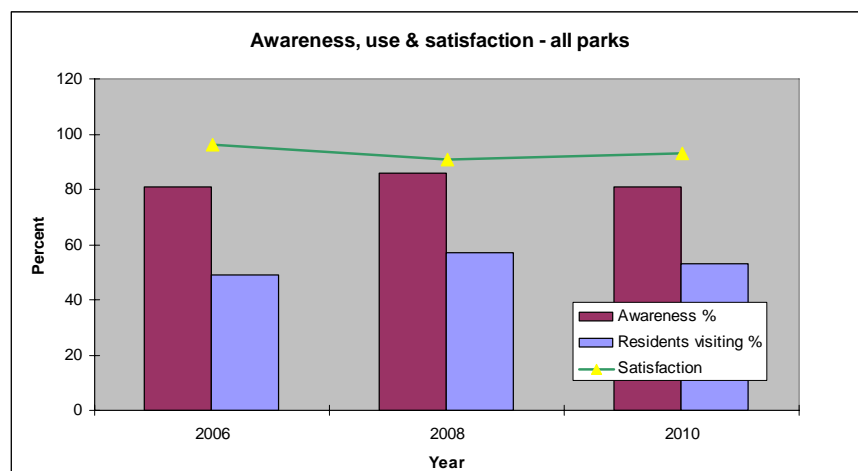
Officers provided event support for the Open Day, attended the launch at Kohunui Marae and organised the planting day. Despite the weather being good for only ducks and plants on the Sunday, around 30 locals turned up and 1,200 native trees were planted in just under two hours. There were many positive comments about the two days of events and great appreciation expressed at the work done to improve the Lake Domain site. It was the first tree planting near the yacht club for 40 years.

4. Research

During the period we received the results of the *Community Awareness and Usage of Regional Parks Survey*. Key points included:

- The regional population's ability to recall the names of parks is slightly less than 2008 but still high. Eighty-one percent of the population can recall the name of at least one park.
- Fifty-three percent of the population have visited at least one park in the last 12 months - about the same as 2009.
- Satisfaction levels with the parks remain high, with 93 percent being satisfied with their last visit.

This report allowed us to analyse data over the past few years. The figures indicate awareness and satisfaction remaining steady at high levels, with visitation slowly trending upwards.



Park visits have been lower this year and we wanted to understand why that was the case. It appears that a lot of people have been “switching” between different parks, visiting parks closer to home, or have more constraining family situations. Bad weather was noted by only 8 percent of respondents as the main reason for visiting a park less frequently than in previous years.

Other notable points from the research included the importance of the natural environment to park visitors, regional parks as places to enjoy an outdoor, active lifestyle and as places to go with family and friends. The *desire to be alone* is quite polarising - some people really want that experience in a regional park, while others definitely do not.

5. Community liaison

5.1.1 Recent meetings

Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park

The main items discussed included the group’s Parks Network Management Plan submission; restoration planting projects; planning for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held on 23 August; the cycleway through the park, and the annual Barn Dance.

Friends of Belmont Regional Park

The Friends’ AGM was held on 14 July, with the guest speaker being Peter Handford discussing the concept of Sustainable Land Management Plans.

Friends of Maara Roa

Ross Jackson was the guest speaker at the group’s 10th AGM, also held on 14 July. The Friends are most interested in the completion of the Parks Network Management Plan and Sustainable Land Management Plan so that they can update the Cannons Creek Restoration Plan, which was first developed 10 years ago.

Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee (ARAC)

Officers chaired and attended the regular three monthly liaison meeting, which was attended by Councillors Wilde and Laidlaw to discuss track usage in the forest and possible closure of some areas and opening of others. A field trip arranged to visit the forest was postponed because of only three Councillors being available.

Officers drafted a letter of support for the Whareroa Guardians’ funding application to the World Wildlife Fund for riparian protection work. Signed by the Council Chair, this letter highlighted the importance of this work to the whole stream catchment, including Queen Elizabeth Park. There, the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park are doing similar riparian protection work on the lower reaches of the stream. The grant application was successful.

6. Concessions

The new concessions application management system has been developed and tested, and we are nearing the launch phase. The system can be accessed online by applicants and staff alike, will track applications, approvals and hold associated information to assist us in providing high quality service, yet look after the parks and their natural values.

The next step is to introduce the system to the ranger staff and to current and potential concessionaires.

Name of event	Timing	Park
Xterra Trail Run	July	Belmont Regional Park
5 Bridges Marathon	July	Hutt River Trail
Butterfly Creek Night-time Madness Run/Walk	July	East Harbour Regional Park
Lord of the Rings film tours – contracts and usage payments	Ongoing	Kaitoke Regional Park

7. Park management plans

Officers have assisted with the public meetings held during June and subsequent tasks and co-ordination of follow-up meetings.

8. Wellington Regional Strategy/regional developments

Officers are working with park rangers on several projects:

- A programme of works to be completed before and following extension of the public access to the Wainuiomata Lower Dam in summer 2011/12.
- A review of the size and configuration of the Belmont Regional Park entrance car parks
- Finalising the Rivendell enhancement proposal (also in discussion with concessionaires who use the area)

9. Water usage

Charts detailing water sales for the year are on page 13.

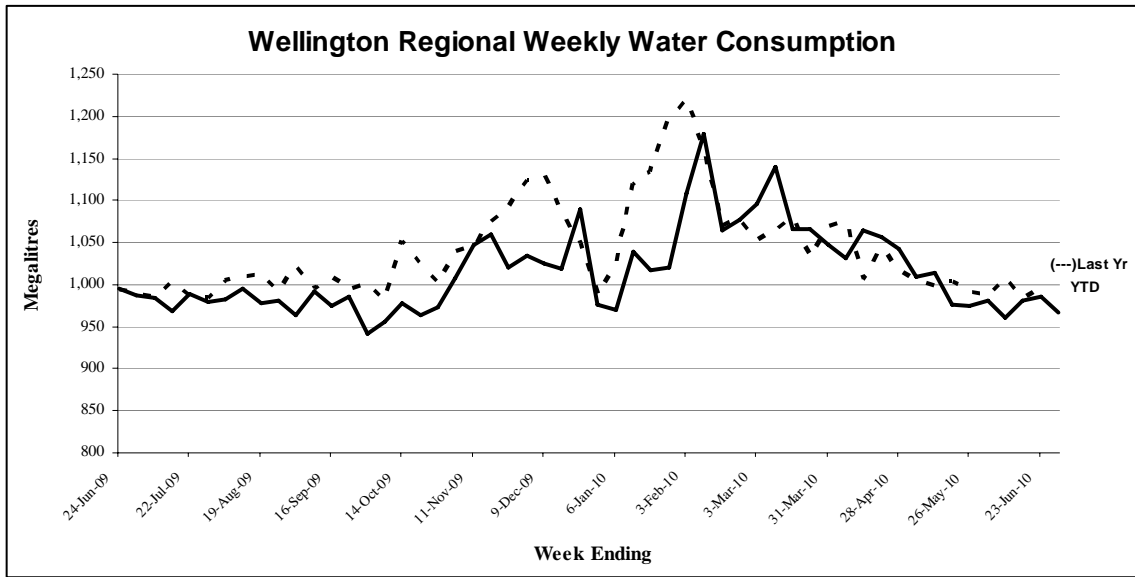


Figure 1 - Water sold over the last 12 months

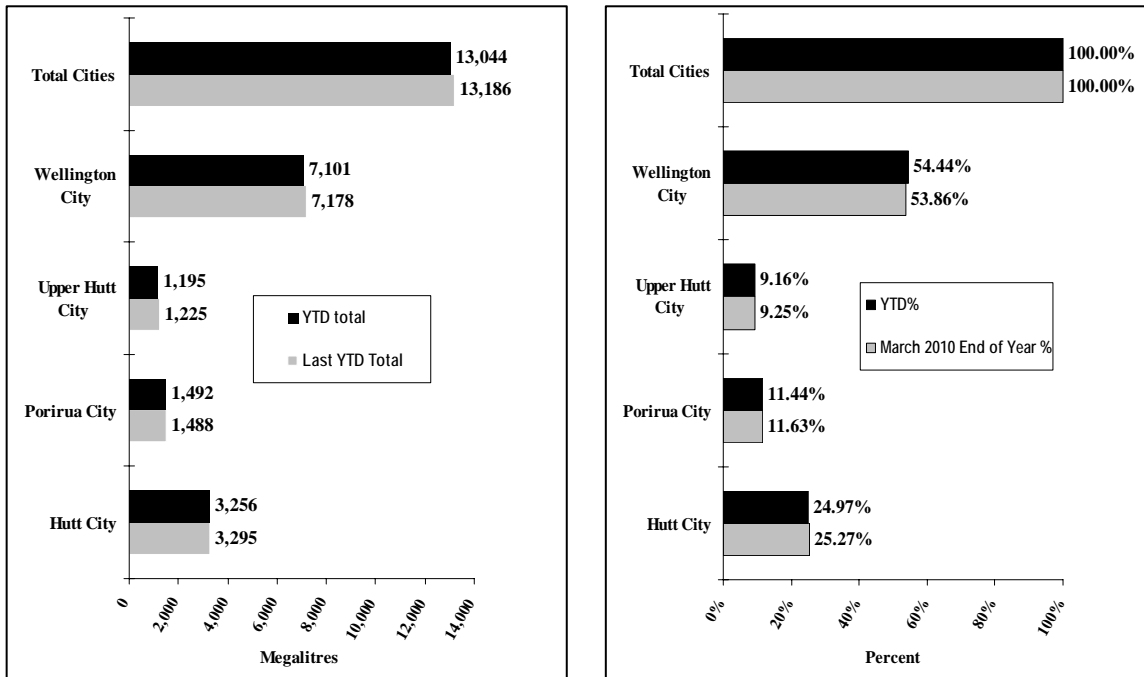


Figure 2 - Water sold during the metering year to date [June 2010]

Water Supply

Review of operations for the period ended 30 June 2010

1. Supply situation

1.1 General

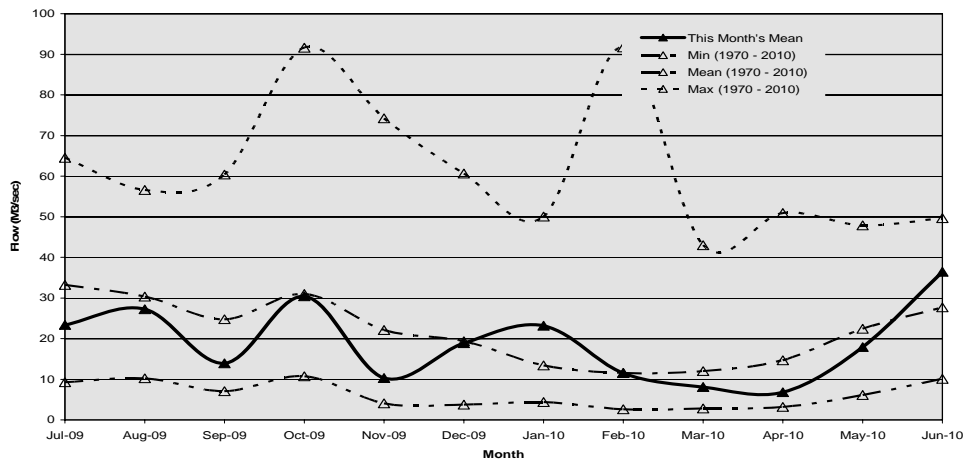
In late February the powdered activated carbon plant at Te Marua was put into operation because of high levels of Geosmin, a taste and odour compound, being present in the Stuart Macaskill Lakes source. In mid-June Geosmin was no longer detected and the carbon dosing plant was switched off.

Lake levels at time of writing are 80 percent for Lake 1 and 100 percent for Lake 2.

Gear Island back-up supply capacity has been reduced, as one of the three wells has been taken out of service. During a CCTV inspection of the well casings it was found that one of the casings was badly corroded and a number of small holes were present. The well will be out of service for the next three months while a new sleeve is installed.

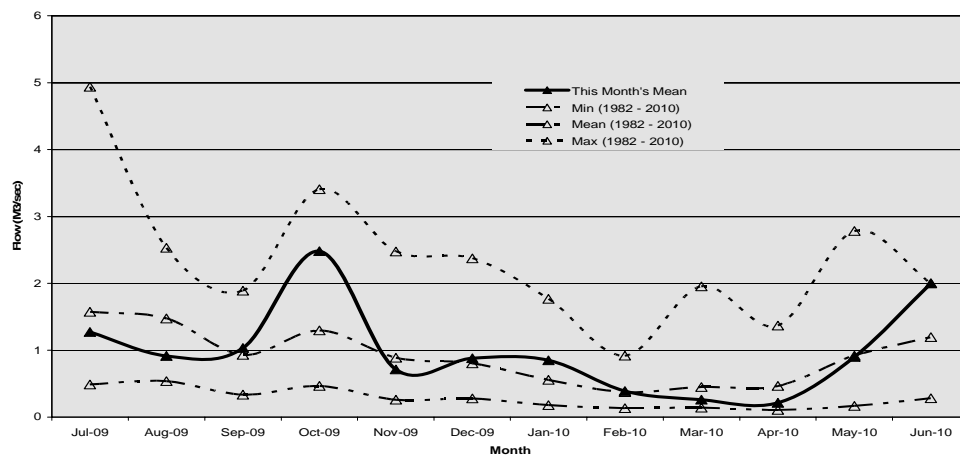
1.2 Hutt River flows measured at Birchville

The mean flow in the Hutt River at Birchville was above the mean during June.



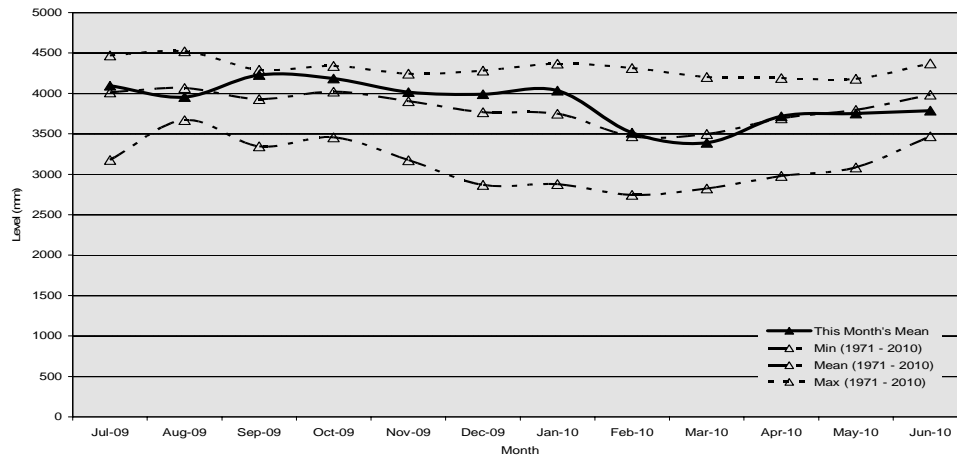
1.3 Wainuiomata River flows measured at Manuka Track

The mean flow in the Wainuiomata River at Manuka Track was about the maximum during June.



1.4 Aquifer levels measured at McEwan Park

The water level in the Waiwhetu aquifer during June was below the mean.



2. Electricity tender

The purchase of electrical energy for GWRC's major use sites was put out to tender in mid-June.

Tenders were invited on the basis of a Fixed Price Variable Volume basis and/or Spot + hedge (Contract for Difference) basis.

3. Change of coagulant at Te Marua

The planned change of coagulant at Te Marua was successfully carried out in mid-June. There have been no detrimental consequences and fine tuning of the chemical processes is almost complete.

4. Winter operation

The Wainuiomata Water Treatment Plant was converted to standby mode, as planned in mid June. The treatment plant will be off line for most of the winter period enabling staff to carry out maintenance and project activities.

5. Ultrasonic algae control

Low power ultrasonic transducers have been installed in Lake 1 at Te Marua as a trial to reduce algae numbers. The transducers are submerged and emit multi frequency ultrasonic sound waves that cover most of the lake area. The sound waves damage the cell walls of algae, which leads to inhibited growth.

If successful, the reduction in algae will have a number of benefits, including; reduced risk to public health from algal toxins, improved water treated water quality in terms of taste, reduced chemical and waste disposal costs, and increased reliability of the treatment process.

The full effectiveness of this technology will not be known for at least 12 months, as we need to compare ongoing algae test results with Lake 2 and also with the past seasonal behaviour of algae in Lake 1.

Development and Strategy

Review of operations for the period ended 30 June 2010

1. **Stuart Macaskill Lakes**

The detailed designs for the rock buttress work to strengthen parts of the external embankment of both lakes have been submitted to Environment Waikato for review by their expert adviser and issuing of a building consent. The consent application has been submitted separately from the work to raise the level of the lakes, to allow this work to commence ahead of the remaining work. Environment Waikato is processing the building consent applications for the lakes as agent of GWRC. The design of the rock buttresses has been peer reviewed by Damwatch Services the Consultant engaged as our technical advisor for this project.

It is intended to award a contract for the rock buttress construction before the end of this calendar year. The target is to complete the buttressing work on the embankment between the two lakes before construction work starts on raising the level of Lake 2 over the summer of 2011/12.

The alternative design concept of raising the embankment crest rather than constructing a low height concrete wall has been adopted and the detailed design is now under way.

An outline plan has been submitted to Upper Hutt City Council. Under the provisions of the *Resource Management Act*, outline plans of any works proposed within a designated site (the Stuart Macaskill Lakes are on a site designated for water supply) must be submitted to the relevant territorial authority to provide the opportunity to request changes to the design.

The immediate neighbours have been advised in writing of the scope and timing of the construction work.

4. **Reduced low flow at Kaitoke weir**

The GWRC management team has endorsed the proposal to apply for a change to the abstraction consent at Kaitoke weir to cover the duration of the Stuart Macaskill Lakes' upgrade. The application and supporting documents are currently being finalised.

This change would reduce the residual low flow in the Hutt River from 600 litres/second to 400 litres/second for a period of three years commencing before the 2011/12 summer. The additional water becoming available would only be taken for water supply to avoid a supply shortfall, particularly in a dry summer, as the alternative to requiring severe water conservation measures.

The impact of a lake being out of service over summer without the additional water being available was discussed with the city water supply managers. Submissions to the draft Annual Plan were received from Hutt and Upper Hutt City Councils supporting a consent change for the period of construction. Formal support has since been received from Upper Hutt and Wellington and City Councils. Porirua City Council is expected to consider the issue on

5 August.

Approval to submit the application will be sought from this Committee following receipt of formal feedback from all four city councils.

5. Wainuiomata mini hydro-generation

The heavy duty 400 volt electric cable, together with a communications cable, connecting the generator building to the water treatment plant have been laid underground, except for the last 20 m at the generator end, which will be installed when the generator building is completed.

The design of the generator building is well advanced and Tenders are expected to be called in August and the building substantially completed for installation of the generator in April 2011. The delivery date of the generator is programmed for 28 March 2011. Commissioning and first production of electricity is planned for July 2011.

6. Security of supply standard

MWH New Zealand Ltd has completed their review of best practice for a security of supply standard and the appropriateness of GWRC's policy of 2 percent probability of shortfall. Their final report is being prepared.

Following receipt of the final report, the results of the MWH New Zealand Ltd review will be reported to our customers and this Committee.

7. Rainwater tank modelling

The draft report on the modelled performance of domestic rainwater tanks in the Region's four cities has been received from Harrison Grierson Consultants Ltd. The report uses actual dry year and average year daily rainfall data for each city. Modelling shows the tank water level on a daily basis over the year when used for toilet flushing and outside water use for three roof capture areas, three household occupancies, and two tank sizes.

In reviewing the draft report it became clear that the assumption of full tank at the start date did not necessarily reflect reality and the calculations did not identify the water supplied from the mains to ensure adequate flushing water at low tank level. The Consultant has made changes to the model to accommodate these issues and a revised report is due in early August.

Emergency Management

Review of operations for the period ended 30 June 2010

1. Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group

1.1 General

The four scheduled work programmes have successfully been completed and reports are now being prepared for the Co-ordinating Executive Group (CEG) and the CDEM Group.

2. The new emergency management information system (EMIS)

Implementation of the system is behind schedule and the Ministry of CDEM now anticipates the system (after testing) to be implemented towards the end of 2010 or even as far out as the first half of 2011.

3. Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (CDEM Group) activities

- Keeping the CDEM Group Emergency Operations Centre(s) in a state of readiness (weekly testing of communications equipment, databases, and information management system , etc.)
- Preparing for *Get Ready Week* (11 to 15 October 2010). This year's theme will concentrate on tsunami preparedness and new public education material has been developed to encourage our communities to be more aware of this hazard and to be better prepared should our Region be exposed to such a threat.
- Preparing for *Earth Rocks* at Te Papa. This event happens every two years over Labour Day Weekend and gives CDEM in the Wellington Region the opportunity to interact with approximately 18,000 visitors to Te Papa and to promote personal preparedness. All our staff, as well as staff from the territorial authorities, will be involved with this event.
- Community Preparedness survey 2010. This survey has been completed and the report revealed some interesting results. For example, during the past four survey measurements the public's awareness and level of preparedness for a major civil defence emergency steadily grew. In 2010 68 percent of respondents considered their level of preparedness as *good or better* compared to only 56 percent in 2004. Another example revealed that the preferred choice of sourcing information is radio (>60 percent), television (13 percent), internet (11 percent), with the Yellow Pages only 3 percent. A full report of the findings will be tabled at the next CEG and CDEM Group meetings.
- *Exercise Tangaroa* (20 October 2010) is the national part of *Exercise Pacific Wave*, an international tsunami exercise. The exercise is based on a distant source tsunami and will focus on decision making about warnings, information management and evacuation of affected communities. Planning for the exercise is well under way and the Exercise General Instructions have been developed and disseminated to all the participants.