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Committee Environmental Wellbeing Committee
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General Managers' report to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee 23 October 2012

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of Greater Wellington's activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibility.

2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

3. Catchment Management

3.1 Flood Protection

3.1.1 Boulcott/Hutt Project

In September 2012, the Boulcott/Hutt Project reached another major milestone with Council approval of a procurement process to reinstate the golf course features disrupted by the stopbank construction. This will involve Council making a lump sum payment to the Golf Club to enable the Club to complete most of the remaining reinstatement works for which Council is responsible.

The contractor is making good progress with construction works. The stopbank from Mills Street to the former Hutt course boundary is substantially complete. The contractor has submitted construction management plans to Hutt City Council for the remaining section of the stopbank. The contractor expects to commence these works before the end of October 2013. The realigned section of Connolly Street has been sealed with asphalt. The construction of retaining walls is progressing.

3.1.2 City Centre Stopbank Project

Following a request from the Hutt Valley Floodplain Subcommittee, staff met with the Mills Street residents on 9 October 2012 to explain the programme for the project and also to discuss any issues related to the construction timing. Council is to prepare some alternative construction sequencing options for the Mills St residents to consider and provide their view on a preferred sequence. This will then be taken into account as part of the consenting process. The Waimarie Croquet Club, with the assistance of a consultant, is making good progress in preparing a presentation brochure to be used when seeking funds from donor agencies. The total estimated cost of relocating to the new site is \$420,000.

3.1.3 Otaki River Works

Staff have now commenced reviewing the design river channel from the State Highway to the mouth as part of the design process to determine edge protection and environmental enhancement works for the reach. It is proposed to complete the Gas Crossing edge protections in stages with the programme for this year to include the completion of the detailed design and the placement of rock for two of four groynes. The remainder of the work will be completed in subsequent years.

3.1.4 Lower Waitohu Stream

Land entry negotiations with the landowners from Convent Road Bridge to the Otaki and Porirua Trusts Board (OPTB) land are progressing well. In this reach, staff are planning to carry out stream improvement works that are permitted under the Fresh Water Plan and the Kapiti Coast District Council District Plan. These works are planned for February/March 2013.

An application has been lodged with the Maori Land Court to obtain an easement for the deflector stopbank. This application will take some more time to process, and it is unlikely a decision will be available for obtaining planning approvals in time to commence construction in February/March 2013.

OPTB has requested a partnership approach for the governance and management of the proposed South Waitohu stopbank and Mangapouri and Waitohu Streams. Staff now propose to hold off the construction of the stopbank to provide more time for Greater Wellington and the OPTB to progress with governance and management negotiations.

3.1.5 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme (LWVDS)

The 2012/13 works programme for LWVDS is underway. The key projects under consideration include a review of the current and proposed development works programme, planting of native shrubs on the lower Ruamahanga River, topping up stopbanks upstream of Lake Onoke and rip rap works.

3.1.6 Western Rivers and Streams

Hutt

The annual willow planting programme along the Hutt River is now finished. The native tree planting work is still ongoing and has included a number of community planting days. Staff are now undertaking vegetation spraying around boundaries, and cutting and poisoning Old Mans Beard along the river margin.

Wet gravel extraction in the Kennedy Good Bridge area has been temporarily stopped to comply with consent conditions, but the gravel pushed up on to the beaches will continue to be removed over the next few weeks.

Otaki River

Willow planting for the year is largely complete along the Otaki River. Track maintenance has been undertaken, including the section behind Winstone's plant which has been widened and reshaped. Gravel extraction is underway above the Chrystall's Bend rock line, and mowing is being undertaken along the stopbanks and berms.

Waikanae River

Maintenance work along the Waikanae River has included mulching, berm shaping and scrub removal from gravel beaches from the SH2 Bridge to El Rancho. Stopbank shaping and filling has also been carried out opposite Jim Cook Park, and staff are now starting to interplant willows in areas subject to erosion.

3.1.7 Wairarapa River Schemes

Work is progressing on the 2012/13 work programmes. At this time of the year, work consists largely of completing planting programmes of willows and native plants, willow layering, beach vegetation clearing, bed recontouring and winning boulders for lower valley bank protection work to be undertaken later in the year.

Maintenance rock rip rap is being delivered, and is being used to construct rock groynes as contractor resources become available.

The study to measure the impact of machine work in the water has commenced, with Massey University researchers measuring pre and post river work invertebrate life at sites in the northern valley rivers. This study will support the renewal of the global river consents.

3.1.8 Recreation Activities

The Hutt River Trail continues to get good use. Trees have been cut back from the trail at Belmont, and trail maintenance has been carried out at Silverstream.

A request has been received to modify a section of the trail at Gemstone Drive so as to make it comply with the New Zealand Cycleway standards. Staff are

working with the Upper Hutt City Council and the River Trail Management Group on the matter.

3.1.9 Gravel Extraction

Details of gravel extraction volumes are provided in the following table:

River	Extraction Volumes (m ³)	
	YTD 12/13	FY 11/12
Hutt Mouth	5,390	29,057
Hutt	25,663	49,873
Otaki	3,450	50,265
Wairarapa	NA	209,359
Totals	34,503	338,554

Wairarapa gravel extraction returns for this current year have not yet been received from contractors. However, the demand for gravel licences at this time would indicate that gravel demand will be lower than normal.

3.1.10 Drainage Schemes

Preparation is underway for the annual pump drainage scheme meetings held each year in November. One of the issues will be material damage and earthquake insurance for the pumped drainage schemes. Insurance has been arranged for the Onoke pump drainage scheme, at a complete premium, as an extension to other farm policies. This was not available for the other four pumped schemes.

There have been no operational issues during the winter period, and no significant maintenance items identified for this year's work programme.

The Landcorp Farm, Wairio, has independently submitted a proposal to Greater Wellington's Consents and Compliance Section, for a range of consents for its activities. The land is adjacent to the Te Hopai drainage scheme and the interface with the Wairarapa Moana Clean Up Fund is being explored. An initial water quality investigation of the local catchment is being undertaken.

3.1.11 River Management Resource Consent Project

The Hutt River Mouth extraction and deposition consents have now been granted for a term of 35 years. This is a significant milestone as the 35 year term recognises the ongoing need to maintain the river mouth for flood protection, while acknowledging the areas where Greater Wellington will continue to monitor the effects of the activities, including Petone Beach and the disposal zone in Wellington Harbour.

Environmental Regulation has requested further information on the Hutt River wet gravel extraction consent. As indicated to the Committee earlier, further work has been required to determine the extent of the potential effects of the extraction. This assessment will be completed in conjunction with other work which will be required for the global consent project.

Since the last report, Tonkin and Taylor Ltd have started to prepare the resource consent for the western river consent applications. A consultation strategy has been completed, and initial meetings held with some parties. Work is progressing on the various technical reports that are required to support the applications, including recreation, ecology and river morphology. Work on the Environmental Monitoring and Code of Practice is continuing. A draft short term consent application for the Waingawa River has been submitted to Environmental Regulation for feedback. More detail on this matter is included in Report 12.500.

3.1.13 Floodplain Management Plans (FMPs)

Waiwhetu Stream

Design work on four combinations of options, by the appointed consultant, is continuing. Draft deliverables from the consultant are expected by the first half of November 2012.

Pinehaven Stream

The preferred combination of options will be presented to the next Hutt Valley Floodplain Management Subcommittee on 11 December 2012.

Waikanae River

The FMP review, which was consulted on with the wider public in 2011, has been finalised internally and is ready for final sign off.

A report and presentation will be made to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee on 27 November 2012, before being officially published.

Otaki River

To support the Global Resource Consent Project – Western Rivers, a review of the river management part of the original Otaki FMP review, is to be ‘fast tracked’ as a specific investigation. The remainder of the review is likely to be deferred until 2013/14.

Hutt River

The FMP review will be progressed up to a ‘Draft Scoping Report’ stage. However, it is likely that approval to defer the continuation of the review to the 2013-14 programmes will be sought due to the effort required to undertake the consent project and the Wairarapa FMPs.

To support the Global Resource Consent Project – Western Rivers, the review of the river management part of the FMP review, is to be progressed.

Waiohine River

Two combinations of options are proposed to be taken forward for consultation with the community and detailed analysis as part of the Phase 3 investigations. A meeting of the Waiohine FMP Advisory Committee will be held on 15 October 2012 to consider the proposal. If adopted, the detail evaluation will

commence immediately with a view to completing the work and selection of the desired option for implementation by April 2013.

Waingawa River

The findings of the Scoping Report were reported back to the Scheme Committee on 27 September 2012. Members and other invited guests provided very good feedback and appreciation on the findings and the proposed Interim FMP Governance Structure (Upper Ruamahanga Floodplain Management Sub-Committee).

The programme of detailed investigations will be finalised when the Waipoua and Upper Ruamahanga River FMP Scoping Report has been completed. This will allow staff to combine similar or identical investigations to commence simultaneously.

3.1.14 Other Investigations and Support

Otaki River – Hydraulic Model Upgrade

Modelling has been completed, and the final scenario runs are underway. A draft report has been reviewed. The final report and full handover is to be completed by the end of October 2012. The upgrade is related to an action from the current Otaki River FMP, and is also identified as one of the priority rivers in the Climate Change Adaption Scoping Study.

Waikanae River – Staged Flood Maps for Flood Preparedness: Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Grant Funded

Funding to the value of \$50,000 was received from CEDM to develop staged flood maps. These will show how a flood is likely to develop over time and in which location for the benefit of emergency services (WREMO).

Required modelling work and supported survey work, by the appointed consultant, is continuing and is on schedule to be completed by January 2013. The final adopted maps are to be completed by the end of June 2013.

Waikanae River – Sedimentation Transport Study

The draft Report on the Waikanae River – Sedimentation Transport Study: Phase 2A Sediment Budget was received from the appointed consultant. The final report is expected in October 2012, with recommendations for the next stages of the Study, i.e. river management options, assessment of potential environmental effects, and a sensitivity and risk assessment.

In addition, an internal study/project by our modelling team, and supported by other staff, is ongoing on developing the Waikanae Optimum Bed Level Guidelines. These are being developed in conjunction with the above study.

The outcomes of these investigations will support the Global Resource Consent Project – Western Rivers.

Porirua Flood Hazard Maps

The hydraulic design report has been peer reviewed and final 'model runs', including Probable Maximum Flood (PMF), are being completed. The final report is expected to be completed in October, including the updated Flood Hazard Maps.

A strategy is to be developed on the publication of the Flood Hazard Maps, and a report is to be presented to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee covering the findings of the work and the suggested publication strategy.

Tawaha Catchment Diversion (Whakawirwiri Stream)

It is anticipated that the Resource Consent application will be lodged during the second week of October 2012.

Actual construction works are scheduled to commence in January 2013 providing the application does not go to a hearing, although the likelihood of a hearing not being required is considered low.

Climate Change Adaptation Scoping Study

The draft final report was reviewed during the second half of September 2012.

Final comments and additional information are to be incorporated in the final report. This is scheduled to be submitted during the second week of October 2012.

Following the submission of and agreement on the final document, a report will be presented to the Greater Wellington Climate Change Working Group and the Environmental Wellbeing Committee.

3.2 Biodiversity

3.2.1 General

The investigation into the destruction of native trees at Rangitatau reserve on Wellington's South Coast has been completed. The investigation highlighted a number of procedural short-comings which have now been remedied. Greater Wellington will contribute towards the cost of a detailed restoration plan for the reserve to be prepared by Wellington City Council in close consultation with the community.

The Greater Wellington website has now pages dedicated to biodiversity activities. While the main pages have been populated, more work is planned to provide technical information to external audiences.

3.2.2 Department planning and reporting

Reporting the organisation's progress implementing the Greater Wellington Biodiversity Strategy is the responsibility of the Biodiversity Department. The first of these reports has been tabled with the Executive Leadership Team. Most key actions are being addressed in work programmes and good progress is

being made in the completion of tasks. Generally, the Strategy has stimulated positive inter-departmental discussions and collaboration.

3.2.3 Policy advice and research

Biodiversity staff have worked with the Environmental Policy Department in regards to the Regional Plan review. In particular:

- Comprehensive advice on components relating to biodiversity offsetting has been prepared to assist the drafting of the Regional Plan. This included providing policy wording for inclusion in the draft Plan.
- Contributions to discussions on policies and rules for riparian vegetation and wetland protection, discharges into significant sites (Porirua Harbour, Lake Wairarapa), and water allocation provisions.

Advice was provided on several consent applications to Environmental Regulation and submissions on other council's plan changes and other external projects.

Biodiversity staff prepared the evidence related to biodiversity policy for the Greater Wellington submission on the New Zealand Transport Agency proposal for the Mackay's to Peka Peka Expressway for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The key concerns about the proposal are the underestimation of area with significant ecological values affected due to the applicant's failing to apply the criteria in Policy 22 in the proposed Regional Policy Statement. Tim Porteous will be presenting this evidence to the EPA Board of Inquiry in November.

3.2.4 High value biodiversity areas

A total of 140 areas are actively managed for their biodiversity value.¹ Of these, 106 receive pest animal control on an ongoing basis and 90 are scheduled for pest plant control in the 2012/13 year. See Figure 1 for location of actively managed areas.

The department is planning to complete 27 Biodiversity Area Plans (BAPs) in this financial year. So far 10 are in the process of being prepared.

After successful translocation of North Island robin from Kapiti Island extra ground-based bait stations have been deployed in the Wainuiomata Mainland Island to protect the birds from predators while the aerial 1080 operation was delayed. The aerial 1080 operation was successfully completed on 20 August. The subsequent fine weather is likely to result in excellent results in regards to bait take.

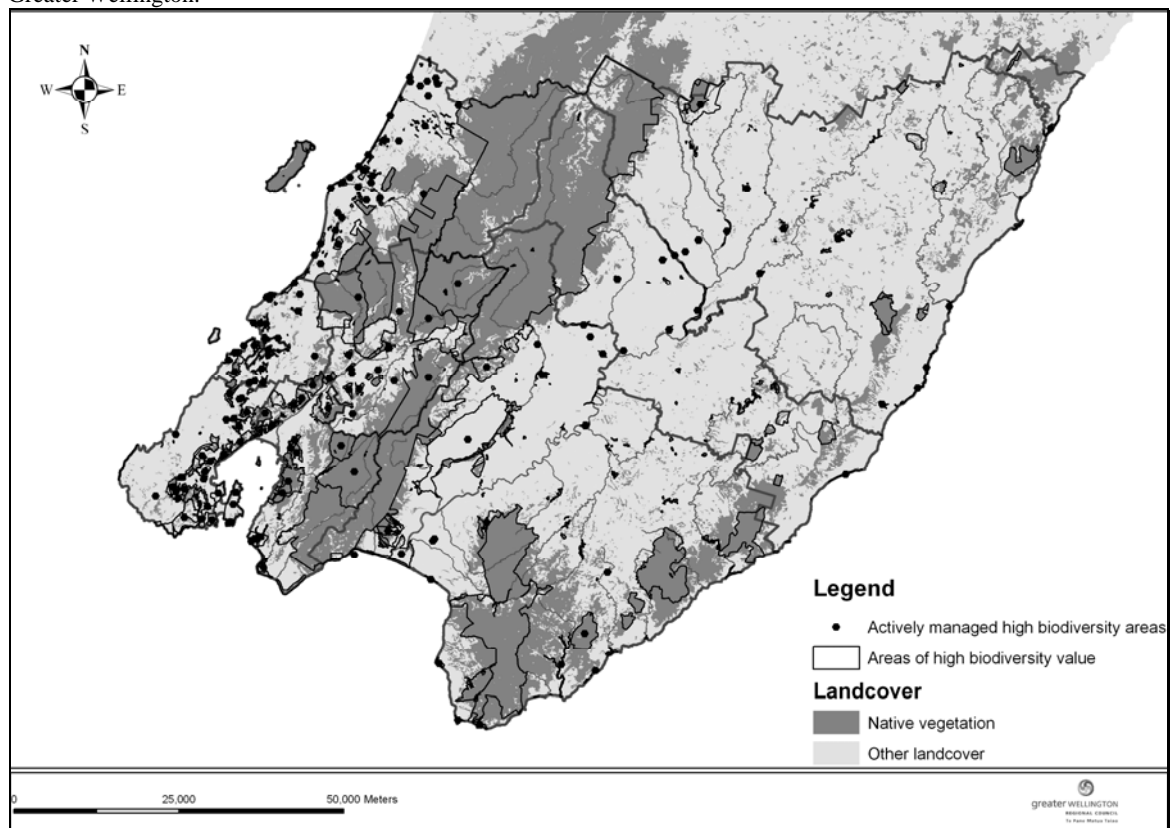
Following an unconsented construction of a track through a wetland reserve on the Riversdale-Orui Coast, staff met with the Riversdale Residents Association and Masterton District Council and negotiated an agreement on appropriate mitigation of the effects.

¹ Active management can involve various activities, including advice to landowners, exclusion of stock, as well as pest and weed control.

A pair of New Zealand dotterel, the region’s most threatened birds, have arrived to nest at the Riversdale dunes on the Orui Coast. It appears that the population is expanding into the Wellington region in response to successful management regimes further north. Predator control, temporary fencing, and signs have been set up with permission from Masterton District Council, the landowner, and Department of Conservation (DOC). Leaflets have been distributed to nearby residents in an effort to build community engagement.

Twenty new self setting rat and stoat traps are being trialled by the Biosecurity department at Johnsonville Park. Results will be compared with the success of previous bait stations at that site.

Figure 1. Location of areas of high biodiversity value and sites under active biodiversity management by Greater Wellington.



3.2.5 Site-specific biodiversity advice

In the first quarter site specific advice has been provided to seven external and two internal stakeholders on forest, riparian, wetland and dune ecosystem types. External stakeholders included landowners, iwi, private trusts, and individuals.

3.2.6 Priority areas for community engagement

Wairarapa Moana

Staff gave presentations about the role of the Biodiversity department, and the

Community Projects Team in particular, to several key stakeholders, including the Wairarapa Moana Management Team, iwi representatives, and the South Wairarapa Biodiversity group

The department is working with DOC to develop a process for Greater Wellington to lead community engagement at Wairarapa Moana. Biodiversity staff will lead projects in conjunction with DOC, including revegetation and education programmes, as well as projects on involving the Wairarapa Moana Restoration Network and iwi involvement.

The department is working with a range of stakeholders to develop a brief for an overall biodiversity “scoping plan” for the lake and surrounds. The plan will identify those high value areas where the department or the community may undertake restoration and protection activities.

Porirua Harbour and catchment

In consultation with Keith Calder, Porirua Harbour Strategy Coordinator, the list of projects Biodiversity staff will be working on has been finalised and project briefs are currently being drafted.

The Porirua Harbour Community Education Group has been established to deliver educational content about the Porirua catchment to the community and in schools and on websites. The purpose of this group is to increase coordination and focus on key messages and programmes from all contributing groups and organisations.

The department continues to support the stabilisation of erosion prone land through funding projects of the Pauatahanui Revegetation Framework (collaboration between Greater Wellington and Porirua City Council).

A project to identify potential opportunities and methods to improve ecological health of estuary through community restoration is underway. The outputs will include an estuarine re-vegetation plan that includes management units that are appropriate for community restoration. It is hoped to commence some “on the ground” work next winter.

3.2.7 Region-wide ecological restoration support

The process of transferring responsibility for managing care groups to territorial authorities where the site concerned is of lower biodiversity value is progressing well. These changes are documented in memoranda of understanding. This has freed up staff to focus on the Porirua harbour and Wairarapa Moana projects.

Planning is well advanced for the *Encore Awards* 2012. The awards honour individuals, groups, school communities and landowners commitment to conservation and biodiversity in collaboration with the Department of Conservation and Greater Wellington departments. Judging commences later this month and the ceremony will be held at the Wellington City Art Gallery on Monday, 3 December.

3.3 Biosecurity

3.3.1 Biosecurity Law Reform Act 2012

The long expected changes to the Biosecurity Act 1993 have been assented on 17 September 2012 as the Biosecurity Law Reform Act 2012. It introduces a number of changes with the aim of improving and streamlining the New Zealand biosecurity system. The Act will be followed by the National Policy Direction (NPD) that will address a number of issues relating to pest management, which will affect the review of the Greater Wellington Regional Pest Management Strategy. Staff will present the Committee with a more detailed report on the implications of the Act in the region after the NPD is issued by the Minister.

Pest Animals

3.3.2 Rabbits

Rabbit enquiries have increased as more people are starting to see young rabbits around private properties as well as care group planting sites in the west of the region. A total of 154 rabbits were shot over three nights in a new block of land purchased by Kapiti Coast District Council. This site has been an issue for local care group plantings in the past. In the Wairarapa, rabbit enquiries from the general public are only coming in spasmodically at present. It is unlikely that rabbit densities in Wairarapa will increase to pest proportions in the foreseeable future.

3.3.3 Rooks

The annual aerial rook nest survey for the region has been completed with the survey carried out on 13 September 2012. The initial survey revealed the presence of eight breeding rookeries but this could alter before the end of the season if new rookeries are reported to us by members of the public. All of the rookeries that are active are generally small with the largest holding 20 to 30 birds. The first round of control was completed on 2 October with 24 nests baited and a further 29 new but unused nests located. These will be checked and baited towards the end of the month. There were 98 nests baited in 2011 so it is predicted that there will be a noticeable decline in the rook population this year. This is a positive step toward eventual eradication of rooks from the region.

3.3.4 KNE programme

Some pest monitoring work has been completed (Table 1) at a number of KNEs. The results indicate that the regular possum, rat and mustelid work programmes are maintaining pests at low levels.

Table 1. August Pest Monitoring results

KNE	Rat tracking Rate (%)	Mouse tracking rate (%)	Mustelids Present	Hedgehogs present	Possum present	
Fensham	0.00%	60.00%	NO	NO	No	
Witako	0.00%	6.67%	NO	NO	No	
Keith George	0.00%	10.00%	NO	NO	No	
Wright's Hill	3.33%	46.67%	NO	NO	No	
Johnsonville Park	0.00%	30.00%	NO	NO	No	
Porirua Scenic	3.33%	13.33%	NO	NO	No	
Long Gully	5.00%	35.53%	No	NO	No	
Tauherenikau	0.00%	30.00%	NO	NO	No	
Parkway	10.63%	30.00%	NO	2.63%	No	

A deer culling contract was completed in the East Harbour Regional Park. Five deer were shot over a ten day period. A goat culling contract was completed in the Akatarawa block, resulting in a total of 69 goats, eight pigs and one deer being shot over a 17 day period.

Staff have commenced predator trapping to protect rare New Zealand Dotterel nesting at Riversdale Beach. The dotterel nesting area has been fenced to exclude members of the public for the duration of the breeding season.

3.3.5 Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Aerial Operation

The 1080 aerial project in the water catchment area was completed on 29 August. The operation went smoothly and according to plan. Staff are monitoring bait and carcass condition and deterioration levels. Warning signs are checked regularly.

3.3.6 Aorangi Trust Blue Penguin Programme

The establishment of nest boxes for Blue Penguin on the Cape Palliser Coast by members of the Aorangi Trust has had early success. Recently a pair of penguins took up residence in one of the boxes and two eggs were produced. Traps laid earlier have been successful in capturing stoats and hedgehogs, and this will hopefully provide the necessary support to enable the eggs to hatch and the chicks to survive through to fledging. All work is undertaken by volunteers with a passion and a vision for seeing the return of Blue Penguin nesting colonies along the Palliser Coast.

3.3.7 Magpies

The magpie breeding season is upon us and regular complaints are being received. Most Wairarapa calls are from cyclists who have been attacked whilst riding rural roads. Western zone calls have come from a mixture of postal workers and private land owners. Staff have been busy attending to these calls for assistance, with the offending birds being either trapped or shot. It is expected that staff will field complaints until the end of October.

BioWorks

3.3.8 Rimutaka Range Aerial Project

The aerial operation was completed on 29 and 30 August. Staff were fortunate to complete the total operational area (27,000ha) in two days after experiencing several months of unfavourable weather conditions. The project was audited by the Animal Health Board (AHB), Regional Public Health, and Greater Wellington consents officers. The operation complied with all various approvals and consents issued for the operation.

The BioWorks team continue to monitor rainfall for bait toxicity and possum carcass deterioration to determine when the treatment areas will become safe for normal use. Staff are undertaking weekly checks on poison signs and information boards in high use public areas to ensure the public remain informed of the operation. Any damaged or missing signs are replaced immediately.

The Hutt River is being monitored during periods of high rainfall to determine if rivers levels are high enough to cause possum carcasses to be transported outside of the operational area. To date river levels have not been high enough to trigger down stream inspections of the river banks. However, one precautionary check of the Petone foreshore has occurred and no carcasses were found.

3.3.9 Pukeatua Aerial Project

This project remains stalled due to unsuitable weather. BioWorks have the AHB's approval to apply bait at the earliest opportunity. Weather delays have meant that the project will be required to be publically re-advertised during October.

3.3.10 Western Tararua Aerial Project

The completion of this project (4,257 ha) was planned for the 2011/12 year but the project has been affected by two key staff leaving as well as with destocking issues on one of the large properties in the project. Staff are working towards completing the project in the 2012/13 year.

Pest Plants

3.3.11 Surveillance and Total Control species

Staff have inspected properties in the Raumati South and found new sites of Woolly nightshade and Blue passion flower sites. Sites with small plants have been controlled and the remaining sites, with larger trees, will be targeted for control once all owners have been contacted.

Staff contacted all affected landowners around Summerset Village Lake in preparation of commencing the annual control programme for Senegal Tea.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) funded Manchurian wild rice programme has commenced with a site assessment, mail out to all affected neighbouring properties, and meetings with occupiers to discuss control logistics and access.

3.3.14 National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA)

Staff have inspected plants for sale at the main Forest & Bird fundraiser held at Waterloo hall in Lower Hutt and the Carterton Daffodil Day markets. There were no banned plants found. These events were a good opportunity to educate the public on species that are prohibited for trading.

3.3.15 Check Clean Dry (CCD) Advocacy

The CCD partnership programme planning has been completed for the 2012/13 summer. Staff met with new MPI staff responsible for incursion, response and communication. MPI is very keen to improve the annual CCD awareness programme. A recently completed review has showed that changes to the programmes initiated by councils and DOC had a significant positive effect on raised public awareness.

The National Freshwater Pests Partnership Co-ordination Group meets via phone conference every month. It is a national group focused on stopping the incursion or spread of fresh water pests. The participants (MPI,ASUREQuality, DOC and councils) share experiences in an effort to respond in a more efficient and uniform manner nationally. Local area partnership groups like the Lower North Island Didymo Partnership Group evolved from this forum.

This group has developed an incursion response plan for the lower North Island didymo incursion. The plan ensures co-ordinated joint activity by MPI, GW and Horizons Regional Councils and ASUREQuality. The group meets annually to review the plan and discuss current national Didymo management and wider aquatic and terrestrial response risks.

3.3.16 National Machinery Hygiene Guidelines and Biosecurity at Farm Gate

The National Pest Control Agencies (NPCA) has contracted Diederik Meenken to develop a set of guidelines for Machinery Hygiene to address the issue of pest plants spread by agricultural contractors. Greater Wellington has become part of the national group, including MPI, DOC, Fed Farmers, Dairy NZ, Horticulture NZ, Forest Owners, Contractors Association and others, that was formed to develop the guidelines further.

The group has met once to discuss the first draft of the Machinery Hygiene Guidelines and decided to extend the scope to address “Biosecurity at the farm gate”. This initiative aims to improve management of pest spread via the machinery pathway, particularly of weeds and plant disease. The guidelines will involve providing education packages to contractors and their customers to raise biosecurity intelligence through simple examples of how to stop pests being moved between properties.

3.3.17 Containment species

The Wairarapa rugged coast, beaches and coastal settlements have been inspected for the signs of Boneseed. Plants are still being found and a few new sites appeared through garden dumping on beaches, urban clearance and as a result of stock removal from infested areas.

The aerial control of boneseed was completed. Plant numbers were consistent with previous years. Staff have initiated discussion with the Biodiversity team to consider long-term management options on some of these sites. They are suggesting to aerially seed indigenous species to establish canopy and shade out Boneseed. The areas on the south Wairarapa coast would be targeted for restoration.



Staff surveyed Wellington and Porirua coastal reserve areas. Aerial control is planned for this area and staff are awaiting suitable weather.

3.3.18 Biological control

Wairarapa staff worked on Gorse thrips survey in Carterton and South Wairarapa. At this stage it seems as if the thrips are getting around quite well by themselves and few releases to fill gaps will be required.

Smilax sites have been revisited to determine if the rust is present. Where rust was absent a release has been made. Smilax plants are devastated at the sites where rust has been present for some years.

This year's broom psyllid translocation programme will achieve full dispersal of this species in Wairarapa. Translocation will start when juveniles emerge from eggs en-mass for a short three week period in October. Broom gall mite monitoring at last year's release sites noted formation of new galls. This agent

is devastating plants at other release sites (no flower buds form, dieback and plant fragile).

Although no Tradescantia stem and leaf beetles were seen during site inspections (as yet not emerged from ground) the characteristic damage is apparent on Tradescantia at all sites.

3.3.20 Community Engagement

Staff assisted Wellington Weed Swap with a greater presence than previous occasions.



Darryl Kee (GW), Michele Morrison, Susanne Govella (GW) identifying a Cathedral Bell weed. Photo taken by: Amy Brasch, DOC

3.4 Land Management

3.4.1 Akura Conservation Centre

The Centre is showing an operating surplus of \$136.9K at the end of the first quarter. This is \$12K ahead of budget. Expenditure and revenue figures for the winter trading season will be finalised by the end of November and reported as part of the six month review. The trading season has been a very good one, especially sales of Pinus radiata seedlings to both private forestry companies and Afforestation Grant Scheme projects supervised by Land Management staff.

Six hectares of new nursery has been planted on the land leased from PK Trust. This is the first of three years of planting culminating in 13 hectares of

new nursery adjacent to Akura. Shelter belts have also been planted and it is anticipated that the irrigation system will be ready to start in mid-November. Currently the soil moisture levels are good. There is a contingency plan that would allow the new plantings to be irrigated earlier if soil moisture levels became limiting. The existing irrigation system at Akura could be reconfigured if required.

Management at the nursery over the next month will concentrate on mulching, mowing and spraying. Pruning will begin in late November and continues through to March.

3.4.2 Land Environment Plans

Land Environment Plans (LEPs) have been developed to inform landowners how nutrients can be managed in intensive farming systems. LEPs will provide Greater Wellington and landowners with a tool which will enable them to work together to manage:

- Nutrients, *E.coli* and suspended sediments in waterways via surface runoff, groundwater or direct discharge (e.g tile drains)
- Effluent management and disposal
- Stock access to waterways
- Biodiversity values on farms

The LEP also will provide a framework via which Best Management Practices (BMPs) for particular land uses can be adopted and maintained. These will be in conjunction with industry standards such as the Fonterra Accord and BMPs prepared by industry bodies including Dairy NZ, and the Land and Water.

To date six plans have been prepared in the Mangatarere catchment and a planting programme has been completed over the last few months. Interest remains high in this catchment for further LEPs and two more are in the pipeline. While the Mangatarere catchment has been a particular focus for the pilot programme, two landowners in the Mangaone catchment near Te Horo have requested plans for the coming year. Two other LEPs will be prepared as part of the Wairarapa Moana Clean-up project. It is pleasing to note that this programme has quite quickly turned into one with a regional perspective.

A new staff member has been appointed to manage the LEP programme and will begin duties in late October.

3.4.3 Winter Planting

The final stages of the winter planting programme are being completed. This involves release spraying around newly planted seedlings to control grass and weed regrowth that can smother establishing seedlings and compete for soil moisture. On the back of the large Afforestation Grant Scheme programme this is a significant undertaking as spraying can only be undertaken on calm days as

spray drift can be a problem. Individual trees are sprayed using a knapsack and this year this involves 250 hectares or 275,000 spots.

Pole planting was completed by the end of September and some 25,000 poles have been planted on erosion-prone pasture land, mainly in the Wairarapa hill country. Soil moisture levels are currently good, however the northwesterly winds that are prevalent through October/November can quickly remove topsoil moisture. Successful pole planting relies on good rainfall through the summer months especially January/February.

3.4.4 Myland - Land Use Decision Support Tool

MyLand was developed from 2009 to 2011 as a prototype strategic land use decision tool. It is a joint initiative of Scion and AgResearch, which was funded by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (now Ministry of Primary Industries, MPI). The purpose of this tool is to assist land owners to improve the long term profitability and sustainability of their land by integrating science outputs into an easy to use web based system.

Currently MyLand consists of a web enabled interface that provides geospatial functionality and an initial modelling framework that is designed to model the production, economic, and environmental factors for a range of land uses. Key stakeholders have provided considerable support for this system at a meeting held on 20 December 2011 at MAF, Wellington. The system, when fully completed, is intended to provide strategic decision making through the modelling of multiple land use scenarios.

Regional Councils are potentially the main user of such a tool and were represented on the stakeholder group. At this point a beta (or stage one version) has been developed. A number of workshops have been held recently to road test the beta version and seek feedback from Regional Councils and forestry companies to develop a near-production version.

There is considerable interest from Land Management staff in this tool. Further development is required especially around the economic models that underpin the tool. After the current round of evaluation, feedback on the useability and utility of MyLand a stakeholder meeting will be held to evaluate the next stage of the tools development.

Long term underpinning funding is needed to maintain and support this tool. Considerable costs are involved to license data, license database software, and purchase web hosting services. It has been proposed that a formal group be setup to fund the development of MyLand over the next 4 years.

3.5 Wairarapa Moana Wetland Project

The main focus has been launching the Wairarapa Moana Clean Up Fund project.

Other tasks have included finalising the application for Ramsar status for the public land associated with the Wairarapa Moana wetland complex. This will

be formally applied for shortly. Saint Matthews College has kindly spent its winnings from the logo competition on native plants and planted them in the area being upgraded at the Lake Domain. Catchment Management Group staff have planted and weeded previous plantings in this same area.

Through the association with Ducks Unlimited, DOC and Greater Wellington, staff are building a relationship with the Environmental and Geological Science department at Victoria University. It is probable that one or two masters theses will study the Wairio/Matthews/Boggy Pond area.

Input to the new regional plan regarding rural land use and water quality and the regulation of the extensive drainage network has occurred. Note that Lake Wairarapa's water quality has not deteriorated since sampling commenced in 1994 despite the intensification of land use on the surrounding land. It is, however, supertrophic so is in poor shape. It is possible this is due to the associated wetlands stripping out nutrients.

3.5.1 Wairarapa Moana Cleanup Fund Project

Achievements this quarter

The core project team has been changed into a technical advisory group (TAG) comprising staff from Greater Wellington, DOC, local iwi, Dairy NZ and Ducks Unlimited. Fonterra has requested and have been accepted as members of the TAG.

Three TAG meetings have occurred concentrating on the establishment of a set of templates/practises to be used during the term of the project.

A Land Environment Assessment procedure has been developed and trialled on one property. The LIDAR maps are proving to be invaluable in determining the drainage issues on a property. Over 20 landowners have expressed an interest in the project. A schedule has been developed to achieve the initial assessments by the end of November 2012.

Water quality and flow measurements have been collected from two of the priority wetlands – Bartons and Matthews Lagoon. The water quality sampling at Matthews Lagoon has reinforced the potential for wetlands to strip nitrates from drainage water, eg in this initial set of sampling the total nitrogen level decreased by 400%. Levels however still remained higher than ANZECC (2000) trigger levels. The dissolved reactive phosphorous values by comparison showed no significant decrease remaining at levels above the ANZECC (2000) guidelines. The objective of this project is to modify these wetlands to achieve outputs in line with an appropriate guideline. Identification of the appropriate guideline value that will achieve water quality outcomes is still to be addressed. Discussions are ongoing to involve Victoria University students in developing a model of Matthews Lagoon.

Work is ongoing to develop a set of cultural health monitoring parameters.

A pest plant control programme has been developed for the edge wetlands and agreement has been reached about the priority actions to be completed at those

wetlands, e.g. pest control, wetland alteration/construction. A project involving the removal of exotic fish species to improve the habitat for native fish in Bartons Lagoon has been scoped.

Field visits have occurred at three of the priority wetlands - Wairio, Matthews and Bartons Lagoons. Ducks Unlimited proposal to continue to restore the Wairio wetlands has been approved for year one. NIWA scientist, Chris Tanner a wetland specialist, is assisting the project to develop the potential of Bartons and Matthews Lagoons.

A wetland bird expert has been employed to assess wetland bird diversity and abundance at each of the edge wetlands. Bird recording devices have also been installed. Work is ongoing to develop a set of cultural health monitoring parameters.

The TAG has identified a need to strengthen the technology transfer programme. Three streams of the programme, all with an appropriate cultural input, are being developed:

- Wairarapa Moana and the Fresh Start for Freshwater Cleanup Fund
- The edge wetlands-their values, importance and management, and
- Farming around wetlands

Risk management

The delayed start to the project has impacted on consultation with the dairy farmers. Currently they are too busy with calving to discuss the possibilities of this project.

4. Environment Management

4.1 Harbour management – oil spill response review

The saga of the grounding and oil spill from the container ship Rena, off Tauranga, on 5 October 2011 has been widely covered by the media.

Since early May the Tier 3 (Rena) marine oil spill response has been downgraded to a Tier 2 regional response. This means that the responsibility for the ongoing monitoring and any future oil spill clean ups now rests with the Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

In addition to this, section 325 of the Maritime Transport Act 1994 provides that the Director of Maritime New Zealand may, at any time within two years of a maritime oil spill response being carried out, review that response with a view to improving future responses. In line with this, Simon Murdoch was appointed by the Director in September to review the effectiveness of the Tier 3 oil spill response following the grounding of Rena. This review is anticipated to take six months.

5. Development

5.1 Plantation forestry

Expressions of Interest for the sale of the forestry cutting rights for the metropolitan and Wairarapa forests close on 16 October. It is expected that a report will be available for the Council meeting in December.

As at 15 October, we have 35 loads on the ground in the forest, this is considerably greater than normal. Rayonier “lost” at least two ships to scheduling problems. It is predicted that they will recover before month end.

5.2 Forestry residue

In my report to the last Committee meeting, I indicated that a trial was taking place to see if it was advantageous for a commercial contractor to clear each skid site of wood for chipping. The trial proceeded but unfortunately the contractor’s costs outweighed the selling price of the chips. We are to try again using a commercial firewood operator who has offered a fixed price for a specific skid site.

5.3 Wairarapa forests

Traditionally, logging takes place for part of the winter and this occurred this year. Ground conditions improved in the month of September with drier underfoot conditions at the skid sites which made processing easier.

Each year, a licence is issued to allow beehives in some areas of the Wairarapa forests. The objective of the beekeeper is to produce Manuka honey from the remnant bush areas. Over the last year, the honey was of a high grade and Greater Wellington’s share of the revenue was \$26,000.

Although there are continuing predictions of doom from some quarters, Asian (China, India, Taiwan and Korea) prices have remained relatively stable with the major movement being the US dollar. It appears that movement in the landed price has been offset by movements in the shipping cost and only the foreign exchange has caused any significant change in the New Zealand price. Demand seems to continue unabated.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:



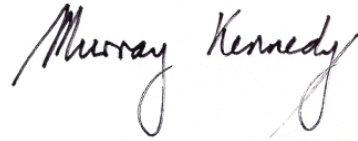
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