

**Report 99.259**

24 May 1999

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Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee  
from Colin Wright, Divisional Manager

## **Divisional Manager's Report**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Committee of current activities and provide information of interest since the previous meeting held on 22 April 1999.

### **2. Divisional Matters**

#### **2.1 Financial Report**

The financial reports to the end of March indicate that the Division is \$174,000 under budget after ten months of the financial year. Within the various departments there are a number of variations from budget which largely relate to timing differences. This is particularly so in the Biosecurity Department which is currently \$365,000 under budget. By contrast the Operations Department was \$384,000 over budget because of the additional \$850,000 that has been expended so far on flood damage repair work. Overall, capital expenditure is close to budget.

As earlier indicated, 14 of the 17 Annual Plan Performance Indicators are on target for achievement. The exceptions relate to under activity in the soil conservation area and the flood damage in the river schemes.

#### **2.2 Annual Plan**

For the benefit of appointed members of the Committee, it is noted that submissions on the Council's Annual Plan close on 28 May. All submissions will be considered by the Policy & Finance Committee at meetings scheduled for the 10 and 11 June.

The Annual Plan for 1999/2000 is scheduled to be finalised on 29 June.

### **2.3 Awhea Catchment Scheme Rating**

At the recent general meeting for the Awhea Catchment Scheme held at Tukurumuri, the meeting agreed on an informal review of the Scheme's rating. This was as a result of representations made by Mr DTS Riddiford. The meeting agreed that staff would work with the Scheme Advisory Committee Chairman and one other member to identify any obvious anomalies. Any further action would be decided depending upon the number and size of any anomalies.

### **2.4 Whakawiriwiri Stream Upgrading**

Following the decision at the last meeting of the Committee to proceed with an alternative proposal for the Whakawiriwiri Stream upgrading, a consultant has been engaged to prepare an appropriate assessment of environmental effects so that a resource consent application can be made in the near future. Advice on the new proposals has been given to all those involved in the previous consent hearing approximately four years ago. Responses have been received from only a small number of those previously involved and this information will be used in finalising the resource consent application.

## **3. Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)**

### **3.1 Donalds Creek Flood Protection Project**

This project has been completed at a cost of \$340,000 including the \$55,000 land purchase cost for the flood detention area. The original estimate for the project was \$290,000 and did not include land purchase. Most of the land will be sold off in due course. As suggested at the last committee meeting, an opening ceremony is planned for later this month.

### **3.2 Flood Damage Repairs**

Projected expenditure on the Council approved flood damage repair programme is \$850,000 in comparison to the original estimate of \$1.13m. The remaining Council approved works were not undertaken, as direct financial contributions were required, and could not be obtained from the benefiting landowners.

### **3.3 Waiohine River Management Scheme - Flood Damage Repairs**

Additional flood damage repair works consisting of bank protection at six sites between Kuratawhiti Street and the Ruamahanga confluence have been completed at a total cost of \$130,000. The total flood damage repair cost is expected to be \$387,000 to give a projected scheme deficit of \$254,000.

The Scheme Advisory Committee meeting in April recommended a 60% rate increase, to provide funds for an adequate maintenance

programme, and to repay the Scheme deficit over a minimum 4 year period. A newsletter has been sent out to ratepayers advising of the reasons for the recommended rate increase.

### **3.4 Masterton Oxidation Ponds**

The stopbanking work on the Forbes property has been completed at a cost of \$65,000. This work will provide flood protection to the Oxidation Ponds, and is part of the Council approved flood damage repair programme.

Masterton District Council funded works to protect the Oxidation Pond embankment from river erosion are in progress at an estimated cost of \$45,000.

### **3.5 Waiohine Floodplain Advisory Committee**

This committee has been formed to consider and recommend future river and floodplain management options, and to assist with related community consultation.

The committee is made up of representatives of the:

- Greytown Community Board
- South Wairarapa District Council
- Carterton District Council
- Iwi
- Waiohine Scheme Advisory Committee
- Landowners adjoining the Apple Barrel Floodway

The committee's first meeting was held in late April, during which terms of reference and additional committee membership were determined.

### **3.6 Lower Taueru River Management Scheme**

The tree removal programme has been completed over five years at a cost of \$540,000 in comparison to the original estimate of \$700,000. An ongoing programme of channel maintenance will now be put in place.

### **3.7 Gladstone Water Supply Scheme**

A meeting was held with Gladstone residents to discuss the proposed water supply scheme. It was agreed that Council would carry out a feasibility study and report back to the landowners with recommended options and estimates. A steering committee was elected to help staff with this study.

### **3.8 Conservation Forestry**

About 9,000 tonnes of logs have been harvested to date from the Hiwinui Forest Reserve, compared to the planned 10,000 tonne target for this financial year. Net income to date is \$205,000 compared to the 1998/99 budget of \$200,000. The increased income projection of \$220,000 is a result of the better than expected log quality.

### **3.9 Soil Conservation Joint Venture Forests**

The first joint venture forest established by Council, Highfield with an area of 66 hectares, is at present undergoing its first pruning. Both the pruning and Council supervision costs are being met by the landowner.

### **3.10 Scheme Meetings**

Advisory Committee meetings have been held for seven river management Schemes and six catchment control Schemes, in order to set works programmes and rates for the 1999/2000 financial year. Also papers were circulated and programmes and rates confirmed with the chairperson of each of the fifteen drainage schemes and two water supply schemes administered by Council.

### **3.11 Railway Irons in Rivers**

Railway irons are often used as part of protection works in rivers. If these fail they can be hazardous to jet boats and other recreational users of rivers.

As a result of an approach by the local Jet Boat Club, an inspection was held of the Ruamahanga River from Morisons Bush to Te Ore Ore. Railway irons were located in approximately 12 localities.

The Council has undertaken to remove redundant railway irons as and when they complete work in their immediate vicinity. In return the jetboaters have offered to assist the Council where the railway irons are located in deep water and machinery is not able to be positioned close to them.

It is pleasing to see the jetboaters and staff working together to try and solve this particular issue.

## **4. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)**

### **4.1 Old Mans Beard, Wairarapa Rivers**

Other than some minor follow-up, all contract control for Old Man's Beard adjacent to major Wairarapa rivers has been completed for the current year. Six contracts were approved.

This season a second maintenance application was completed on the Waingawa River from State Highway 2 to the confluence with the Ruamahanga.

Initial control was carried out on the Ruamahanga River from two kilometres downstream of the Gladstone Road bridge to three kilometres below the confluence with the Waiohine River. No work has been undertaken on the Waiohine River this season.

#### 4.2 Moth Plant

Moth Plant (*Araujia sericifera*) is a vigorous climbing, perennial vine with the ability to effect forest margins and other valued areas. Broken parts of the plant exude a sticky milky sap, which can cause a painful rash on exposed skin.

One site of this species is recorded in the Wellington Region. This is situated at Paraparaumu where there has been a marked increase in the size of the infestation over the last year. Seedling plants have been located some distance from the main source.

It is intended to undertake control trials at this site with the intention of eventual eradication. A contractor has been arranged to commence initial trials within the next few weeks.

Moth plant is listed as a National Surveillance plant in the Regional Pest Plant Management Strategy.

#### 4.3 Bovine Tb Operational Update

Operational progress as at 30 April 1999

	<b>Treatment Area (ha)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Area Completed (ha)</b>	<b>%</b>
Bovine Unit	177,816	79.0	134,050	59.6
Private Contractor	47,284	21.0	29,362	13.0
	<b>225,100</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>163,414</b>	<b>72.6</b>

#### 4.4 Vector Control Areas

The following operations have been completed.

	<b>Ha</b>
Carterton West	5278
East Alfredton	4715
Haurangi Crown	3100
Lake Wairarapa Crown	700
Ponatahi Longbush (WRC area)	4453
Tawhero Crown	124
Tinui	30773
Tinui Crown	1100
Whangaehu	22797
Woodside	3141

Mataikona	2000
Stronvar	25230
	<b>103,411</b>

There are 20 operations to be completed by 30 June 1999 with four yet to commence. The Bovine Tb programme is progressing well and is expected to be completed on schedule.

#### **4.5 Aerial Control**

The large Holdsworth/Woodside Crown operation of 12,000ha has been completed. The aerial baiting occurred over six days beginning 29<sup>th</sup> April and concluded 19<sup>th</sup> May. This proved to be an excellent team effort. The operation went smoothly and incorporated more stringent risk management procedures, including additional effort into the checking and clearance of baits from tracks and enhancement of public notification systems.

There were four town water supplies involved. No 1080 residual (1ppb detection limit) was detected in any water samples. It is pleasing to see the completion of this operation. Aerial operations in the vicinity of the Tararua Ranges are always difficult given the prevailing weather conditions.

#### **4.6 External Contracts**

All external contracts will be completed by the end of May 1999. The Pakowhai operation is in the last stage of monitoring. The current residual trap-catch data indicates a 4.0% result and suggests a successful operation.

The Ponatahi-Longbush operation is to be completed on or about the 23<sup>rd</sup> May with post operational monitoring occurring the following week. The contractor has always performed creditably and this operation should be no different.

The Mataikona and Stronvar operations were completed earlier in the financial year.

#### **4.7 Bait Trials**

Biosecurity staff are currently trialing a new toxic bait product marketed by Feral Control. The bait is Cholecalciferol paste, used for the control of possums and rodents. The citrus flavoured peanut paste is dispensed from traditional bait stations/feeders or placed in special biodegradable plastic bags. The bait is said to be stable and palatable for up to two months in any weather. The acute toxic effect experienced after one feed prevents the target animal from taking further bait after 12 to 18 hours. A lethal dose for possums is contained in 12 to 15 grams of bait. The product is purported to have no persistent residue or half-life problems and poses a very low risk of secondary poisoning. A trial on possums in the Hawkes Bay achieved

an excellent result. The Council's trial at Pirinoa will also include cost benefit factors.

#### **4.8 Karori Wildlife Sanctuary - KNE**

Western Zone Biosecurity staff have begun work in earnest at the Sanctuary. Access routes are currently being prepared at 100 metre intervals traversing the valley system. Bait stations and traps will be placed on these at regular intervals and provide the means for the initial possum knockdown. Control works will be 'on hold' until the predator fence is substantially completed.

Preparations are underway for the aerial baiting of 150 hectares within the Sanctuary using brodifacoum to 'mop up' possums and effect rodent control. A notified consent was required for this operation.

#### **4.9 Wainuiomata Orongorongo Operation**

The aerial prefeeding of the Wainuiomata Catchment was carried out on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May 1999. The toxic baiting of this area and the neighbouring Orongorongo Catchment is expected to be carried out in late May, weather permitting.

#### **4.10 Trap Bonding Scheme**

The Wairarapa Branches of Forest and Bird Society and Ducks Unlimited have secured funding to establish a trap bonding scheme. The Pest Eradication Assistance Programme (PEAP) is aimed at the control of mustelids (ferrets, stoats and weasels) and is available to the public. The PEAP scheme will encourage landowner awareness and support for the removal of these predators from the environment.

Both the Department of Conservation (Masterton Field Centre) and Biosecurity Department have assisted with the development of the programme. Most of the traps and ancillary equipment has been purchased and it is hoped to have the bonding scheme functional in June 1999. The scheme is meritorious and complimentary to the aims of both the Department of Conservation and Regional Council.

#### **4.11 Goats on the Pencarrow Escarpment**

The East Harbour Environmental Association (EHEA) sought the assistance of Council to have goats removed from the Pencarrow Escarpment. EHEA considers the goats to be a threat to the local environment and their presence to be incompatible with the purposes of establishing the East Harbour Regional Park.

The goats have been causing most concern in the area between Burdans Gate and Camp Bay Stream where they have been browsing heavily on gorse and other vegetation. EHEA is concerned that the continual browsing will prevent the natural regeneration of native species and create erosion.

The majority of the land on the escarpment is privately owned and the landowner has a legal right to farm goats. As there is no boundary fence the goats have ready access to the beach and coastal road. This area is the responsibility of Hutt City Council.

The Regional Animal Pest Management Strategy is not particularly helpful for this situation as it focuses on advice and education and does not empower the Regional Council to destroy goats on someone else's land without the landowners permission.

Due to the land tenure and the lack of a common boundary fence the situation needs to be resolved between the landowner and Hutt City Council. The Department of Conservation may be able to assist. The Department administers the Wild Animal Control Act 1977 which allows the destruction of goats on private land if they are causing, or liable to cause, damage to the land, soils, vegetation, natural water or wildlife.

The East Harbour Environmental Association has been advised that the Regional Council is happy to assist in resolving the situation but is not in a position to take a lead role.

## 5. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

### 5.1 Environment Incidents – 9/4/99 to 23/5/99

<i>Date of Report</i>	<i>Incident</i>	<i>Details</i>
9/04/99	100 Gallons of transformer oil (vegetable grade) had entered the Martinborough stormwater system.	The investigation has resulted in no further action as the spill was not traceable to a natural water body
21/04/99	Illegal construction of stopbank, rural Masterton	Abatement notice issued requiring a stop to the work until a consent had been granted.
23/04/99	Abandoned car had been rolled into the Waipoua river	Regional Council arranged removal of the car.
26/04/99	Rubbish being thrown into stream, Featherston	Offenders written to, requiring them to remove rubbish, and stop further dumping.
27/04/99	Odour being caused by industrial site, Masterton	Odour confirmed. Company has resource consent, with odour conditions. No further action taken, but may become an issue if complaints continue



## 5.2 Notified Consents

• Greytown Sewage	On hold for 60 days to enable further Iwi consultation and public health input
• Greytown/Featherston Water	Agreement for temporary takes being sought by SWDC from affected parties. Application still awaited.
• Craggy Range Vineyard	A number of submissions made. Pre-hearing meeting held

## 5.3 Flood Prediction Monitoring

Good progress is being made applying a Tasmanian computer software to parts of the Ruamahanga Catchment. Wellington and Wairarapa hydrology staff have spent three days with the developer, calibrating and developing the application.

The programme uses both 'real time' river levels and rainfall readings to predict subsequent flood sizes further down the catchment.

## 5.4 District Council Non Notified Consents

A meeting has been held with District Council planners exploring possible cost recovery for the Regional input provided to non notified consent applications they receive and process. This activity has grown significantly due to intensified subdivision, with some 140 consents assessed per annum over the past three years.

## 5.5 Environmental Planning

Environment Division and Planning and Resources staff have worked together to develop possible environmental goals for the next triennium. Task groups have met with their outcomes reported to a recent workshop. Ideas from the workshop will be progressed into the Council's Long Term Financial Strategy.

## 5.6 Dairy Discharges

The project to replace some 35 expired consents for the discharge of treated dairy effluent to water is proceeding well. All properties have been visited and meetings held between owners, staff and a consultant engineer. Results have been summarised and show a number of systems to be inadequate and/or poorly performing. The majority of owners plan to change to land within 2–3 years and a further meeting with affected parties is to be held to obtain their support to facilitating this change.

## 5.7 WELA

The Wairarapa Engineering Lifelines Association (WELA ) is making further progress in identifying Wairarapa hazards and the risks to its engineering lifelines. Currently NIWAR are undertaking a study to identify the risk posed by severe storms to the Wairarapa, and a three year study on the active Masterton and Carterton faults is about to commence.

WELA's annual meeting is to be held in the Committee Room at 2.00 pm on 24 June 1999. An invitation is extended to Committee members to attend and support this important work. A presentation will be given on earthquake effects in a Japanese event, particularly looking at liquefaction of stopbanks and tsunami effects.

## 6. Recommendation

*That the report be received and its contents noted.*



Colin Wright  
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa