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

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of current activities and provide information of interest since the meeting held on 16 April 2002.

2. Divisional Matters

2.1 Future Arrangements with Bovine Tb

Committee members will recall the presentation and discussion after the last Committee meeting regarding the push for full contestability for Bovine Tb vector control operations from the Government and the Animal Health Board.

Informal discussions with the Animal Health Board have indicated that the Board is not imposing a particular date for full contestability, but would like to see the Council moving steadily towards this situation. They have acknowledged the limited number of competent contractors in this area and the difficulties in achieving completion of the present programme.

This acknowledgement is welcomed as it will enable us to logically work through the various issues associated with the subject rather than making a hurried decision.

2.2 Wairarapa Irrigation Study

Work on the Wairarapa Irrigation Study over the past few months has largely focused on reviewing the areas that could be supplied with water if a scheme went ahead. This work has included public meetings

with landholders in the various supply areas, and the election of small steering groups to represent property owners.

Funding for Stage 2 of the investigation is now finalised and the consultants will shortly be commencing work on further detailed investigation of the scheme concepts. This will include a detailed examination for other potential storage lake sites as there are significant issues with some of the presently preferred sites.

The Stage 2 investigation is scheduled to be completed in early 2003.

2.3 Leave

I will be on annual leave from 30 May to 12 July 2002. During this time Ian Gunn will be the Acting Divisional Manager.

2.4 Staffing Issues

Stephen Thawley, Resource Advisor, is now overseas until May 2003. Steve Veix, Resource Advisor, has resigned and leaves at the end of May. Lucy Martinez has accepted a full time position and another contract Resource Advisor is being sought.

3. Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)

3.1 Upper Ruamahanga Scheme Review

The review of the Upper Ruamahanga River Management Scheme and rating classification is now complete. The new Upper Ruamahanga, Middle Ruamahanga, and Lower Ruamahanga Schemes are in the process of being set up. Also the new rating classifications are being notified under the Special Order process.

3.2 River Scheme Asset Revaluation

The river scheme asset re-valuations have been completed in line with the Local Government Amendment Act's new Financial Reporting Standard. The valuation methodology has been certified as correct by an independent consultant. The Gross Replacement Value of the river scheme assets has increased from \$44.7m to \$76.5m, mainly due to inflation since the previous 1997 valuation, and the inclusion of the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme diversion channel.

3.3 River Advisory Scheme Committee Meetings

Advisory Committee meetings for the eight main Wairarapa river management schemes were held during May. The main reason for the meetings was to report on progress with the current works programme, and to set rates and determine a works programme for next financial year. A report on required scheme rates and projected scheme surpluses or deficits will be presented at this meeting.

3.4 Hikinui Road Stopbank

Mr John Barton has withdrawn his Resource Consent application for the passage of milk tankers along the Hikinui Road stopbank. Staff had invested significant time and effort preparing a submission opposing this proposal, as it was expected to cause damage to the stopbank as well as pose a serious hazard to tanker drivers and others in the area..

3.5 Lincoln Students

36 Lincoln University students on their annual North Island tour were hosted by Rotary Club members for two nights in Masterton and visited a number of Agriculture and Forestry Operations within the Wairarapa.

They were introduced to the Council's soil conservation work through the Stoney Creek video.

Previous groups had seen the original video and tutors who have now seen both were impressed by the progress to date.

3.6 Technical Services Section

Activities completed include -

- Upper Ruamahanga five yearly re-survey of X-sections from Double Bridges to Wardells.
- Survey of Riversdale beach X-sections following Easter's large swell.
- Completed erosion zone coverage on flood hazard maps for Engineering and Masterton District Council.
- Gravel Licence System – processing of gravel returns.
- Meeting with Masterton District Council on Flood Hazard coverage.
- Work for external customer enquiries for maps and information.
- Work on setting up a GIS system for Rangitaane, Wahi tapu sites.
- Computer draughting work on Soil Conservation farm and Sustainability Plans
- Topo survey for Fish & Game of Lake Wairarapa area.
- GPS survey of Lake Wairarapa Bench Markers
- Topo survey of proposed dam at Brancepeth for Soil Conservation.

3.7 Farm Environment Awards Field Day

A field day was held at the property of Jim and Simon Campbell's property as part of the inaugural Farm Environment Awards. In excess of 100 people attended the day and provided a fitting finale to the awards programme.

A convoy of 4WD vehicles carried visitors to five key sites where aspects of farm and environmental management were viewed and discussed. The highlight of the day was an extended stop at the Lodge. This retreat overlooks a large dam that has become the focal point of the Campbell's property.

The awards have created considerable interest throughout the Region. Next years event is already shaping up to be much larger, ensuring the success of the awards in the years ahead.

3.8 Soil Intactness Monitoring

A contract has been let for a preliminary report and pilot programme to monitor the intactness of the region's soils. Intactness relates to the degree to which soil is being lost from the profile either by wind or water erosion processes. The contract will mirror recent programmes developed by Gisborne, Waikato, Taranaki and Horizons.mw.

The soil intactness programme will add a second soil monitoring project to the existing soil quality programme, and begin to build baseline data on the health of the Region's soils.

The project is to be carried out by Dr Doug Hicks of ecological Research Associates and has been funded by savings made in the soil quality monitoring programme. Reports will be completed prior to 30 June 2002.

3.9 Castlepoint Beachcare Programme

A planting day has been held at Castlepoint to assist with the restoration of a sand dune adjacent to the basin. Members of the community joined with 25 students from Oxford University, Ohio to plant native sand binding grasses and shrubs on the dune which is owned by the Department of Conservation. All plants have been grown from seed collected at Castlepoint.

The site had been actively eroding up to 1999 when a joint initiative between the local ratepayers, Masterton District Council, DoC and the Regional Council resulted in the area being fenced, and a series of wind break fences installed to trap windblown sand.

Gradual improvement in the dune formation has occurred in the last two years, allowing a planting programme to be prepared to further assist the rebuilding process. Further work is planned for the next

financial year involving all interested parties and concentrating on the dune areas within the main basin.

4. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

4.1 Pest Animals

(1) Rabbits

The annual rabbit proneness survey has almost been completed. No medium to high infestation levels of real concern have been identified. The Ames Street Reserve at Paekakariki has the highest density in the Region but is isolated and relatively small. Other areas in the Western Zone that will require vigilance are a small coastal block south of Peka Peka and the Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve administered by the Department of Conservation. All of these areas pose problems for control in that they are 'high use' public areas. The risk management costs associated with rabbit control has to be weighed against the probable benefits. No control is proposed for these areas at the current infestation levels.

In the Wairarapa, the problem areas are the coastal communities of Riversdale and Castlepoint. Whilst densities are only low to medium, rabbits pose a nuisance by digging up lawns and gardens and eating new plantings. Of particular concern is the threat to the Dune Restoration Programmes. Rabbits have a liking for the native pingao grass, which is an integral part of the dune protection programme. Netting plant protectors are not very successful due to strong winds and constantly moving sand. An egg powder and latex paint mix repellent has been used in the past but only has a deterrent period of 6 to 8 weeks, at best. Staff will investigate alternative repellents that may prove to be active for a longer period. These coastal communities are also problematical for rabbit control because of their high public use.

(2) Rooks

There is usually little to report about rook control at this time of the year but this autumn has been exceptional for long fine periods and insignificant rainfall.

The rook feeding patterns are emulating those for summer and have created ideal situations for baiting programmes. In excess of three hundred rooks were destroyed at Ica Station at Whareama in the eastern Wairarapa and another 50 plus at Gladstone. This should make a significant reduction in the Region's rook population. However, it is possible that the Whareama rooks were transient and from outside our Region.

(3) Key Native Ecosystem Management

Staff have been revising the current KNE programmes to further align with the objectives, and means of achievement, outlined in the new Regional Pest Management Strategy. There is still a desire to remain committed to the maintenance of sites treated previously but some rationalisation may be required. Some of these projects have been running for several years but do not fully comply with the new criteria. However, most are under city or district council jurisdiction, have reasonable native biodiversity values, and are share funded with the respective council.

As part of the revision process an updated indigenous forest prioritisation computer model was used to recalculate previous data sets. The process considered both the overall regional possum control programme and the possible location of high priority ecosystems which may qualify for more holistic biodiversity management. The prioritisation disclosed that 88 of the top 100 non-DOC forests in the region are already under some form of ongoing possum control. The review is limited because it is based on a large regional model that cannot take account of the threats or management needs for specific areas. Until a more quantitative process is available it is important to 'ground truth' sites that have been identified as high regional priority.

The largest areas to be assessed are located within the Kapiti District adjacent to the DoC Estate. A number of areas have been identified that compromise the possum control work in existing KNE, mainly as a source of re-invasion. These areas include a series of small gaps in the Wellington City programme, the Akatarawa Valley and for Bovine Tb purposes, DoC's Smith's Creek catchment east of upper Kaitoke. There are no funds available to incorporate these areas.

(4) Magpies

A further cull is being planned for the Woodside research area in order to lower numbers prior to the main bird-breeding season. Most birds breed late in the spring but magpies may start in August.

There has been a steady demand from occupiers for magpie traps from the Council, with traps having to be booked in advance. An order has been placed for the manufacture of more multi-catch traps. Rural people seem to be of the opinion that the magpies population is increasing in the Wairarapa. Whilst there is no hard evidence to verify this, it is perhaps timely to undertake a census in selected areas.

4.2 Tranz Rail

A recent restructuring within Tranz Rail has delayed the completion of pest plant control on some rail reserve land. Programmes for the year were agreed in January. Most of the work had been completed in the Western Zone. However, in the Wairarapa, Gorse control is still to be

completed. Of immediate concern are infestations of Old Mans Beard north of Masterton. The Tranz Rail contractor sprayed these infestations at the end of April, despite it being late in the control season.

4.3 Manchurian Wild Rice

The 4th annual input to clear and control Manchurian Wild Rice, scattered through wetland below the Waikanae sewage treatment ponds, has been completed. Some minor infestations were not treated along the banks of the stream through the wetland because of high water levels. The cost of this year's work totalled \$9,078.

Areas on KCDC reserve, east of the ponds, were also sprayed. This work was arranged by the WRC, but funded by KCDC.

4.4 Biological Control

A release of the biological control agent Old Mans Beard Saw Fly has been made in the Mangaroa area of Upper Hutt. This was the first release of the agent in NZ and was subject to considerable media interest including an item on the TV One News, an interview on National Radio, and newspaper articles.

Staff recently completed further distributions of Ragwort Flea Beetle to areas of the Region where this agent appears to be only partially established. Over recent years Ragwort Flea Beetle has greatly reduced Ragwort infestation in many areas of the Region. However, during the 2002 summer- autumn period, the degree of control noticeably declined in Kapiti and South Wairarapa. The increase in Ragwort infestation was most likely a result of wet conditions and exceptional growth.

4.5 Hornwort

Following the discovery of extensive Hornwort infestations in Forest Lake at Otaki, an experienced aquatic plant control contractor has inspected the site to consider control options. In his opinion the high water quality should enable the infestations to be controlled with Diquat herbicide. This product is registered for use in aquatic environments. The contractor is to provide a quote to carry out a control programme. Subject to the agreement of the various owners of the lake (access and funding), and satisfying any resource consent requirements, initial control work will take place as soon as possible.

4.6 KNE

Under the KNE programme, two large areas of Blackberry were recently sprayed at Trellissick Park in Wellington City. This work in the northern portion of the park is the first stage of a replanting programme in conjunction with Wellington City Council and a local

community care group. As the area was difficult to access with ground based machinery, a helicopter was used to apply the herbicide. The application was made through a low-pressure cylinder system that can be lowered into or close to the target area. This method of application gives a high level of site specific control, allowing use adjacent to urban areas. The method also has considerable potential use where infestations are located in difficult terrain.

4.7 Communications

Biosecurity staff prepared a display at the Otaki Small Farmers Field Day on May 11. Approximately 4,500 attended the Field Day. A high level of interest was shown in the Biosecurity display. The pest plants focus was on the identification and control of Banana Passionfruit, Blue Morning Glory, and the aquatic species Hornwort and Eel Grass. Both aquatics have recently been located in the Kapiti District. Pest animals focused on self-help control techniques for predators, rabbits, and possums.

4.8 Bathurst Bur

The infestation level of Bathurst Bur has dramatically increased in one of the three recorded sites in the Region. Over recent years each site has averaged less than 100 plants. All sites are regularly monitored and flowering plants removed and destroyed. At one site infestation levels recently reached an estimated 6000 plants. These have been cleared. Reasons for the sudden upsurge remain unclear but farming practices may have played a key role in disturbing the seed bed.

4.9 Bovine Tb Operational Progress

(1) Bovine Unit

The Bovine Unit has completed 71% of their programme to the end of April.

Private contractors have completed 50% of their combined programme.

The Bovine Unit and Private Contractors both have considerable amounts of land under progress. However, it was expected that the total coverage should have been greater at this time of year. Operational failures are the main reason for the slower progress.

Areas still to complete are -

Bovine Unit	63,000 hectares
Private Contractors	57,600 hectares

(2) Mangaroa-Kaitoke-Whitemans Valley

Planning for this revised operation is complete. Medical Officer of Health, City Council and Resource Consent applications have been forwarded to the respective organisations.

A further meeting to discuss operation procedures occurred with the anti-1080 group on the 14 May. The group seemed reasonably comfortable with the proposed changes. There is some uncertainty regarding whether they still aim to continue with a legal challenge. The Council has not received any formal notification to date.

The main change proposed includes removing approximately 4,800 hectares from the aerial 1080 programme and completing by ground laid methods. Additional costs will be incurred with this method change. A total area of 7,200 hectares has been re-tendered. This area comprises most of the private water supply catchments. Three tenders have been received. Tenders are generally twice the price per hectare originally accepted for the entire operation. Animal Health Board funding approval will be required.

(3) Pre-Technical Review Meeting

A pre-Technical Review meeting has been held with Animal Health Board, AgriQuality and Horizons.mw representatives. This meeting reviewed the current Bovine tuberculosis situation within the Wellington Region. The meeting identified areas where the 2002/03 programme may need to be altered, and discussed planning for the 2003/04 year.

A more formal review meeting in September will occur once future plans have been determined and costed.

The Animal Health Board uses this process to develop the annual national vector control plan.

5. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

5.1 Environmental Incidents

<i>Date & Time</i>	<i>Incident</i>	<i>Details</i>
17/04/2002	Hundreds of glass bottles dumped in Waiohine riverbed, Carterton.	Unable to trace offender. Cleaned up by WRC.
18/04/2002	Neighbour has undertaken works in stream, affecting complainants boundary fence, Carterton.	At the request of the complainant, case was left to the two neighbours to reach agreement.
24/04/2002	Person may have constructed breakwater in the Carterton coastal marine area, without consent.	Investigated. Minor works, outside of coastal marine area. Advised District Council. No further action taken.
24/04/2002	Dog became violently ill after drinking water in stream, South Wairarapa.	Water sampled, area investigated. Unable to find obvious problem. Complainant referred to vet.
30/04/2002	Car dumped in Waipoua River, Masterton.	Removed by WRC.
1/05/2002	Raw effluent detected in watercourse, Carterton.	Effluent discharged from irrigator being located too close to a watercourse. Abatement notices issued.
13/05/2002	Rubbish dumped in riverbed, Masterton.	Rubbish removed. Not able to trace alleged offender.
13/05/2002	Smoke nuisance from neighbouring industry burning wood waste.	Not considered offensive or objectionable.
14/05/2002	Drainage dispute between two neighbours, Rangitumau.	Under investigation.

5.2 Enforcement

Abatement and Infringement Notices

- A meeting and inspection has been held with the company involved in a diesel spill into a water race last year. Current improvements and plant upgrade should ensure future incidents do not occur.
- The required hearing of a defence lodged against an infringement notice, issued in relation to unconsented wild flood irrigation, has finally been resolved. The landowner has paid the infringement fee but has denied any culpability.
- Three separate abatement notices have been issued for failure to comply with consent conditions relating to spray disposal of dairy effluent.

Waingawa Chemical Spill

The joint prosecution of Renalls Ltd is proceeding with informations about to be laid.

5.3 Notified Consents

It continues to be a busy year for notified consents with 15 issued so far this financial year, compared with only 5 in the previous year.

Carterton – Kaipatangata Water Take	Currently notified with submissions closing 23 May 2002.
Featherston Sewage – Discharge	On hold awaiting full assessment of effects and consultation. Application expected soon.
Martinborough sewage – Discharge	Hearing adjourned to 31 May 2002. Two subsequent meetings with applicant and submitters have set agreed discharge standards.
Masterton Sewage – Discharge	Interim consent application to be made before June 2002
Owahanga Station – Coastal	Meeting held with owner’s representative to clarify scope and requirements. No further progress.
J Barton – heavy vehicle assess on stopbank – Land Use	Application withdrawn two working days before the hearing.
Renalls Ltd – Air Dscharge	Hearing held on 6 May. Decision to be given by 27 May 2002.
QE Park Lake Masterton - 4 consents	Granted.
Water Races - 6 – Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils	Applications received for all races. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ AEEs assessed for Masterton races with further information requested. ◦ Carterton full AEE yet to be received. ◦ South Wairarapa AEE’s assessed, some additional information being provided.
Tyer – Coastal Permit	Notified, joint hearing to be held with SWDC

5.4 Coastal Strategy

The Group has met and decided its response to the submissions received on the draft vision and strategy. This has been conveyed to Key Stakeholders in a newsletter. The next step in the project is provision of a Discussion Document to Key Stakeholders getting their views on coastal issues and possible solutions. This will be circulated at the end of May with a month for submissions.

Boffa Miskell have taken advantage of the recent fine weather to undertake their assessment of coastal landscape and ecology. A series of aerial photographs have been taken to assist this study.

5.5 Hazards Research

- A Tsunami workshop is to be held on 24 May covering the consultants recommendations on appropriate responses to be taken in respect of this hazard.

- The IGNS initial study of the Mokonui fault, west of Masterton is complete and the draft report is undergoing peer review. This accurate mapping of the fault, sets out to better define fault movement, and identify possible trenching sites for later detailed study.
- The joint Masterton District and Regional Council study of the Masterton fault within urban Masterton is complete and is undergoing peer review. It proved not possible to locate the fault east of Chapel Street through the centre of town or Lansdowne.

5.6 Iwi Projects

The project to protect and enhance the urupa at Taueru is nearing completion. The area has been fenced and planted and a rock and plaque installed. A carved entrance way is now being prepared from a totara log obtained from the river.

A contract has been signed for Rangitaane to record sites of Hamua sites of significance. This is largely within Masterton District and considerable effort and assistance has gone into setting up the GIS database and protocols for the project.

5.7 Coastal Sewage

Results of the Riversdale septic tank survey and ground water monitoring are now complete. These have confirmed that problems with septic tanks and disposal fields are common and that contamination of underground water is occurring. Consultants are now developing options for community sewage disposal/treatment for the township.

Interim non-renewable consents are being pursued for major sewage installations at Riversdale. Two activities consents remain to be consented.

South Wairarapa District Council are currently seeking submissions on the proposed Lake Ferry community sewage proposals in their annual plan.

5.8 Hydrology

Rainfall

Rainfall figures for April were similar to March for the Lower Valley and eastern hill country. Alloa's rainfall was still around average but Tanawa Hut's figure was still down nearly 30% of normal. However the rainfall in the Tararuas at Angle Knob was well down at 41% of normal - a huge drop from the 200% recorded in March. The March figure last month of 912mm was the highest on record for that month

since 1975. In contrast April's figure of 215mm is the second lowest (April last year was the lowest at 132mm).

The weather in general for April was typically "autumn" with temperatures dropping. However the eastern hill country is beginning to dry out from the more average rainfall it received earlier on in the summer.

The tables below are for three representative rainfall sites showing rainfall figures for March & April.

Site	Location	Apr 2002 (mm)	April Average (mm)	% of average
Angle Knob	Tararua Ranges	215	530	41
Alloa	Middle Valley	93.4	83	112
Tanawa Hut	Eastern Hills	37	110	33

Rivers

River flows for this year are on a roller coaster ride with mean flows just below 100% for January/February, rising to around 200% for March, and for April falling significantly back down to around 50%. The lack of westerly conditions and rainfall in the Tararua catchments is responsible for this trend. On 17 May water restrictions were placed on the Masterton and Carterton District takes from the Waingawa River.

The table below contains April flow statistics for 2 representative sites.

Site	April 2002 Flow (m ³ /s)	Average April Flow (m ³ /s)	% of Average
Waihenga	31.4	63.5	49
Waiohine	11.5	20.7	55

Floodwarning

	April	Financial Year to date	Previous Year to Date
No. of events	0	5	6
No of Lists Issued	0	23	21

* Note, Lake Onoke Alarmed (10.6 - 11.0m) 7 times during April & included 1 lake blockage.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa