

# **Flood Protection Manager's report for period ending 23 April 2004**

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

### **1.1 Staff**

Mathew Skipper, Riverhand at Mabey Road, resigned in March 2004 after nearly 10 years with the Council. He leaves to take up a role with local contractor Dixon & Dunlop. The position was duly advertised and a good response has been received. Matt was a popular and hard working member of the Mabey Road team. He will be missed.

### **1.2 February storms**

The effects of the February flood events continue to have an impact on our work programmes, and are still dominating much of the Department's efforts.

### **1.3 Wainuiomata Community Board**

The invitation to meet with the Wainuiomata Community Board was finally taken up 21 April, following the 16 February floods. The meeting was arranged by the Board Chairperson, Tracey Pollard, as a public meeting (by personal invitation) to discuss flooding issues and concerns. It was anticipated that there would be requests for guidance on flood damage repairs and what could and could not be done, so Sonia Ellis (Account Manager, Consents Management) was invited to join Phillip Purves and Steve Murphy at the meeting.

Council's funding policy was explained and a brief outline of the Wainuiomata Flood Hazard Assessment Report was given. The latter document sets out the current approach to river management in the lower valley, whereby the Flood Protection Department does not attempt to provide any structural flood protection measures.

There was a concern that Greater Wellington would stop individuals from doing any work themselves, unless they had resource consents which some saw as being an unjustified expense. But offers from Flood Protection and Consents Management to discuss individual problems (at no cost) were well received and the general mood of the meeting changed to one of increased understanding and appreciation of the Council's position. Landowners also saw the potential to work in with their neighbours so that repair works could be more effective and resource consent costs (if needed) could be reduced. There was also a call for the Mayoral Flood Relief Fund to be available for application to the Wainuiomata River repairs and this will be put to the Hutt City Council.

All in all, the meeting provided the landowners with a good forum to express their concerns and frustrations and they appreciated the effort made by Council officers to discuss these.

## **2. Waikanae River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]**

### **2.1 Friends of the Waikanae River**

The Friends group is working well with the main activity being the planning for the next Care Group restoration project.

### **2.2 Otaihanga floodwall**

Although the start of the work on site was delayed due to wet weather, it has progressed well with construction now substantially complete. The main task still to be completed is the finishing work for the landscaping. All work is expected to be completed within budget.

### **2.3 Jim Cooke Park**

Good progress has been made over the last month on the land negotiations, design and resource consents. Gary Williams has been engaged to prepare the river realignment design and new aerial photography and ground level information has been purchased as part of this work. The current programme is to have the preliminary design completed by mid May 2004 and the detailed design, sufficient for consent application, completed by August 2004. Work is approximately one month behind programme but progress is sufficient to allow construction to commence next financial year as originally programmed.

## **3. Otaki River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]**

### **3.1 Flood hazard mapping**

The revised flood maps for the Kapiti Coast, supported by Landcare on 23 March 2004, have been forwarded to Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) along with draft responses to the submissions on the maps that were sent out for initial consultation in May 2003. KCDC is now arranging to send out a full response to each submitter under its letterhead.

Planning has also commenced for a further public meeting in Otaki to inform the community of the actions taken in response to the concerns raised in the submissions and at the 23 June 2003 meeting. The meeting is tentatively programmed for late May 2004 and Councillors will be advised via the bulletin as soon as a date is confirmed.

### **3.2 Rock protection works**

The supply of rock rip-rap for construction of 100m of rock wall, extending downstream from the existing Chrystalls Bend works, has been completed. The supply was delayed for a month as a result of the Manawatu floods. The contractor requested, and was granted, an extension of time to this contract so that rock could be supplied to a number of sites that urgently required repair in the Manawatu-Wanganui region. Placement of the rip-rap will occur in May 2004, as the supply of the rock was delayed for a month as a result of the Manawatu floods.

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

### **4.1 Ava to Ewen project**

#### **Strand Park river realignment**

Cashmore Contracting Ltd is on track to complete the Strand Park viewing platform by June 2004. Earthworks for the platform are complete and the installation of form work for concrete has commenced. A draft information sign has been developed for the platform and a contractor will soon be appointed to fabricate the sign.

The river diversion is planned for the period September 2004 to May 2005. Cashmore Contracting did not start rock delivery to Strand Park in March 2004, as originally planned, due to delays at Belmont caused by the February floods. We now expect rock delivery to start in May 2004, though at this stage we do not expect any delay in completing the river diversion by May 2005.

#### **Opahu Stream pump station**

Hutt City Council (HCC) has applied for resource consents to construct the pump station at Opahu Stream outlet. A concept design for the pump station is ready and HCC expects to complete the final design and tendering process for construction in the 2004/05 financial year.

### **4.2 Belmont improvements**

Cashmore Contracting Ltd has re-commenced Belmont Edge Protection works following the February floods. Approximately 75% of the edge protection work was completed by Easter and we expect the contract to be completed by 31 May 2004. The walkway between Carter Street and Richard Street has now been set out on ground.

The Mabey Road team has started construction of the Norfolk Street stopbank and completion is expected by mid May 2004.

Planting of natives will be carried out during the period June to August 2004. We aim to have three planting days, one each for the months of June, July and August, and the next newsletter will include more details about the planting days.

### **4.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank upgrade**

Initial consultation with the major landowners, Upper Hutt City Council, Wellington Golf Club and Silverstream College Board of Proprietors, is now complete. Their comments on the proposed upgrade options are expected in early May 2004 and we aim to complete the preliminary design by 30 June 2004.

### **4.4 Port Road edge protection**

The Port Road edge protection work will not now occur this financial year as the repair of the February 2004 storm damage has taken a higher priority.

#### 4.5 Hutt River bed level survey

Connell Wagner Ltd has re-commenced survey work following the February floods and around 60% of the field survey work is now complete. We expect the field work to be completed by early May 2004.

#### 4.6 Implementing non-structural measures

A *Section 32* report, prepared by the Flood Protection Department, in support of the proposed District Plan changes was sent to HCC in mid April. HCC now aims to consult with the affected parties before formally notifying the proposed Plan Change. The HCC programme is to complete consultation by June 2004 and to notify the proposed Plan Change in July 2004.

Drafting of the Hutt River flooding hazard fact sheet is now complete and this will be printed and distributed before June 2004. Flood Protection will assist Upper Hutt City Council to identify potential landslide sites along the Hutt River, as part of an emergency management project being managed by that council. Other emergency management projects are progressing.

### 5. Planning and development services [Phillip Purves]

The following summarises the formal, written requests for information or advice attended to during March 2004:

	March 2004	YTD
Requests brought forward	23	29
Additional requests received	11	86
Responses provided	13	94
Outstanding requests	21	21

### 6. Investigations [Phillip Purves]

#### 6.1 Waiwhetu Stream hydrology review

The review of the hydrology of the Waiwhetu Stream catchment is progressing well and the draft report is expected in May.

Discussions have been held with our consultant for the scoping report on the investigations that will be needed to consider options for reducing flood impacts from the Waiwhetu Stream. The hydrology review will complete one of the essential technical packages for these investigations and so provide a head start for 2004/05.

#### 6.2 Waitohu Flood Hazard Assessment

The revised consultation programme for the joint Landcare/Environment Division study is continuing, as are the technical investigation components which remain on track for completion by 30 June.

## **7. Operations**

### **7.1 Wellington [Jeff Evans]**

With the flood repair work programme taking precedence over scheduled works, staff activity this period has been a continuation from the last. We have been kept busy inspecting watercourses, removing fallen trees from berms and waterways, and generally assisting with clean-up and repair.

#### **Hutt River**

The Hutt River suffered only minor damage to the scheme reach in February, so the works programme has been able to continue almost as normal. Flood damage to access tracks adjacent to the Hutt River has now been repaired.

Sight line clearing work and the reinstatement of survey points for the Hutt River cross-section survey will be finished shortly.

Staff have also been kept busy with the extension of the Maoribank rockline, preparatory work removing willows for the Avalon rockline extension, and construction of the Norfolk Street stopbank.

#### **Hutt River Trail**

Flood damage repairs to the river trail have included the re-metalling of some tracks and the installation of a retaining wall in the Taita Gorge area where the river trail was washed out.

#### **Watercourses**

There are still some watercourses that require inspection, clean up and repair work. Generally this will involve the removal of fallen trees and flood debris. We are working through these as resources allow.

#### **Wainuiomata River (town section)**

The Wainuiomata River suffered extensive damage as a result of the 16 February flood event. Staff have made an excellent job of the repair work, which has included the removal of blockages (mostly trees) and shingle build-ups, and erosion repairs including an area at the Faulke footbridge.

A major willow replacement programme will commence this planting season.

#### **Porirua Stream**

Clean up in the Porirua Stream is still in progress, with the removal of major blockages caused by fallen trees.

## 7.2 Kapiti [Garry Baker]

Both the Otaki and Waikanae rivers have more-or-less settled during March and early April, with a few minor freshes upsetting plans for an early start to river channel activities, including the new construction programme to complete the flood damage repairs. The exceptional rainfall during February and early March has had a flow-on effect for our minor watercourses and drains work, causing higher than normal water and ground-water levels for this time of the year, particularly in the Waimeha, Mangapouri and Waitohu Streams. "King" tides along the Kapiti Coast have caused some major changes in the Waikanae and Otaki River mouths. This situation has resulted in a few residents expressing their concerns that the mouth outlets need realigning. Staff are monitoring these river mouths on a regular basis.

Although I am confident that that we can complete this year's works programme, including the additional February flood damage, by 30 June, I am also aware of weather forecast predictions over the next two to three months, which could affect our completion programme.

### Otaki River

Routine maintenance activities carried out included:

- overseeing the rock deliveries for both the Chrystalls rock wall extension, and maintenance top-ups.
- spraying of noxious plants on berms, and mowing of berms and stopbanks along the length of the river.
- placing mulch around the native plantings at Chrystalls Bend, ably assisted by the Friends of the Otaki River Committee Members.

2003/04 programmed works deferred until 2004/05, due to the February flood damage include:

- Rock edge protection:
  - Mangahanene right bank top-up rock line
  - Gas crossing left bank top-up rock line
  - Gas crossing right bank rock line extension (now included in new Capex works)
  - Stresscrete right bank top-up rock line
  - Chrystalls right bank main wall top-up
  - Upper Taylors right bank rock barbs top-up.
- Environmental enhancement at Upper Rahui Road.
- Hughes/Wallace right bank middle boundary fence construction.

The two rock line extension projects included in our construction works programme may require rescheduling as follows:

- Chrystalls lower right bank rock line extension – defer placement of the rock until November 2004 – dependent on weather/river flows and levels.
- Transmission lines right bank rock line extension – defer placement of the rock until December 2004, but complete berm earthworks reinstatement and temporary edge protection during May 2004.

### Waikanae River

Routine maintenance activities carried out included:

- mowing of the left bank berm from Kebbells Corner to the Gas Line crossing.
- clearing blockages from the Puriri Road stopbank flapgates.

Extraction from the lower river recommenced during March.

2003/04 programmed works deferred until 2004/05, due to the February flood damage include:

- Rock edge protection:
  - Maple Lane right bank rock groyne top-up
  - River mouth left bank training groyne rock top-up.
- River mouth left bank training groyne quarry overburden top-up.
- Walnut Grove to Maple Lane right bank boardwalk design.
- Greenaway Road right bank car park refurbishment and drainage works.

### Watercourses

Another weed clearing run was carried out (by hand) in the upper Waimeha Stream.

## 7.3 Operations Support [Steve Murphy]

### Advice visits

The flood of 16 February continues to dominate our workload but there is light at the end of the tunnel. A total of 123 requests for advice or assistance were received following the event, with a steady trickle of new requests still coming in. There are approximately 15-20 enquiries yet to be dealt with or to follow-up.

Some of the enquirers can be helped by discussing their problem over the phone, but a large proportion require a site visit to properly assess the cause and solution to the problem. The majority of the visits relate to riverbank erosion on small lifestyle blocks. Usually a stream on the property, which was seen as a major plus when the land was purchased, is often now regarded as the enemy, devouring land and money.

The desire of many owners to immediately 'control' the river is an understandable one, but usually this involves heavy works and considerable cost. A 'low tech' approach which 'encourages' the watercourse in a desirable direction, the judicious planting of willows, and an acceptance that now and again, floodwaters will want to flow over lower paddocks, is often a better approach. While the risk of failure is always present, a degree of persistence often pays off.

#### Hayward Terrace flooding

A report on this investigation is included as report 04.217 on this order paper.

#### Waiwhetu Stream weed clearance

A small improvement in the weather has allowed Excell Corporation to do some catch-up work and bring the weed growth under control. Since the contract commenced they have removed a total of 9 tonnes of weed to the landfill.

#### Mowing contract

Mowing contract tenders were recently sought for the grassmowing of river berms and stopbanks in the Hutt Valley and Porirua areas. The successful tenderer was Agricontracts Ltd.

#### Gravel extraction

Gravel extraction figures to the end of March 2004 are set out below.

River	Area	Contractor	Period Year 2003/2004 (cubic metres)		Year 2002/2003 (cubic metres)
			Period	Year	Full year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	4,284	31,332	40,362
	River	Horokiwi	0	9,426	13,364
Otaki	River	Winstones	7,310	18,608	54,004
Waikanae	Above Greenaway Road	Various	0	0	7,472
	Below Greenaway Road	Gary Holland Earthmoving	2,430	3,380	2,617
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>14,024</b>	<b>62,746</b>	<b>117,819</b>

**Phillip Purves**  
Acting Manager, Flood Protection



## **Parks and Forests Manager's report for period ending 23 April 2004**

### **1. Manager's comments [Murray Waititi]**

A fair portion of our time since the last Committee meeting has been spent finishing off damage works associated with the February floods. The majority of this work is now complete. Staff put in a big effort to get the flood damage works under control and we will require them to do that again to get work programmes back on track.

#### **1.1 Natural materials permit system**

As reported to the Committee in March, we are making good progress on a permitting system for taking natural materials (birds, plants, etc.) from the parks. As part of the discussion process we will put a paper to Ara Tahi on 26 May 2004.

#### **1.2 Management plans**

A Belmont Management Plan workshop was held with Councillors on 17 March. Due to legislative complications with the land swap between Hutt City Council (HCC) and Greater Wellington, Council will not approve the plan for public submissions in May as anticipated. It is now more likely that the approval process will occur towards the end of the year. Changes suggested in the Councillor workshop will be made but the plan will largely be laid aside until later in the year.

Some interest groups at Belmont and East Harbour have been notified of the timetable changes, but we are waiting on more information on the land swap from HCC before we officially notify all interest groups and the general public.

As resolved by the Committee at the last meeting, work will soon begin on the Kaitoke Regional Park Management Plan. The Forest Lands Plan is currently being redrafted and will be the subject of a workshop to be held with Councillors on 12 May.

#### **1.3 Yardstick benchmarking project joined**

The Yardstick project, started in 2002, is a system for comparing parks management data. Members include 55% of all territorial local authorities plus regional councils', and the Department of Conservation. We have joined this year and will submit data to the project in May 2004. The financial, asset and management information gathered by the project is analysed and shared amongst members for the purposes of benchmarking.

#### **1.4 Lakes Block grazing lease to expire**

After 12 years of operation, the grazing of the Lakes Block at East Harbour Regional Park will end on 24 May 2004. The Lakes Block was purchased in 1992 and has been leased out as a land management tool. When the lease expires the land will be retired from grazing and re-integrated back into the Park for recreational and environmental use as per the 1998 concept development plan.

## **1.5 Karori Sanctuary request**

Karori Wildlife Sanctuary has approached us to see if they can take some more birds from the Akatarawa Forest to release into the Sanctuary. As they did not take all the birds they asked for last year, we intend to approve their request.

## **1.6 Dry Creek – Belmont Regional Park**

The exit of the ACTS Institute from their long-term lease at Dry Creek in Belmont Regional Park has all but come to an end. All of their buildings have been removed from the site apart from the barn. We are currently finalising taking over the barn and planning for its inclusion in any future developments of Dry Creek.

## **1.7 Recreational, ecological and environmental assessments of proposed wind farm sites**

We are currently assisting the windfarm project by providing information on Mt Climie and the Puketiro Forest. The resource information provided by staff will feed in to the overall windfarm feasibility study when it is presented to the Council.

## **1.8 Whitireia Park**

As Councillors are aware, Greater Wellington is programmed to take over the management of Whitireia Park from July 2005. For this to occur, the current Trust Board, local Iwi and the Department of Conservation (DOC) must be comfortable with the service that Greater Wellington will provide to the local community and the governance structure by which the Park will be run. DOC has begun a process of gauging local support for the proposed management transfer. I will keep you up to date on progress of this issue as it unfolds.

# **2. Planning and policy [Dr Philippa Crisp]**

## **2.1 Coastal Dunes Vegetation Network Conference**

Staff from both Parks and Forests and Environmental Education worked together to organise the very successful Coastal Dunes Vegetation Network Conference which was held at Te Papa from 10-12 March. The conference committee included Keeley Hoyle, Ross Jackson and Philippa Crisp (Parks and Forests), Jo Fagan, Nigel Clarke, (Environment Division) but many other staff assisted during the conference itself. The event generated a number of media articles and had a full complement of 140 participants, who came from all over New Zealand. Both the Minister of Conservation and Local Government, Chris Carter and the Minister for the Environment, Marian Hobbs gave speeches during the opening session, as did Council Chairperson Margaret Shields. Councillors Barr and Turver were the Greater Wellington delegates. Field trips included visits to beaches on Wellington's South Coast, Eastbourne and the Kapiti Coast. A smaller group also attended a field trip to Riversdale in the Wairarapa on 13 March.

Queen Elizabeth Park was featured during the Kapiti Coast field trip and presentations were given on the history of the site, the Park's weed plan, new beach structures, dune vegetation trials and the spinifex trial. The latter trial generated a lot of discussion, as the spinifex is now growing rapidly and binding sand at this difficult site (just south of the Raumati sea wall).

## **2.2 Asset management**

### Infrastructure assets insurance reviewed

The schedule of infrastructure assets to be insured has been reviewed and updated. Currently, only major structures and buildings are insured. Methods for managing risks associated with other assets (tracks, roads and fences) are currently being investigated.

## **3. Marketing and design [Amanda Cox]**

### **3.1 Wellington Regional Recreation Initiatives Group (WRRIG)**

As councillors may be aware, WRRIG is an industry group make up of recreation staff of the Greater Wellington local authorities together with representation from Sport Wellington and SPARC. The purpose of the group is to co-ordinate our activities for the benefit of ratepayers. In essence, WRRIG is a small example of the “jointed up government” envisaged by the Local Government Act. Already there has been success with SPARC allocating \$15,000 towards the development of a regional recreation calendar promoting “Push Play”. The regional recreation calendar should be up and running later in the year.

### **3.2 Information boards and brochures**

Work continues on the Queen Elizabeth Park, Wainuiomata and East Harbour information boards, with the main body to be completed by the end of the financial year. We have also made good progress on the Hutt River Trail and walking brochures, and expect them to be printed by the end of May. Kaitoke Regional Park and the general parks brochure are in earlier stages of development.

### **3.3 Events**

The Regional Outdoors Programme came to a close on 28 March, with record results. These are detailed in report 04.208 on this Order Paper.

### **3.4 Volunteer co-ordination**

#### Friends of Belmont Regional Park

Officers have worked with the Friends of Belmont Regional Park to complete and edit their brochure on the Old Coach Road. The brochure is now available to be downloaded from the new Friends of Belmont Regional Park web page attached to the Greater Wellington website.

The Friends are now planning for their AGM on 14 June and we will assist them in printing and distributing their newsletter.

## Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park

The new committee of the Friends of QEP met for the first time on 18 March and elected John Lancashire as chairman, Errol Brown as vice chairman and Bryan Heathcote as secretary. They will meet monthly at the Paraparaumu library and welcome non-committee members to attend as observers.

Around 205 people who had indicated an interest in the Friends' group were advised of the election outcomes, upcoming activities, the confirmed minutes and the Terms of Reference via a letter sent out at the end of March. We have also asked them to advise us if they no longer wish to be advised of Friends or Park-related developments. Most have chosen to remain in touch.

The second Friends' meeting on 19 April was also a success. Part of the meeting was a "briefing" on the Park management planning undertaken by Murray Waititi and Victoria Owen. The Friends were very interested in how the Park is currently managed.

## Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee (ARAC)

Every three months Parks and Forests hold an evening meeting with four ARAC committee members to discuss ongoing motorised recreation activities in the Akatarawa Forest.

Not all Councillors will be aware of the background to these meetings. In June 1997 Greater Wellington closed the Akatarawa Forest to motorised users for three months for safety and to minimise track and environmental damage during the winter. This created a significant outcry from user groups who collectively formed the Akatarawa Recreation **Action** Committee.

Since that time things have improved considerably. Dean Hearfield's work together with the quarterly liaison meetings, all help us to understand each other's points of view and adopt a co-operative approach to various issues.

## Queen Elizabeth Park entrance way

Ross Jackson arranged a meeting of interested field and office staff with Steve Dunn of Boffa Miskell at Queen Elizabeth Park to confirm preferences for the anticipated developments near the MacKays Crossing entrance. Steve has since prepared a concept plan, which shows the new location of the horse riding concession, ranger's office/meeting room and toilets, and discusses options for the memorial gates, interpretation and drainage. We will now resume discussions with Transit and consult with other interested parties including the Tramways museum, iwi, Kapiti Coast District Council, the horse riding concessionaire, the equestrian committee and possibly the US Embassy (in relation to perhaps moving the memorial gates).

### **3.5 Landscape architect projects**

#### **Battle Hill Farm Forest Park**

The resource consent for a viewing platform in the wetland has been approved, and we aim to complete construction by the end of the financial year.

#### **Alpine planting at Kaitoke Regional Park ranger's office**

Annabel Riley will meet with our horticulture staff to discuss the first stage of implementing this alpine plant garden near the new ranger's office. Initial planting will take place over the next month and will include cabbage trees and red tussock to provide some cover and structure. We have collected seeds from alpine species, which we are now propagating with staff from Otari-Wilton's Bush.

### **3.6 Staff**

Ross Jackson attended the NZ Institute of Landscape Architects annual conference and awards ceremony. The conference explored the complexities of the urban environment and successful collaborative solutions.

## **4. Environmental asset management [Dr Philippa Crisp]**

### **4.1 Pest animal control operations**

Professional hunters have completed a goat control contract in the parks and forests during February and March. The final tally was:

- 27 goats and 1 deer in Wainuiomata/Orongorongo water collection area, plus 14 goats on DOC land just over the eastern and southern boundaries (we sought permission from DOC prior to commencing the operation).
- 37 goats in Kaitoke Regional Park.
- 8 goats (off Judas goats) in Belmont Regional Park.
- 142 goats and 2 pigs in the Battle Hill/Mt Wainui area of Akatarawa Forest.

The Akatarawa forest operation was particularly successful because of the impacts the goats had been having on this area of original indigenous vegetation. The Environmental Ranger, Jaap Knegtmans, who has been running these operations, is currently reassessing the Judas goat numbers and our needs for the future.

### **4.2 Pest plant control operations**

The recent bad weather has caused some difficulties for the weed contractors, as there has been little suitable spraying weather available. The floods have also removed buddleia from some areas, but re-deposited it downstream, where it will resprout and start new infestations.

## **4.3 Monitoring**

### Rodent/mustelid monitoring

A rodent/mustelid monitor was completed in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo water collection area in early March. Rat numbers (61%) had fallen in relation to the November monitor (82%), but were similar to the numbers seen in the August monitor (54%). This may well be because of the stormy, wet weather that has occurred prior to the monitor.

Stoat numbers were much higher than previous recordings (11% as opposed to 2.9% in November and 2.8% in August). This is thought to be a reflection of summer activity – an increase was also seen in hedgehog numbers (possibly for the same reasons). We now have a full year's data and intend to reduce monitoring from every three months to every six months to see if similar trends are found.

### Permanent vegetation plot remeasurement

Officers have been remeasuring the vegetation in the permanent plots located in Pakuratahi Forest and in Kaitoke Regional Park. It is six years since these plots were last measured and tree growth rates or changes in seedling composition can be assessed through this work. The permanent plot data provides information about the long-term health of the forest vegetation.

## **5. Western sector [Matt Ballantine]**

### **5.1 Battle Hill Farm Forest Park**

The Battle Hill display sheep are looking healthy after what has been a record season for rainfall and grass growth. A distinct contrast to this time last year when the area was still in the grip of the worst drought anyone in the area could remember.

Holly trees and wildling pines have been cut and/or sprayed in the bush reserve. This was carried out by the ranger and a contractor. All felled trees have been stump-treated to ensure that no regrowth occurs. The areas treated last year are already showing good regrowth of natives who are making the most of the increased light through the gaps left in the trees.

The Food and Farm Festival ran again and numbers were up by another 1,000 this year following the trend. Total numbers were 3,000. The day was good weather-wise and everyone involved had a good time. Particular hits were the dog trialling, sheep shearing demos, helicopter rides, animal petting, and of course the food. Events such as this are proving a good way to raise the profile of the park and the work that Greater Wellington does. It is also a great way for the park to put something back into the local community.

The first civil defence meeting at Battle Hill was held and attended by ten Rangers, local residents and civil defence staff from the Porirua City Council. The Battle Hill homestead is now officially a civil defence centre for the Upper Paekakariki Hill Road. A VHF frequency civil defence radio has been installed and the homestead will serve as a base for residents in the event of an emergency.

## **5.2 Belmont Regional Park**

Work has concentrated on storm damage repairs including track and structure work in the Korokoro Valley. Tracks have been reopened to the public throughout the Park following intensive work by our own staff and contractors over the period.

Although all tracks in the park have been reopened, storm repair work will continue into the next period.

A damaged pylon line along Old Coach Road required Transpower to move heavy machinery on site and carry out some track upgrade work in order to get access for their contractors and machinery. A massive Macrocarpa tree that was blocking the entrance was removed. The tree and root ball were moved from the site with some difficulty, assisted by a 20 tonne excavator. The ranger has been monitoring the work and also the reinstatement of the road. Unfortunately, this work coincided with a planned walk along the road by Friends of Belmont Regional Park, and therefore the walk had to be cancelled.

The Ranger has also been working with Friends of Belmont Regional Park assisting them with identifying future projects that the group may undertake within the Park. The Friends are keen to carry out some more practical projects that would raise the group's profile in the community.

## **5.3 Queen Elizabeth Park**

We are gearing up for the Autumn/Winter Environmental Volunteer Programme. This work involves preparing sites for planting, ordering materials and sorting and hardening off plants prior to the planting days.

Contractors have recently finished removing pampas grass from the Pickle Pot area at Paekakariki. Staff are in the process of preparing the bare patches for mulching and planting.

The onset of Autumn has brought the first really settled weather for the year. The views of Kapiti Island and the South Island are particularly memorable at present. It is satisfying to see how many people utilise the park during the week. Many of these mid-week users are tourists who have been drawn in by the improved MacKays entrance signage on State Highway 1. There are noticeable numbers of camper vans entering this end of the park. These tourists tend to utilise our recreational facilities, undertake short walks and enjoy the coastal environment.

## **5.4 Hutt River**

More damaged sections of the Hutt River Trail, Taita and Avalon, have been repaired and re-metalled. A new pedestrian stile was installed at County Lane and we have been removing pest plants along the trail.

Ranger Thane Walls has liaised with Hutt Valley High School about growing native trees for the river corridor. Maintenance on Trail assets such as seats, signs and bollards has also been completed. Liaison with both city councils over Trail extensions and vehicle access issues has occurred and Thane has worked with Rotary on the River Trail sign audit.

This is a busy period for events along the river corridor. There were two car events, one a fast car show and the other a “drive-in” movie. The second Hutt River Trail marathon and half marathon took place late in March. The run uses the entire length of the river trail. A couple of hundred people participated. In mid April the Trentham Harriers held their annual fun run/walk, using the Upper Valley reaches. Throughout the period various smaller walking and running clubs regularly used parts of the river berm for casual events.

## **5.5 Whitireia Park**

A contractor started on the coastal escarpment fence in early March and has progressed well, almost half of the fence is completed. Conditions of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust consent are being met. The contractor was instructed by Department of Conservation (DOC) staff on the appropriate manner for inspecting each post hole, and the means of contacting DOC staff should archaeological items be found.

Staff have been working with a roading engineer to develop a design for the cattlestop to go on the hairpin corner above Onehunga Bay. The cattlestop will link with the new stock fence and deter cattle from entering the coastal escarpment but allow easy access for vehicular traffic. The design will allow for large vehicles such as buses and trucks to enter, and safe passage for passenger vehicles.

Staff have monitored possum bait stations and refilled them with bait where necessary. A night shoot in early March resulted in seven rabbits and a hedgehog shot and one hare seen (but missed).

## **6. Eastern sector [Fraser Oliver]**

### **6.1 Akatarawa/Pakuratahi Forest**

#### **Akatarawa Forest**

The main emphasis this period has been on cleaning up after the extreme weather. The majority of the damage relates to excessive water levels causing failed culverts, slips and several stream crossings that were badly scoured. Fortunately no major structural damage to any of our assets occurred.

Windthrow trees were evident in several areas throughout the forest with the majority of the damage being to the exotic plantations. Removal of windthrow trees affecting the roading network has been completed throughout the forest and all access roads are open and in usable condition. A digger was used to remove slips, repair scour, and to reopen water tables, cut off drains, etc.

Similar repairs were also required at the Birchville end on the Cannon Point walkway.

Several high profile events occurred during this period.



The Karapoti Classic Mountain Bike Race involved 998 participants. The summer programme events that included the Heli-flight aerial tours, allowing the public to go for a ride in the helicopter around the upper Upper Hutt Valley, during which participants were able to view several access points to both the Akatarawa and the Pakuratahi Forests from the air. As both the Greater Wellington and the Upper Hutt City Council facilitated this event it enabled people the opportunity to participate in a helicopter event which would normally be difficult for them to organise on their own. The feedback from these people was extremely positive.

Also during this period we have had one driver training exercise, six 4WD club events, two Army exercises, three public firewood expeditions and one commercial filming exercise.

### **Pakuratahi Forest**

Maintenance has centred around storm damage repairs as unfortunately, the Pakuratahi Forest (situated on the eastern side of the Hutt Valley) appears to have received the brunt of the storm conditions. As a result, damage has been a bit more extensive in these areas than other places.

Since the last Landcare Committee meeting, we have repaired the abutments to the vehicle bridge at the entrance to the Tunnel Gully Scenic Reserve, inspected it and opened it for vehicle and foot access.

It was interesting to note that during the three to four week period that access for vehicles was closed, feedback from Tunnel Gully users was extremely positive. Not only people walking dogs, but also families with children did not have to be concerned about motor vehicles throughout the Reserve area. This also added a very peaceful, serene atmosphere throughout the area. It makes us wonder if having a car-less Sunday in an area like Tunnel Gully Reserve would be beneficial.

Windthrow pine trees throughout the Rimutaka Incline walkway and other adjoining areas have been cleared. At this point in time all roads are open and accessible.

We have not issued any consents for events in the Pakuratahi Forest but public access to the Rimutaka Incline and Tunnel Gully Reserve continues unhindered even during this bout of severe weather.

## **6.2 Kaitoke Regional Park**

Repairs to storm damaged areas are well underway. Cross-blading of the Pakuratahi River is complete, preventing further bank erosion and scouring of the entrance bridge abutments. The slip up river from the Pakuratahi forks has also had protection work completed.

The Hutt water collection area access road has been reshaped and culverts cleared to aid runoff. Weed spraying has also been carried out along the length of the road.

All trees and slips have been cleared from roads, tracks and the campground, making the area safe for public use. The Weir Track remains closed until an engineer and arborist complete a safety assessment.

The new map boards are in place and look great.

Visitor numbers are starting to decrease during the week however, weekends are still seeing a number of camping groups stay. Rangers are being especially vigilant at the moment on who is entering the Hutt water collection area during the “Roar” hunting period and when they are due out. Public and staff safety is the top priority for us over this period.

### **6.3 Wainuiomata**

Stage two of the northern boundary fence is underway with the contractors making good progress literally blasting the holes for the strainer posts.

Vehicle access to the recreation area over the Wainuiomata River ford has been restored. This has allowed regular maintenance of the area to be undertaken. Repairs to the flood damaged support pier on the truss bridge has also been completed.

The public “Roar” hunt is the main focus during late March and April. Again this years event is proving to be a success, with positive responses by all involved. Patrolling of the northern boundary has increased, as there is usually an increase in illegal hunting this time of year. Patrolling has proved to be a successful deterrent in the past.

A rare fine day saw 48 people enjoy another guided tour of the Wainuiomata Water Catchment Area. Staff continue to receive positive feedback from participants.

### **6.4 East Harbour Regional Park**

The tracks maintenance team has completed minor maintenance on key routes including the Muritai Park Track and Bus Barn Track. The construction team has also completed a number of safety related projects in the Butterfly Creek valley area. This has included three new bridges, two new decks and handrails to existing bridges and three alterations to existing boardwalks. Feedback to field staff from park users has been excellent.

Key tasks at this stage have been the setting up of work programmes, liaison and meetings with key community groups and adjoining landowners.

Considerable time has also been spent visiting and dealing with adjoining property owners affected by the recent storm damage i.e. land slips and tree problems.

Another project underway is facilitating new signage for the whole Park. This is required because Search and Rescue has identified poor signage as a cause of people getting lost in the area.

**Murray Waititi**  
Manager, Parks and Forests

## Landcare Support, Divisional Accountant's report for period ending 23 April 2004

As shown in the financial summary statement below, Landcare's operating surplus is significantly ahead of budget for the nine months (\$751,000 or 52%). However, we are still estimating a year-end surplus only \$12,000 ahead of budget, which means a very busy quarter is ahead for the Division.

<b>Landcare Division</b>					
<b>Financial Summary Statement</b>					
<b>For the 9 months ending 31 March 2004</b>					
<b>\$000</b>					
	<b>Year to Date</b>			<b>Full Year</b>	<b>Full Year</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>
External Revenue	10,408	10,350	58 F	13,862	14,004
Internal Revenue	708	806	(98) U	1,075	1,025
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>11,117</b>	<b>11,156</b>	<b>(40) U</b>	<b>14,937</b>	<b>15,028</b>
Direct Expenditure	6,208	6,835	626 F	9,087	9,353
Indirect Expenditure	2,725	2,890	165 F	3,877	3,691
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE</b>	<b>8,933</b>	<b>9,724</b>	<b>791 F</b>	<b>12,964</b>	<b>13,044</b>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>2,183</b>	<b>1,432</b>	<b>751 F</b>	<b>1,973</b>	<b>1,985</b>
Net Asset Acquisitions	489	381	(108) U	612	529
Capital Projects	959	1,269	310 F	2,335	2,159

### Direct expenditure

Direct expenditure has a favourable year to date variance of \$626,000 or 9.2%. The key drivers of the variance are:

- Programmed flood protection works have been delayed or deferred to allow the February 2004 flood damage repairs to be undertaken. To 31 March, flood clean up works of around \$159,000 had occurred with an estimated \$280,000 still to come.
- Savings relating to personnel vacancies that have been applied to other projects have not yet been spent. These are programmed to occur by 30 June.
- We have put a deliberate hold on all but safety-related work in East Harbour Regional Park until the land swap with Hutt City Council is finalised. The work programmes to the end of this financial year have now been finalised and the majority of the operating budget will be spent in May and June.
- Environmental protection works, including weed and pest control and monitoring are behind schedule from a combination of bad weather and resource availability. With the exception of a couple of post operation monitors, the work programme will be completed this year.

## **Indirect expenditure**

Indirect expenditure continues its favourable variance. The majority of the variance is in financial costs, which are underspent due to lower levels of capital spend in 2002/03 and the current year, and gain on asset sales.

## **Net asset acquisitions**

The main contributor to the unfavourable \$108,000 variance in net asset acquisitions is the earlier than planned purchase of Strand Park. This will disappear by year-end with the budget phased for June.

## **Capital projects**

Of the \$310,000 favourable variance year to date, we are estimating that \$176,000 will not be spent this year and will either require rebudgeting or is a true saving. The projects with the most significant savings year to date are the Otaihanga floodwall which will be completed by 30 June, and the Jim Cooke Park stopbank which will not be completed as planned this year and will need rebudgeting. On the Parks and Forests side, the capital jobs in East Harbour have been partially deferred to 2004/05 given the delays in the HCC land swap.

**Tina Walker**

Divisional Accountant, Landcare