



Report **05.459**
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Committee **Rural Services and Wairarapa**
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Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of current activities and provide information of interest since the previous meeting held on 16 June 2005.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Divisional Matters

3.1 Financial Performance

Since the last Committee meeting one financial year has ended and another has begun. The Division finished up the last financial year with an operating surplus of \$20,000; a very small variation considering the way storm events affected work programmes and caused major damage during the year. Further details are provided in the separate financial report.

3.2 Wairarapa Irrigation`

Representatives of Meridian Energy spent a day in the Wairarapa recently further investigating the potential for community irrigation schemes. The day was focused on meeting farming representatives, plus discussions with Go Wairarapa and Greater Wellington.

3.3 Juken Nissho Ltd and 1080

Further discussions have been held with JNL management about their policy to not allow the use of 1080 in their forests. Detailed monitoring information is

being collected so that the respective costings of aerial and ground control can be discussed in detail with the company.

3.4 Staffing Matters

Steve Blakemore, Planning & Resources Department Manager, retired recently after 39 years service with the Council and the predecessor, Wairarapa Catchment Board. Steve made a very large contribution to many resource management activities in the region during his long career in local government. A farewell function for Steve was held on 29 July.

Roger Wood, Senior Land Management Officer, also retired in July after 22 years service following a long period on sick leave. Roger was well respected for his work with many farmers on erodible hill country land.

Craig Hamilton has joined the Policy and Planning Section as the Emergency Management Officer. Craig and his family have moved from England to take up this position. He brings with him both practical experiences in emergency management and formal technical qualifications.

Karen Williams has returned from parental leave and will be working as a Senior Resource Advisor two days a week.

4. Land & River Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)

4.1 Akura Conservation Centre

The 3 metre pole cut has been completed with the Akura Conservation Centre supplying over 22,000 poles including 5,000 purchased outside the district. The Rivers pole cutting is still continuing. These are traditionally planted in September. The demand for poles has placed pressure on the available skilled labour to deliver at times.

The low uptake of *P.radiata* seedlings for woodlot plantings has been disappointing with a total 100,000 sold to date. As for last year there is a very good turnover in native species this year. There has been excellent use made of the publicity and information supplied with plant sales. The new counter and extension of the showroom have assisted in improving client flow and customer service.

4.2 Streams Alive - Riparian and Shelter Planting

This year has seen a large demand into the areas of plant establishment. While conditions are drying, the use of root trainer and planter bag stock allows for an extended planting season.

4.3 Soil Conservation

Farm Plan activity has been very good with pole demand far outstripping supply. Both good returns from farming and the erosion damage sustained over the last eighteen months have seen an increased demand for Land Management services. We have had adequate planting crews this year enabling the pole planting to be completed at an accelerated rate. This has been important, especially given the early drying spring conditions. Numbers of conservation woodlots are well down with areas generally small and many blocks failing to be fenced in the early wet winter conditions or have been postponed.

4.4 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme

Steady progress continues with the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme review. Staff now have the hydraulic model information and are working with David Bulman on a new draft rating classification.

Staff have met with landowners in the Turanganui River valley following the significant flooding which has occurred over the past 18 months. It was agreed that there would be ongoing planting and river works focusing on maintaining the capacity of the existing river channel. There was discussion about the Te Rata road and its impact on the flooding. It may be necessary to construct some wing-banks.

Planting has been completed, both rooted cuttings and poles.

The upgrade of the Mahaki culvert is well under way. Cost quotations have been received for the landward extension of the culvert.

4.5 Drainage Schemes

The impact of a change in electricity charging has become apparent. A number of schemes are now installing timers to prevent the pumps operating automatically at the time of peak power charges.

Various maintenance works have been completed including the installation of new weed screens, and the repair of the Onoke pump following damage by boulders.

4.6 Kopuaranga River Enhancement Project

Ground truthing and surveying is in progress. Site visits are verifying the extent of flooding. Aerial photographs have been collected while the willows were out of leaf.

4.7 Surveying

Surveys have been completed on the coast at Riversdale and Castlepoint, the Battersea drainage scheme, and the lowest section of the Ruamahanga River.

4.8 Ruamahanga Gravel Consent

A variation to the Ruamahanga Gravel Consent WAR 990026 has been approved. This has resulted in changes to the extraction volumes and administration. The Gravel Users Group has been convened and the changes explained to them.

4.9 Integrated Catchment Management

Go Wairarapa convened a meeting of interested parties. These included representatives of grape growers, Masterton District Council, Department of Conservation, Massey University, etc. A small group has been created to consider the next step.

4.10 Tauanui Harvesting

Continuing dry weather has allowed harvesting to continue to the capacity of the logging contractors throughout winter. Breakdowns to both harvesting machines reduced the capacity for July, but net revenues for July still exceeded \$77,000. Volumes and revenues will be well up for August, but are not available at time of writing.

The large hauler has now left the site, so volumes are expected to settle back to approximately 3,000 tonnes per month compared with in excess of 5,000 tonnes for June (similar anticipated for August).

The access road has sustained the traffic for the heavier winter logging volume with limited maintenance required. Similarly the public road has handled the logging traffic well, however the local residents will appreciate the reduced traffic from now on, as dust levels are similar to peak summer months.

4.11 Sediment Workshop

The Senior Conservation Forester attended a field workshop at Riverhead Forest run by Auckland Regional Council. The focus of their permitted activity status for forest harvesting is the control of sediment arising from the fine clay soils potentially reaching Manukau Harbour as opposed to our land stability / soil erosion focus.

Staff from Environment Waikato and Northland Regional Council attended as well, providing an opportunity for networking of staff from four Regional Councils who were active in resource management issues associated with harvesting. Contractors, forest owners, and consultants involved in forest harvesting took the total number involved to sixty plus.

Some present considered the rules and the demonstrated efforts to achieve the required outcomes excessive, but the consensus was that both were appropriate on that site. Auckland Regional Council is producing a guideline to aid practitioners in meeting the required standards. They strongly advocate ongoing communication with staff involved and efforts to do things right, but are happy to invoke remedial requirements and infringement notices if necessary. Costs are recovered through a per hectare levy harvested on an annual basis.

4.12 Works Unit

The works unit has focussed on the winter seedling and pole planting programme for the Land Management Section. Activity has been hectic involving delivery of materials, supervision of contracts, and checking of work in the drier than usual planting season. Focus is about to shift back to silviculture.

5. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

Pest Plants:

5.1 Urban Surveys

Survey work has now been undertaken in Carterton, Greytown and Martinborough.

As with Masterton, new sites of mainly blue passion flower, smilax and moth plant are being recorded. This work has significantly increased the numbers of infestations for these species. Survey work is also being undertaken in the Wellington, Hutt, and Kapiti areas where new sites of various species are being recorded.

5.2 Containment Species

- BioWorks are currently nearing completion of the Darwin's barberry contract at Stronvar.
- The boneseed contract at Riversdale, Castlepoint and Mataikona has been completed. All mature plants in these areas have now been controlled with over 150 sites recorded.

5.3 Eradication Species

Two new sites of maderia vine have been picked up at Riversdale and Castlepoint. Both sites were identified by the contractor when controlling boneseed.

A new infestation of African Feathergrass has been located in Kapiti.

5.4 Contractor Registrations

Pest plant contractors who registered their interest with Biosecurity will also be used by the Environment Division. Take Care groups will use only those who have proved their capability through the registration process. This should ensure consistency in contract management and more efficient use of resources.

5.5 Woolly Nightshade

New sites of this species have been recorded in Porirua, Kapiti and Lower Hutt.

5.6 Sweet Pea Shrub

Several new sites have been located in Porirua.

5.7 Blue Passion Flower

Four new sites located in Wellington.

5.8 Eelgrass

One new site located in Wellington.

5.9 KNE

- **Porirua Scenic Reserve**

Porirua City Council has largely agreed to our management plans for weed control in the Reserve. DoC has also agreed to commit to a weed control programme in their small block of regenerating forest which adjoins Porirua Scenic Reserve. Four contracts are going to tender shortly for this Reserve. One for the DoC area, two for woody weeds and vines and one for *Tradescantia* control.

- **Tauherenikau**

Three new contracts are to be let shortly for tradescantia, blackberry, jasmine, ivy, old man's beard and sycamore control. We are also looking at engaging the services of 'Trees for Wairarapa', a community based group who will ecosource the seed and grow the plants for us at a minimal cost. Areas have been earmarked for planting next year.

Pest Animals:

5.10 New Bait for Social Wasps

An application has been lodged with the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) by Landcare Research NZ Ltd to manufacture a bait containing fipronil to control social wasps. Fipronil is a pesticide that has low toxicity to vertebrates and will be incorporated into paste baits at a weight to weight ratio of 0.1%. The new bait has the trade name of Xstinguish. The application summary states that the only risk to humans is at the manufacturing stage but appropriate health and safety procedures and equipment will minimise risk of exposure. Fipronil is currently registered for use in at least 22 countries including New Zealand, Australia, the United States, the Netherlands and South Africa.

Social wasps, such as the common and German wasp varieties have long been recognised as a pest of urban, rural and natural ecosystems. Well known as a risk to people who are allergic to their sting, wasps are also charged with eating native insects and honey dew which are important food sources for many of our native species including kaka, tui and geckos. The German wasp has been in New Zealand since the 1940's whilst the common wasp was first noted in the 1920's but did not become well established in the Wellington region until 1978.

The Xstinguish bait containing fipronil was first trialled on wasps at the Department of Conservation's St Arnaud Mainland Island (Nelson) in 1999. It was an outstanding success. It was also trialled in Hawaii in the same year against the wasp bait called Knox-Out which contained micro encapsulated diazinon. The Xstinguish bait proved to be far superior in dramatically reducing wasp numbers.

The availability of registered wasp bait will be welcomed by all New Zealanders who have come to expect that they are stuck with them. The advantage of such bait (if the label controls allow) is that the wasps can be targeted at their point of nuisance. It will also negate the use of 'home made' remedies that people have resorted to through frustration of being unable to locate or access nests to destroy them.

5.11 Rodent Monitoring at Key Native Ecosystem Sites

A rodent monitoring programme has been running in nine selected Key Native Ecosystem's (KNE's) since December 2001. The original function of the project was to monitor the level of rodents present in response to possum control regimes within the KNE's. The by-kill of rodents is now an integral part of KNE management and the rat monitoring data has become an important tool for the planning of multi-species control programmes. The project also provides information on the presence or absence of predators and other pest species such as hedgehogs.

The monitoring data disclosed that in the KNE's where the vertebrate toxic agent brodifacoum is used for possums, there is a large by-kill of rats, effectively controlling these populations. However, to maintain this status it is necessary to replenish the bait stations at no more than three monthly intervals. Even after two months the rat populations are rising to levels that threaten the viability of our native species. It has been well documented that rats are a threat to breeding birds because they prey on eggs and chicks. They are known predators of skinks and geckos and eat invertebrates including snails, beetles, spiders, moths, stick insects and cicadas. They also eat seeds, fruit and seedlings of native trees thus reducing the level of regeneration in our forests.

The ongoing control of rats is as important as controlling possums. This is why most control areas have control sites established on a grid pattern with service lines for ready access.

5.12 Rook Control Meeting

On 26th June 2005, a meeting was held at Pahiatua to discuss rook control. This is an annual event between Hawkes Bay, Horizons and Greater Wellington Regional Councils who collectively have a significant rook control programme and have formally agreed to support one another to achieve their respective objectives.

The report from the Horizons Animal Pest Unit expressed that their aerial control had exceeded expectations. They had a budget of \$150,000 and treated some 2,900 nests, including 291 nests adjacent to the boundary with Greater Wellington. Horizons have maintained a concerted effort of control on the boundary since 2000 in order to complement the long term control undertaken by Greater Wellington.

Hawkes Bay Regional Council also reported an intensive effort with some 40 hours helicopter flying time. Their priority treatment areas are Central and Northern Hawkes Bay north of State Highway 5 as they attempt eradication and try to stem the spread into Gisborne District.

Greater Wellington visited 16 rookeries and treated 188 nests.

Through the process of sharing the experiences of success (or otherwise) there was a realisation that there was a need for more research and development for rook control. The control tools are limited and pressure on rook populations is causing a change in their habits. An example is that rookeries are becoming difficult to find because they are sometimes nesting in shelter belts or low densely foliated trees. The traditional nesting trees are large pines or eucalypts in prominent positions that afford visibility for several hundred metres. It is also contended that the rule for estimating populations by nest count should be increased from 3.5 birds per nest to 4.5. It appears that large scale possum (and rat) control is reducing the predator threat to rooks as it has for native bird species. There is also an opportunity to look at other bait/toxin formulations that are not so influenced by changes in ambient temperature.

Following approval from the respective Councils, a one-day workshop is to be held in Palmerston North on 16 September this year to explore opportunities for research and development and to explore funding opportunities for this with agencies such as Biosecurity NZ, Horticulture NZ and the Foundation for Research and Technology. Fiona Bancroft from GW's Biosecurity Department has been tasked with organising the workshop. Other Councils with rook issues have been invited to attend.

5.13 Workshop on Use of the Rabbit Calicivirus Disease Suspension

Four Biosecurity staff attended a workshop on 12 July at Taupo on the correct use and application of the rabbit calicivirus disease suspension for the biociding of feral rabbits. Even though GW has no plans to use the suspension in the near future it was deemed important to know the correct interpretation of the national guidelines through the South Island experts and to be able to discuss any issues with North Island counterparts. The suspension is only to be used during the months of June and July and unfortunately for those who had arranged programmes there has been a three week delay in importing the suspension from Australia. It was recommended at the workshop that problem rabbit areas be sampled to establish the levels of immunity that may exist from the cyclic RCD events which first occurred in late 1997. Unless the rabbit problem can be assessed as serious, the cost of such a survey outweighs the cost of conventional control.

5.14 Waihora KNE Occupiers Meeting

A meeting was held on 19 July at Clive Paton's woolshed at Tuhitarata (South Wairarapa) to update the landowners on progress to date, to consider and discuss the future for the KNE and surrounding area, and to promote the establishment of a 'care group'. The Waihora KNE (1,030ha) has been identified by both the Department of Conservation and Greater Wellington as having significant natural

conservation values worthy of protection and enhancement. The area is ranked within the top ten KNE sites and the Waihora Stream is recognised as one of the top twelve streams for natural biodiversity values within the region. Presentations were given by representatives from GW, DOC and QEII Trust.

There was general consensus from the occupiers that a ‘care group’ be established with terms of reference to provide formality. This would enable the group to set objectives and also provide a basis for alternative funding opportunities. A field trip is being arranged for late October to inspect the KNE operational area so that individuals can gain a better insight on how to better support biodiversity and ecological health.

5.15 1080 Aerial Operations

Two large-scale 1080 aerial possum control operations have recently been completed on Council land by the Pest Animals staff for forest health purposes. The areas were the Wainuiomata – Orongorongo Water Catchments and a combined Western Kaitoke Regional Park/Akatarawa Forest Block operation. Both operations went smoothly and were attended by personnel from Public Health and GW Consents in the role of compliance auditors. Both areas had ample time for possums to encounter bait before rain affected bait quality. The Wainuiomata/Orongorongo area had in excess of 20 fine days following the bait application.

Bovine Tb:

5.16 2004/05 Programme

The Animal Health Board approved the following programme for the 2004/05 year:

AHB Approved

Hectares

Possum control	359,421
Ferret control	35,467
Surveys	<u>87,376</u>
	482,264

5.17 2004/05 Control Hectares

The 2004/05 workload was spread amongst the following contractors.

	Possum (ha)	Ferret (ha)	Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks	143,363	22,094	24,091	189,548
Professional Guiding	40,527	2,874	14,171	57,572
J McCaslin	35,271		8,376	43,647
Target Pest Control	2,519		11,174	13,693
Horizons Regional Council	10,912	5,068	4,114	20,094
Trappersnz	4,654			4,654
Others			6,483	6,483
Sub Totals	237,246	30,036	68,409	335,691
Outstanding (South East Wairarapa Stage 3)	34,555			34,555
Control postponed	87,620	5,431	18,967	112,018
Totals	359,421	35,467	87,376	482,264

5.18 2004/05 Control Hectares Completed

Contractors have completed the following area by the 30 June 2005:

	Possum (ha)	Ferret (ha)	Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks	127,332	22,094	24,091	173,517
Professional Guiding	36,550	2,874	14,171	53,595
J McCaslin	32,127		8,376	40,503
Target Pest Control	2,519		11,174	13,693
Horizons Regional Council	10,912	5,068	4,114	20,094
Trappersnz	4,654			4,654
Others			6,483	6,483
Totals	214,094	30,036	68,409	312,539

- 90% of all possum control operations were completed by the 30 June 2005.
- 100% of ferret control and surveys were completed during the year.

(1) Progress

The following operations from the 2004/05 programme were not completed as at 30 June 2005.

Operation	Strata	Area	Proposed/Actual Completion Date	Operator
Featherston	HR 1	412	11 July 2005	BioWorks
Featherston Crown	HR 1	910	8 July 2005	BioWorks
Featherston Crown	MR 1	3,515	8 July 2005	BioWorks
Homewood-Riversdale	MR 4	1,760	15 July 2005	BioWorks
Mangaroa-Kaitoke	HR 1	2,325	15 July 2005	BioWorks
Mangaroa-Kaitoke	MR 1	3,240	15 July 2005	BioWorks
Mangaroa-Kaitoke	MR 2	1,116	15 July 2005	BioWorks
Martinborough	HR 2	3,144	30 July 2005	J McCaslin
South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	HR 1	1,114	6 July 2005	BioWorks
South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	HR 2	1,150	6 July 2005	BioWorks
South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	HR 3	966	17 July 2005	Professional Guiding

The following operations from the 2004/05 programme remain uncompleted as at the 31 August.

Operation	Strata	Area	Current Progress	Operator
Featherston	HR 1	412	Rework underway	BioWorks
Mangaroa-Kaitoke	HR 1	2,325	Rework underway	BioWorks
Mangaroa-Kaitoke	MR 1	3,240	Rework underway	BioWorks
Martinborough	HR 2	3,144	Under monitor	J McCaslin
Mt Bruce-Waipoua	HR 3	1,799	Under monitor	BioWorks
South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	HR 1	1,114	Rework underway	BioWorks

South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	HR 2	1,150	Rework underway	BioWorks
South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	MR 1	2,301	Rework underway	BioWorks
South East Wairarapa – Stage 2	HR 3	966	Under monitor	Professional Guiding

It is disappointing that BioWorks have failed six end of year stratum, totalling 10,542 hectares. All of these areas are currently receiving rework. However, BioWorks have successfully completed a further 45 strata covering 131,022 hectares. The non completion by J McCaslin is also due to a monitor failure.

Trend monitors to confirm work requirements for the 2005/06 year are still to be completed within the following operational areas:

- Kahutara-Pirinoa
- Mangaroa-Kaitoke
- Taueru-Maungaraki
- Te Wharau
- Tinui
- Whangaehu-Mauriceville

(2) Summary of Vector Control and Surveys

Completion of vector control and surveys during the 2004/05 year has surpassed previous year's efforts.

In comparison, parts of the 2003/04 programme were not completed until October 2004, with many contracts finishing in August and September.

5.19 Monitoring Results – 2004/05

Over recent months there have been 59 RTC monitors completed. The results are of interest:

- 20 / 32 Medium Risk monitors have returned results <2% (4% target)
- 21 / 27 High Risk monitors have returned results <1% (2% target)

These results confirm that the risk of failure (and therefore rework) is forcing contractors to aim for extremely low residual values. The benefits to the programme are that a number of proposed operations can be deferred in the following financial year.

(1) Outstanding Issue

- **South East Wairarapa – Stage 3**

AHB were notified that this operation would not commence in 2004/05. Staff have been consulting with occupiers to determine control (aerial or ground) boundaries prior to the areas being considered for contract. AHB approval has been granted for input contracts for the aerial components.

Meetings have recently been held with DoC and the NZ Deer Stalkers Association. It was agreed that an aerial 1080 trial using deer repellent additive should proceed this spring in the Recreational Hunting Area (RHA) to assess the impacts on birds (Tomtits) and rodents. However, this trial has been postponed due to a variety of factors. Staff will now concentrate on contracts on private land. There continues to be strong support for the programme from private landowners.

Staff anticipate completing the RHA (approx. 14,000ha) and some adjacent properties with 1080 / deer repellent bait after the deer hunting season concludes. Additional monitoring may still be required if similar monitoring work has not been completed elsewhere in NZ beforehand.

5.20 2005/06 Programme

The Animal Health Board has approved the 2005/06 programme which includes:

- 421,119 ha possum control
- 92,403 ha surveys

It is likely that some of the 2005/06 programme will not be required to be treated once the results of all trend monitors are known. There are approximately 19 trend monitors to complete before the final programme is actioned.

The 2005/06 pre-tender qualification process has been completed with eight contractors passing registration for vector control and surveys. A further two contractors have registered for survey work only. One tender round has been completed to date (refer below).

	Possum (ha)	Ferret (ha)	Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks (tender)	18,594	0	0	18,594
GWRC BioWorks (preferred supply)	46,382	0	0	46,382
Target Pest Control	24,844	0	0	24,844
Sub Totals	89,820	0	0	89,820
To Determine	331,299	0	92,403	423,702
Totals	421,119	0	92,403	513,522

A second tender round comprising 23,621 ha of possum control and 5,748 ha of surveys have been issued to contractors for planning and pricing. These tenders will be assessed early September.

Registration of interest has also been concluded for monitoring contractors. Only six contractors were registered. The first parcel of tenders for monitoring, incorporating both trend and performance tasks, has recently been assessed. Staff are extremely concerned about the lack of interest shown in this parcel by registered contractors.

6. Planning & Resources Department: (Ted Taylor, Acting Manager)

6.1 Environmental Incidents

Date	Complaint	Outcome
9 June	Drainage problems, rural South Wairarapa	Consented activity – consent holder agreed to clear drain.
14 June	Cow effluent on road caused by regular stock crossing, rural Masterton	Farmer has agreed to hose it regularly.
16 June	Rubbish dumped in riverbed – rural Carterton.	Unable to trace offender. Cleaned up by Regional Council staff.
7 July	Stream in urban Masterton polluted by pumping of dirty water caused by burst water main.	Contractor was warned, and asked to use pollution control methods for future such events.
8 July	Suspected dumping of hazardous waste in forestry area, rural Masterton.	Found to be non-hazardous waste, relating to a consented activity.
25 July	Smoke pollution from backyard burning of waste, urban Masterton.	People responsible put the fire out at Council's request.
27 July	Complaint of smoke pollution caused by backyard burning, urban Masterton.	Staff found smoke not to be offensive or objectionable. No further action taken, other than a letter to complainant.
8 August	Foam being produced at outlet of Masterton sewage ponds.	Considered to be natural. No further action taken, other than a letter to complainant.
10 August	Water pollution caused by piggery effluent, rural Carterton.	Still being investigated.
12 August	Complaint of spray drift, rural South Wairarapa.	Determined that contractor had been acting responsibly, and that complainant was unlikely to have been affected.
14 August	Complaint of odours from the Masterton oxidation ponds.	Remedial works undertaken on operation of the ponds. Regional Council has requested a formal explanation.
15 August	Pumping of dirty stormwater caused water pollution, urban Masterton.	Warning given to plumbing firm responsible. Council staff have requested changes be made to handling such stormwater in future.
15 August	Contractor taking gravel from Waipoua river without consent or licence.	Please explain letter issued. Under investigation.

22 August	Low flow reported in Fleet St stream, urban Masterton.	Investigated. No human cause found. Suspected to be related to extraordinarily low rainfall for August.
23 August	Spray drift from vineyards affecting neighbours, urban Martinborough	Under investigation
23 August	Digger building dam in bed of stream, urban subdivision, Martinborough,	Dam removed after consultation with Council staff.
23 August	Water supply to farm houses polluted by piggery effluent, rural Carterton	Found to be cross contamination of two pipes. Problem has subsequently been fixed.

6.2 Notified Consents

<i>Consent Application</i>	<i>Status</i>
Featherston sewage – discharge	An application for a discharge to land trial has been received. This application is on hold.
SWDC - Lake Ferry sewage (3 Discharge Permits – Land; Water and Air)	Consents granted, no appeal.
A E & S W Benton Partnership (1 Water Permit - Groundwater Take)	The hearing is scheduled for 12 October.
Martinborough Coastal Developments Ltd (3 Discharge Permits – Land; Water and Air)	No hearing date has been set yet as SWDC has put the application on hold pending a peer review of the applicants report.
J A Bicknell (3 Water Permits – Surface Water Take)	Submissions closed 6 July. A number of submissions received, some for, some against. A pre-hearing meeting was held in August.
R I & C V Scott (1 Water Permit - Groundwater Take)	Submissions closed 6 July. A number of submissions received, all in favour. A pre-hearing meeting was held in August.
N & E E Reid (2 discharge permits)	Application received for renewal of consents required for piggery operation. Has been placed on hold for further information.

6.3 Enforcement

Enforcement Status

Ian Alexander: We have received two cost decisions from the Environment Court and High Court. GW was awarded \$17,200 in total which has now been paid.

6.4 Appeals

Castlepoint sea-wall

Masterton District Council has appealed the Castlepoint seawall decision. Their appeal focuses mainly on Stage II of the project (which was declined by the Hearings Committee). However some minor issues with Stage I have been raised as part of the appeal. Following a meeting with DoC and MDC, all outstanding issues with Stage 1 have been resolved. MDC have submitted to DoC and GW a revised Stage 2 proposal for comment and mediation has been set down for 6 September. This mediation has subsequently been adjourned at the request of MDC.

Eastleigh

Craig Erskine has appealed the joint decision of MDC and GW on the Eastleigh subdivision at Riversdale. Subsequently GW has been removed from the proceedings.

Land & River Operations Dept – Scadden's Stopbank

John Barton has appealed this decision by an independent commissioner. The Environment Court surprisingly set this appeal down for a hearing on 12 July despite the unavailability of GW's lawyer and two key witnesses. However, following a conference with the judge, a hearing has now been delayed. Mediation has been set down for 4 October.

6.5 Hydrology

(1) Rainfall

Rainfall in June was lower than average. Less rain than normal fell in the valley in July but the Tararua Ranges and the eastern hills had more rain than normal.

The weather in August was very dry from the Tararua Ranges to the eastern hills. Rainfall totals for three representative sites were all at the record low. The record dates back to 1976 for Angle Knob, to 1964 for Alloa and to 1956 for Tanawa hut.

The table below shows rainfall statistics for three representative rainfall sites.

Rainfall Totals

Site	June		July		August	
	mm	% of average	mm	% of average	mm	% of average
Angle Knob (Tararuas)	460	69	827	133	265	40
Alloa (middle valley)	71.4	64	73	64	23	22
Tanawa Hut (eastern hills)	135	92	215	128	36	26

On a year to date basis (January to August) rainfall is close to average; 94% of average for Angle Knob, 93% for Alloa and 87% for Tanawha Hut.

(2) Rivers

River flows for June and July were about average.

River flows for August were well below average. The August mean flows for both the Waiohine at the Gorge and the Ruamahanga at the Waihenga site were both at a record low. The record dates back to 1979 for the Waiohine and to 1976 for Waihenga.

A number of other streams and rivers in the Wairarapa are also getting low with restrictions on water takes either applying or getting close to applying.

The table below shows river flow statistics for two representative sites.

River flows

Site	June		July		August	
	m ³ /s	% of average	m ³ /s	% of average	m ³ /s	% of average
Waiohine	25.2	91	29	100	12.8	45
Waihenga	116	103	127	137	44.3	35

(3) Floodwarning

Two minor floods occurred during June, generating four river alarms. Of the four river alarms, Waihenga River Station alarmed three times and Taueru once.

Two minor floods occurred during July with eight river alarms. Of the eight river alarms, Waihenga River Station alarmed five times and Taueru once.

There were no floods in August.

Lake Onoke mouth closed on 14 July and remained closed until 17 July before the contractor could make an opening. Lake Onoke levels were maintained between approximately 11.2 to 11.65m. Water had to be back flowed to Lake Wairarapa during this period and Lake Wairarapa rose from 10.05m to reach a height of 10.83m.

(4) General

The Resource Investigations Section is providing monitoring support for a study of the effects of urea application to hill country. This study is taking place at Castlepoint Station and is intended to measure the benefits of nitrogen application to grass growth in spring along with the loss of nitrogen to water. A number of similar studies are being conducted throughout New Zealand at monitor farms with input from AgResearch.

Recently there has been some publicity regarding the Environment Court overturning a decision made by Environment Canterbury (ECan). The application by Lynton Dairy limited, a large scale dairy farming operation, was to take up to 560 litres per second of groundwater from a zone that ECan considered to be “highly allocated”. ECan declined the application.

In overturning the decision the Environment Court granted the consent subject to the Court approving the final conditions. In particular the Court;

- Restricted the volume that had been applied for to 70%.
- Set a 10 year period for the consent.
- Was critical of some aspects of ECan’s view of the potential effect of the take on the groundwater resource.

We will be looking at the decision closely to ensure our water allocation management and consent processing is not vulnerable in relation to the issues raised by the Court.

7. Recommendation

That the Committee:

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

Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa