

# **Flood Protection Manager's report for period ending 10 November 2005**

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

### **1.1 General**

The report below shows that we are making good progress in most of our work areas. A big effort is being put in by staff to ensure a successful year.

Key highlights that come to mind are:

- The upgrade of the Alicetown stopbank is ahead of schedule, and tenders have been received for the new Opahu Stream pump station and associated outlet works.
- Good progress is being made with the land negotiations in preparation for the Chrystals Extended stopbank construction.
- We have now completed raising/flood proofing two of the three houses in Otaihanga approved for raising following the January flood. Plans for the remaining house are well advanced.
- The Waiwhetu Stream flood study is picking up momentum, including our thinking on how best to integrate the contaminated stream and flood issues for the reach by Hutt Park.
- The flood repairs by the Manor Park Golf Course are essentially complete. Orders for the rock required to complete flood repairs in all three major rivers have largely been placed with delivery to the Otaki River complete, and Waikanae underway.
- The Otaki and Waikanae Friends walkovers were again both successful and positive days, despite the weather.

### **1.2 Staffing**

We have now successfully recruited a replacement for Susan Borrer, our hydraulic modeller. Fathaha Khanam started with us on 31 October in the position of Assistant Engineer. Fathaha a recent migrant from Bangladesh, did a postgraduate degree in Thailand. Fathaha will be mentored in her modelling training by Phillip Wallace who has just completed the modelling work for the Waiwhetu Stream investigation.

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

### **2.1 Jim Cooke Park**

The resource consents for this project were granted and the contractor has now been appointed. The contractor has started work on site with the clearing of the haul roads and the rock stockpile areas. Approximately 200 tonnes of rock has been delivered to site to date. Transpower is now in the process of moving the second pylon out of the river corridor with the new foundations completed and the tower expected to be moved on 10 November 2005.

## **2.2 Friends of the Waikanae River**

The walkover of the Waikanae River was held on 7 October 2005. Thirty people attended with a wide range of topics covered. An action list from the walkover has been prepared and we are working through the tasks.

## **2.3 Otaihanga House Raising**

The raising of 15 Toroa Road has been completed and the final paperwork is currently being prepared before the payment is made. The work has been completed under budget. Agreement has been reached in principal with KCDC and the McLachlan's for the flood proofing of 21 Makora Road. We are now preparing the necessary paperwork before we proceed with the construction of the new floodwall.

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

### **3.1 Friends of the Otaki River**

The Otaki River walkover was held on 10 October 2005. Despite the wet weather, 35 people attended the event. The main interest generated during the day was on how the Winstones lake would be used once completed. GW staff have undertaken to facilitate an initial meeting with KCDC, the community and Winstones. It is expected that the project will be included within the strategic planning exercise KCDC is currently undertaking in Otaki.

The Otaki Friends annual general meeting is the next event programmed for 23 November 2005, followed by the Chrystalls open day on 26 November 2005.

### **3.2 KCDC Flood Hazard information plan change**

All responses to the submissions have now been prepared and forwarded to KCDC along with revised maps. The hearing is programmed for 23 November 2005.

### **3.3 Chrystalls Extended stopbank**

Negotiations are continuing with landowners on this project. It is likely to be another month before these negotiations are at the point that the detailed design will be able to begin. Provided this work is progressed to a point where general agreements have been reached by early December 2005 we will be able to keep to the programme of starting construction in the 2006/07 financial year.

### **3.4 South Waitohu stopbank**

No progress is being made on this project at present. Detailed design work will start in February 2006.

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

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

Barry Foster Contracting Limited (Barry Foster) is progressing well with the Alicetown stopbank contract. Excell Corporation Ltd, sub-contracting to Barry Foster, has started installing new stormwater pipes under the stopbank. Barry Foster, after completing all

temporary stopbanks, has now started on constructing the main stopbank. The temporary stopbanks are required for providing flood security while the existing stopbank is excavated for laying stormwater pipes and strengthening the trunk sewer. We expect the stopbank reconstruction to be substantially completed by June 2006.

Tenders for the civil works component of the Opaahu pump station closed on 25 October 2005. This contract includes extending the existing culvert, constructing the stopbank on top and rock works at the new culvert outlet. The budget for stopbank and rock works is provided in the 2006/07 financial year. We will be seeking to bring budget forward to enable these works to proceed.

#### **4.2 Boulcott/Hutt stopbank**

We are preparing to commence the Boulcott/Hutt stopbank project investigations in January 2006. At their 2 November meeting the Hutt River Advisory Committee considered the project scope and programme for the stopbank upgrade. We aim to recommend a preferred alignment to the Advisory Committee by December 2006.

#### **4.3 Belmont improvements**

Excell Corporation has commenced the installation of the Norfolk Street flood gates. Installation of two stormwater sumps is complete and foundation works for the gate sill plate has commenced. We expect the gate installation to be completed by the end of November 2006.

#### **4.4 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank**

Submissions on the proposed change to the Upper Hutt City Council district plans zoning of the 'wine glass land closed with 17 submissions. A hearing on this proposed plan change is expected to start in early December 2005. We are steadily progressing the detailed design of the main stopbank and land purchase negotiations with Silverstream College. Consultation with six encroached landowners is now complete. Consultation with the Whirinaki Crescent residents will commence in the second week of November 2005 with the distribution of a newsletter.

#### **4.5 District Plan measures**

At this stage, Hutt City Council officers are planning for a hearing of the proposed plan change in early December 2005. We have now completed informal meetings with two submitters who own land in the river corridor.

Upper Hutt City Council officers plan to review the draft plan change proposals in November 2005. We will meet with UHCC officers in early December to discuss a consultation strategy.

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

The following table summarises the situation in regard to the number of formal, written requests that have been attended to during August and September.

	Aug/Sept/Oct 2005	YTD
Requests brought forward	11	12
Additional requests received	48	59
Responses provided	46	58
Outstanding requests	13	13

## 6. Investigations

### 6.1 Waiwhetu Stream floodplain management study [John Eyles]

Since the last meeting of the Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Committee (WSAC) on August 29, work has concentrated on:

- Completing the hydraulic model and producing flood hazard maps
- Completing the Issues Report which will be used for consultation
- Scoping the briefs for the detailed investigations for the Awamutu and lower Waiwhetu Streams
- Revising and refining the consultation strategy

The WSAC requested a field trip to become acquainted with the catchment areas of the Waiwhetu and Awamutu Streams. Planning is underway for a bus tour for the Committee on 10 November.

The next WSAC meeting is scheduled for 21 November. Work is underway to prepare the project manager's report and other papers to update the Committee about progress with the study.

### 6.2 Mangaroa River flood hazard assessment [Phillip Purves]

A second design workshop for this project was held with the Consultants on 19 October 2005, at which the model calibration was discussed and a way forward established in regard to the differences that have developed between modelled and recorded results. Sensitivity runs are continuing. The results of these will be used to determine an appropriate freeboard allowance for the Mangaroa River flood level predictions.

Draft erosion and slip hazard maps for the river were presented at the workshop and this work is due to be finalised over the next month.

The project is now around three weeks behind programme, which can largely be attributed to the incorporation of the additional survey data (approved as a variation to the contract) and the associated additional modelling. This remains a relatively minor over-run and the consultants are confident that the project will be completely finished by the end of 2005.

### 6.3 Pauatahanui Stream flood hazard assessment [John Eyles]

A joint site inspection of the Pauatahanui Stream was undertaken by GWRC and PCC officers in September. We found areas where significant flood capacity improvements could be made by removing some trees and clearing storm debris that are forming

obstructions in the channel. Some reaches would also benefit from removal of gravel deposits.

We are now in the process of compiling mapping information with PCC to identify property owners and what needs to be done where.

We have also received the draft flood hazard report for review.

#### **6.4 Lower Wainuiomata River [ Geoff Dick ]**

At the Landcare Committee's 4 August 2005 meeting I reported a request from the Wainuiomata Community Board that Greater Wellington investigate and report on possible works in the Khyber Pass area to provide flood improvements to the lower Wainuiomata River.

In response to the request we advised that channel improvements may be possible but are unlikely to be to have a positive economic benefit. In addition environmental considerations, such as the trout fishery, would need to be considered. We also advised that Greater Wellingtons approach was to ensure future development took into account the flood risk so that river management works on the lower floodplain could be avoided.

### **7. Operations**

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

The willow and native planting programmes are now complete, with a total of 5,915 willows and 2,950 native plants planted on the Hutt River berms and river edges.

Willow layering is underway. Willows are being cut and layered along areas of eroding bank edge, so they can sucker and take root to protect the bank from further erosion.

The spring spray run, to kill noxious weeds and long grass in the drainage channels, and along side fence lines on the numerous properties which border the Hutt River is underway. An ongoing annual control programme to remove and poison Old Mans Beard, Wild Ginger and Japanese Honeysuckle is also under way in the lower river.

The construction of a small stopbank to fill a dip in the Stokes Valley training bank was completed. This was done to reduce the risk of the Hutt River over topping the training bank during a major flood.

##### **Hutt River trail**

Seasonal maintenance has been undertaken over this period, including vandalism repairs, and weed and pest animal eradication.

##### **Hutt River ranging services**

Speed restriction signs have been installed along most of our access tracks. With recent law changes these speed restrictions can now be enforced by the Police.

Activities such as the misuse of motor bikes, abandoned vehicles and rubbish dumping were similar to the last period, with the exception of a truck load of used whiteware with a dead dog amongst it. A stolen car was driven into mid channel at Taita. The Police were

concerned that there may be someone in it and dispatched the Police dive team. Fortunately there was no one inside. This incident made it into the news.

### Watercourses

Work is finally underway on the rebuild of the Speedy's debris arrestor. This work had been on hold until we received the necessary resource consent from Hutt City Council.

### Work for the other departments

Staff have finished installing the air quality monitoring hut at Savage Crescent in Upper Hutt for Resource Investigations.

## 7.2 Kapiti [Garry Baker]

The last six weeks has seen our weather patterns as "a game of two halves". The first period was dominated by cold southerly winds and rain, and the latter with an increase in settled weather with a good number of sunny and windless days. The two annual walkovers of Otaki and Waikanae Rivers were both held on cold showery days, resulting in a decrease of attendees. The hot drinks at lunch time did make the conditions more bearable.

### Waikanae River

All remaining January flood debris that was not taken by the public for "firewood", was removed from the Jim Cooke Park and Greenaway Road berms to the southern berm on Otaki River, where it was burned and buried. This was more economical than disposal to landfill.

As part of the Jim Cooke Park Realignment capex project, a new 100 metre boundary fence was erected on the south bank at Howarths property. The first deliveries of rock for the rock groynes commenced just prior to Labour weekend.

### Otaki River

The annual planting programme on the Otaki River is now complete, with a further 380 poles from our willow stands planted along the left bank below the State Highway Bridge.

The location and clearing of survey marks and sightlines, in preparation of the next 5-yearly cross section survey of the Otaki River is virtually complete. At Upper Rahui we used heavy machinery to cut the necessary sight lines through the planted berms, the first time they have been cleared since this capex project was completed over 6 years ago.

The fine, settled weather over the last couple of weeks has seen the annual spray run for noxious weeds from Mangahanene to Barretts', a distance of nearly 7 kilometres, largely completed.

A further 500 tonnes of rock for topping up the Chrystalls main rock line was delivered to stockpile.

## Mangaone Stream

The Mangaone Stream mouth was realigned late September.

### **7.3 Operations Support [Steve Murphy]**

#### Asset management

The focus for asset management last month was to assemble the numerous supporting documents, which together make up the 2004-05 Asset Management Report. This report will stand as a record of the condition of flood protection assets as at 30 June 2005. It is also the foundation for the year end Asset Management summary report to the Landcare Committee in this agenda.

#### Isolated works and advice

Flood events generate numerous calls to Flood Protection seeking advice on how to repair erosion or prevent future flooding. There is also a steady demand for the service all year round with landowners perhaps using the better weather to repair earlier damage.

With the increasing subdivision of rural land throughout the region it is expected that demand for this service will increase. Any increase in demand has implications for staff time and the budget available to subsidise eligible works.

The last review of our isolated works procedure was approximately 10 years ago, and a fresh look is overdue. We propose to complete this review by Christmas. We will look at issues such as eligibility, subsidy levels, liability, documentation and follow up.

#### Maymorn Road residents

We are working with a number of residents in Maymorn Road whose properties back on to the Mangaroa river. A vertical erosion face approximately 3 metres high is now 2 to 3 metres from their rear boundaries, and with every flood creeps closer.

The solution will not be straight forward as the river channel at this site is very confined leaving little room for the construction of any works. Two earlier attempts to stabilise the erosion using planting have failed, and a more substantial work is definitely required. The situation is further complicated by a new housing development currently being built on the river terrace on the opposite bank. Any proposed protection works must be carefully designed so as not to adversely affect this property.

#### Waiwhetu Stream

For the past 9 years aquatic weed growth has been removed from the stream primarily by manual means. Manual clearance as the preferred option, as opposed to chemical means, was an outcome of the resource consent process to continue using "diquat" as a control method.

The discontinuation of regular spraying has seen the return of a number of weed types apart from Cape Pondweed. The most difficult of these is 'willow weed'. This weed forms a tangled mat at the stream margins and by catching passing silt, builds out to eventually block the stream completely. A recent site visit confirms that weed growth is considerable

and with spring growth already underway, will soon be beyond the contractors ability to control using his current resources.

The estimated cost to spray twice a year with diquat, and achieve good control is \$10,000 pa. The same level of control using manual clearance is estimated at \$60,000. One further option is a specialised mower head fitted to our tractor, and arrangements have been made to trial this method.

Some careful thought is needed before a new regime is adopted. In due course officers will prepare a report to the Landcare Committee setting out the options and a recommended course of action.

In the meantime we will plan for a diquat spray prior to Christmas. This will control growth over the holiday break and return the stream to a state which the contractor can manage on his return.

#### 7.4 Gravel extraction

Gravel extraction figures to the end of September 2005 are set out below.

River	Area	Contractor	Period Year 2005/06 (cubic metres)		Year 2004/05 (cubic metres)
			Period	Year	Full Year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	9,114	13,398	50,105
	River	Horokiwi	13,316	14,318	30,717
Otaki	River	Winstones	10,830	10,830	35,366
Waikanae	Above Greenaway Road	Various	0	0	2,790
	Below Greenaway Road	Gary Holland Earthmoving	0	0	10,828
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>33,260</b>	<b>38,546</b>	<b>129,806</b>

**Geoff Dick**  
Manager, Flood Protection



## **Parks and Forests Manager's report**

### **For period ending 10 November 2005**

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

Preparation has begun in earnest to prepare the parks for the busy summer period. Lawns are being mowed, vegetation trimmed, tracks metalled, and buildings are having a lick of paint. Planning is also almost complete for the raft of events that we have in store for the public over the summer months. The Regional Outdoors programme kicks off in earnest in January and will be mostly complete by the time this Committee next meets. Weather permitting, it should be our most successful one yet.

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

##### **2.1 Park and Forest Area Management Plans**

The hearing dates for Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP) Management Plan have been set for 9, 11 and 14 November. At present, around 40 people have requested to be heard, but the details are yet to be finalised. Jack Rikihana (Ngati Raukawa), Ra Pomare (Ngati Toa Rangitira), Carol Reihana (Ngati Haumia), Louella Jensen (KCDC Councillor), and Chris Turver will also sit on the hearing committee. All going well the Council will consider final changes to the draft plan at the 15 December Policy and Finance Committee. A newsletter on the QEP management Plan has been written and sent out to interested parties. A reply has been sent to an Official Internal Audit request received relating to this management plan.

The East Harbour Regional Park Management Plan is currently making very slow progress while a new planner is being recruited to fill Trecia Smith's role. A contractor is analysing the submissions received during the first consultation round.

The Belmont Regional Park Management Plan has been delayed due to finalising the purchase of the Waitangirua Farm, and the transfer of the management and control of the Takapu Block from DoC. We intend to restart the review of this plan early in the new year once these have been resolved.

##### **2.2 Infrastructure asset management**

We are currently undertaking a review of our Asset Management Plan. Phase I has included field inspections of all the assets on the ground to confirm their location and condition. This has now been completed for all of the parks and forests. Data on GIS and the AMP database are now being updated.

Phase II will review the service levels of our assets to ensure they are appropriate.

###### **2.2.1 Capital works**

- (a) QEP Ranger's office construction underway

Crowe Construction started work on the Ranger's office in August. The floor slab has been laid and framing started. The work is programmed to be completed by early November.

(b) QEP Paekakariki toilet plans started

The architect has prepared plans for the replacement toilets at Paekakariki picnic area, Queen Elizabeth Park. Site investigations and detailed working drawings are underway. Construction is programmed for early 2006.

## 2.3 Environmental asset management

### 2.3.1 Pest control operations

(a) Pest animals

Two pest animal control operations have been completed so far this year. One in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo water collection area and one in the Kaitoke West/Akatarawa Saddle.

Post-operational possum monitoring has shown that both the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo water collection area and the Kaitoke West/Akatarawa Saddle 1080 operations (completed 26th August) were very successful. Possum numbers fell from 15.5% to 0.1% residual trap catch rate in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo water collection area. Rodent/mustelid monitoring completed in August also showed rat numbers have plummeted from a tracking rate of around 60% to 2.5%. This is good news for the birds that will now be able to breed without rat predation of their chicks and eggs. No mustelids were detected during the August monitor.

In the Kaitoke West/Akatarawa Saddle operation, possum numbers have fallen from 9.2% to 0.4% residual trap catch rate. Carcasses will continue to pose a risk to dogs for another few months, but signage is in place to warn visitors and a strategy has been developed to deal with possums that may be washed downstream during a flood event.

Goat control operations have been completed in Pakuratahi and Akatarawa Forests. New areas were hunted around Climie Creek and Reddington Stream in Pakuratahi, resulting in a cull of 105 goats, 2 deer and 5 pigs. In the Akatarawas, 113 goats and 6 pigs were culled near Mt Wainui and east of the Whakatiki River. Judas goats have been left in those intensively hunted areas.

In Korokoro Valley, Belmont Regional Park, bait stations have recently been re-filled as part of the ongoing possum control operation. A check of the Judas goats was also completed resulting in the cull of 15 goats. Jaap Knegtman, the Environmental Ranger has liaised with Wellington City Council staff to coordinate this goat control operation with work on their land in neighbouring Grenada.

Line-cutting is underway in East Harbour to set up an intensive control area in a 300ha area within the eastern forest. Bait stations will be installed in a 150m by 100m grid. It is envisaged that bait will be replaced on a regular basis in order to keep rat numbers down in order to improve the habitat for native animals and plants.

(b) Pest plants

A pest plant team has been hired to work on some of the more difficult weed species on Council land over the next six months. This team of four will tackle pest plants such as climbing asparagus and pines in East Harbour Regional Park, alder in Akatarawa Forest,

buddleia in the Wainuiomata Recreation Area and barberry in Belmont Regional Park. Pest plant control completed in the last two months includes:

- Ivy and periwinkle in Tunnel Gully
- Tradescantia and holly in the Wainuiomata Recreation Area
- Wild ginger and Japanese honeysuckle in Belmont Regional Park
- Himalayan honeysuckle, banana passionfruit, Japanese honeysuckle and ivy in East Harbour Regional Park
- Tradescantia, German ivy, seedlings of boneseed and boxthorn in Queen Elizabeth Park.

### 2.3.2 Monitoring

Volunteers from the Ornithological Society have finished their annual counts in Korokoro Valley. Kakariki, a rare species were seen there for the first time this year. Bellbirds were recorded in the valley again (they were recorded there for the first time in decades last year). Bird monitoring is underway in the Hutt water collection area, Battle Hill Farm Forest Park and Queen Elizabeth Park.

Rodent/mustelid monitoring was completed in Wainuiomata/Orongorongo water collection area (result reported above) and in East Harbour Regional Park (46% of the tunnels had rat tracks). There is no rat control in East Harbour as yet. In Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, John Bissell has been filling bait stations to control possums and rats. A recent rodent monitor completed there showed one set of rat prints (and one mouse) in one of 20 tunnels set out through the bush remnant. This is a great result.

### 2.3.3 Wainuiomata Mainland Island

The first bait fill for the mainland island was completed during the first week of October. The bait is only for rats and is placed in bait stations. Traps are being used to keep possum numbers down. Biosecurity and Parks and Forests staff worked together to achieve the filling of over 1,000 bait stations, as well as the setting of over 400 possum traps. The 1080 operation completed in August has provided a “knockdown” of possum and rat numbers. These pests can now be kept at low levels by filling the bait stations and setting the traps every two months. The 1,200ha area is large and rugged, so the work is challenging, but very rewarding for the staff involved.

Planning for the mainland island is also progressing. A consultant has been contracted to detail the strategy for the coming years. A workshop on the project was held in September, with staff from Utilities, Environment, Biosecurity and Landcare Divisions taking part in this multi-divisional project.

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

### **3.1 Promoting the parks**

#### 3.1.1 Promotional material

We have completed a joint GWRC/DOC Rimutaka Rail Trail interpretation project. All 24 posts and new tunnel entrance signs are to be installed in time for the “Unveiling Tales of the Rail Trail” event at Cross Creek on 29 October. The interpretation signs will be an engaging feature of the area.

New entrance signs are being developed for the Pakuratahi Forest, to be placed at the Kaitoke (Rail Trail carpark), Tunnel Gully and Maymorn entrances. These have involved updating both maps and significant amounts of other information, but we expect them to be installed by early summer.

Following a number of enquiries we have also developed a new "Picnic in the Park" brochure to promote group picnics in Queen Elizabeth Park. This will complement updated information and maps available on our website.

### 3.1.2 Get into the outdoors this summer

We have continued planning for our Regional Outdoors summer events programme to attract Wellington region residents to the outdoors this summer.

This time around we are increasing our emphasis on family and youth-friendly events. *Buggy Walks*, *Wandering Kiwi* and *Adopt a Pony* will be popular with young families while the more adventurous can go bush with the Tone Rangers at *Rivendell Rock*, learn skills for the hills in the *Mountain Safety Bushcraft Course*, weave flax with Ngati Toa or browse poetry books at *Poetry in the Park*. Others will go off-track in *Gollans Valley Adventures*, bird-watching at *Birds and Brunch*, or recycle river trash into art in *RIP RAP* on the Hutt River Trail.

Athlete Allison Roe has confirmed that her *Run 2 Heal* event will be held at Trentham Memorial Park and on the Hutt River Trail on 2 April 2006. Raising funds for women's health projects, these 5km and 10km walk/run events have been held previously in Christchurch and Auckland, attracting around 5,000 people at a time. We will help promote this event through our Regional Outdoors Programme.

The Regional Outdoors Programme will be published as an insert in *Elements*, due out in mid December. Events will go live on our website and bookings will open on Monday 12 December. Around 1000 people and organisations on our mailing list will receive a copy mailed to them directly, along with a new edition of our *Green Shoots* newsletter.

## 3.2 Friends of the parks

Our key Friends groups - Belmont Regional Park, Queen Elizabeth Park and Maara Roa - continue to meet monthly (Ross Jackson attends all these meetings, which are ideal opportunities to keep everyone up to date with the latest park developments).

The main items of interest were the future management of Whareroa and Waitangirua farms and their potential involvement in events for the upcoming Regional Outdoors programme.

Ross also attended a meeting of the Guardians of Whareroa to discuss the MacKay's Crossing interchange and our plans for this major entrance to Queen Elizabeth Park.

Two meetings have been held with Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee (ARAC) recently to plan the rebuilding of the Orange Hut which was destroyed by fire earlier this year. Plans are afoot for a very fire resistant structure which ARAC members will build using volunteer labour and a lot of donated materials.

### **3.3 Wellington Regional Recreational Initiatives Group (WRRIG)**

Comprising representatives of the region's city and regional councils and Sport Wellington Region, the group is pursuing SPARC funding for two key projects:

A plan to improve regional provision of opportunities for physical activity. The first stage will involve researching the current situation, with specific focus on the strengths and weaknesses in existing facility and programme provision, and the opportunities that are available to get more people more active. The results of that process will form the foundation of a regional physical activity plan. This plan will in turn inform the development of Council business (or implementation) plans.

Development of a website-accessible database detailing all opportunities that currently exist in the region to get involved in either structured (e.g. playing in a basketball team) or unstructured (going for a walk or bike ride) physical activity.

### **3.4 MacKay's Crossing entrance improvements**

We have continued working closely with Transit NZ and the project contractors, including attending regular partnering meetings with all the organisations involved in the project.

GW Engineering Services recently designed a wetland/ drainage system in conjunction with a consultant Landscape Architect and this was implemented during August and September. The barn was moved to its permanent location but there is a lot of upgrading and surrounding site work to be completed over the next few months.

## **4. Eastern Sector [Fraser Oliver]**

### **4.1 Kaitoke Regional Park**

#### **4.1.1 Maintenance**

Ongoing flood protection work has been carried out on the Pakuratahi River near the Waterworks Road entrance. Willow wands have been planted and extensive fill-in planting of flax and Toetoe continues.

#### **4.1.2 Community groups**

The relationship between the Police Youth Aid Section, Department of Corrections and Greater Wellington continues to strengthen. There are currently seven young offenders completing community service projects under Ranger supervision in the Park. Typical work undertaken includes native planting and site restoration, drain and track clearing and painting structures. The work being done by young offenders is often mundane but enables the work crews to do more value added projects.

A group of ten "Youth for Christ" sponsored, Conservation Corp workers spent ten days in the park working on two native forest restoration projects. Over 500 seedlings were planted and an area of weeds next to the Hutt River at Te Marua was cleared, followed by the planting of 300 Kowhai. Whilst in the park the group recreated on most of the tracks and were given several talks and tours by park staff.

## **4.2 East Harbour Regional Park**

### 4.2.1 Lakes block

Work has now started on a track that will link the future wetland boardwalk site to the middle ridge between the two Lakes. Once this is completed, materials for the new boardwalk can be transported to the construction site. The track will form part of a substantial circular walk network within the Lakes Block.

The track to the true left of Lake Kohangatera suffered considerable damage during the storm that mainly hit the Wairarapa in early October. The track entrance, together with the Pencarrow coast road, were washed out. Damaged sections have now been reinstated after obtaining the appropriate resource consents.

### 4.2.2 Northern block (Wainuiomata)

Work has begun on the upgrading of the track entrances on the Wainuiomata side of the park. This has included barrier/fence upgrades, track grading and metalling together with new signs being installed. Two bridges have also been upgraded on the Lees Grove track. There are some excellent walks from the Wainui side of the park and upgrading the entrance ways will make them more inviting to visitors.

### 4.2.3 Northern block (Eastern Bays)

Maintenance work on the lower sections of the Kaitawa Road track has included re-benching and constructing steps. The nature of this track means that work will be ongoing due to soil instability. However this is a superb route up a deep gully with coastal kohekohe and beech forest.

### 4.2.4 Ranging

As time allows, the ranger is felling or ring barking exotic pines, starting at the north of the park. Over time, the objective is to eradicate all exotic tree species within the park boundary.

### 4.2.5 Events held

A multisport team challenge took place at EHRP on Saturday 8 October. Tracks in the northern forest block were used for the 7km run and tracks within the Lakes Block were used for part of the 20km mountain bike ride. Over 300 participants took part in the teams event with 75 runners completing the hill run section.

## **4.3 Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchments**

### 4.3.1 Maintenance

A new track for walking and mountain biking has been developed in the recreational area. This track goes from the gums to the top of the Sledge track. Two very large pines that were above this track were also removed to eliminate the hazard of them falling on the track.

#### 4.3.2 Ranging

The first Wainuiomata walking tour for this season is on the 16 October 2005. We have 30 people and will not be doing the pack track walk (21km) due to lack of interest from the tramping club at this time of year.

On the night of the 12 October at 5.30pm a neighbour picked up a pig hunting dog off the access boundary road after hearing barking. The ranger on duty collected the dog the next day and the Hutt City Council Pound collected the dog at 11.45am. It turned out to be one of two dogs lost by the owner.

### 4.4 Akatarawa/Pakuratahi Forests

#### 4.4.1 Maintenance

Maintenance this period has included routine checking and clearing of all water courses, i.e. culverts, water tables and cut off drains, throughout both forests. During the next period we will be doing significant road maintenance in preparation for the summer use.

Although the attendance of our prison inmates has been sporadic, they continue to assist us with vegetation maintenance along tracks, installation of bollards to prevent vehicle access, and assisting our maintenance crews with various tasks.

Maintenance to the roads has mainly involved grading of the running surface and filling potholes where and when required (potholing is usually done by the prison inmates).

#### 4.4.2 Events held

During this period we have had 11 recreational club 4 wheel drive days, two army training exercises, three police training exercises, two recreational mountain bike club events, (one of which was part of a New Zealand competition event), one club motorbike event, two recreational horse club events and one motor car rally event.

#### 4.4.3 Research

We have had several visits from a local Upper Hutt book club. The purpose of these visits is to research information for a book that hopefully will be published soon on the historic workings within the Akatarawa forest, i.e. the main emphasis will be the logging of the native forest and the communities that are not only involved in this process but also lived on site. The ranger has not seen any other articles or books that have been written on this subject. Very few people are probably aware of the extent of the logging operations within the Akatarawa Forest over 100 years ago, and that the logs would have been used to build many of the original houses throughout the Upper Hutt/Lower Hutt/Wellington area. The old tram network throughout the Akatarawa Forest that was used to extract the timber has also been registered as an archaeological site. This could have ongoing implications in the future for any planned use of the forest area.

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

### **5.1 Belmont Regional Park**

#### 5.1.1 Maintenance

Staff have been working on structure and track maintenance over the period. We have also started the annual spring growth cut back of vegetation on all our tracks.

#### 5.1.2 Ranging

Staff have been exploring options to remove wind fallen trees that are blocking tracks in the Korokoro Valley area following the storms in 2004. We have discussed resource consent requirements with Hutt City Council to establish a four wheel drive track through private property down to the valley floor in order to be able to clear log debris from the stream and tracks, as well as felling trees that are hazardous. The location of the forest in question (12ha in total) is extremely awkward in terms of accessibility for forestry machinery. At this stage there are no plans to harvest the entire block, because of access and economic feasibility. It is important that the log debris in the stream and on the track are cleared away in order for the area to reopen to the public. It is a very popular route for people walking or cycling from Belmont Trig to Cornish Street.

Bookings for the woolshed classroom have been busy, with several schools using the facility as part of the *Take Action* programme. As well as this there has been other interest in using the facility from community groups such as *Friends of Belmont* and *Normandale Resident Association*. The building is also becoming popular with corporate groups seeking a small workshop retreat for staff.

Waitangirua Farm reopened following lambing on October 14. The large amount of enquiries from the public demonstrates an increasing interest in the area, possibly brought about by the pending purchase of the property by Greater Wellington. Traditionally Waitangirua Farm is closed for two months of each year to allow lambing to continue unhindered. Future ownership of the farm by Greater Wellington may allow some flexibility over closing of walkways throughout the property over the lambing period.

#### 5.1.3 Events held

We held a planting day in conjunction with *Friends of Belmont* at the Dry Creek entrance in September. The day was very wet but the small turnout of people planted 400 trees which compliments the stream side walk at the entrance.

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

#### 5.2.1 Maintenance

Another 600 plants have been planted in re-vegetation plots on the park and things are looking good following constant rain fall to help get them started.

The fantastic growing weather has also been helping the weeds and gorse grow. These have been sprayed on the farm. This is a constant problem but the plants are targeted when they are small to ensure that chemical use is kept to a minimum. The extra effort on the thistles is also paying off with much of the farm clear now.



## 5.2.2 Ranging and events held

### (a) Spring has sprung

Things are getting busy on the park again with the onset of the warmer weather. School education visits are starting to fill up the diary and a number of other events are booked on the park. Campers are also starting to put in an appearance again and a number of Girl *Guides* and *Scout* groups in particular are getting in their round of pre Christmas camping trips.

### (b) Park reopens following lambing

Battle Hill reopened on Saturday 15 October following its closure for lambing. The public were able to use the camp ground and several tracks within the park during the closure period as well as gain access to the Puketiro Forest behind the farm. This was much appreciated by park users who made the most of an exceptionally dry and mild spring to get out and enjoy the outdoors. Families have been visiting the park to look at the lambs, and the access way through the farm meant that they were able to walk quietly through a lambing paddock and see new born lambs.

### (c) Conservation Corps working on park

The *Salvation Army Conservation Corps* recently completed another ‘tour of duty’ on the park. They got stuck in and helped with a number of projects. This included planting, hand releasing around earlier plantings, grubbing thistles, mustelid trapping and general clean up work. The crew were a good keen bunch and enjoyed their time on the park. During there last week the group camped out, took care of themselves and worked largely unsupervised. This is a requirement as part of their course.

### (d) The Falcon returns

A recent bird monitor in the bush reserve revealed the presence of a native bush falcon. Falcons have become more noticeable about the bush reserve area in recent years, particularly around the spring months. Along with Bellbirds (another relatively recent addition) who have been heard and observed regularly, the reserve is getting to be a busy place. Regular sustained pest control is starting to bear fruit and the morning chorus is increasing in volume with each year.

## 5.3 Queen Elizabeth Park

### 5.3.1 Ranging

There have been a number of incidents at the park; dumping of rubbish, vandalism, speeding, vehicles on beach, and motor bikes on the tracks. Rangers have been involving local police to curtail some of this activity.

### 5.3.2 Events held

The New Zealand Equestrian Federation has held a number of practice days at the park. There were approximately 100 horses here on both days. The horse trek riding concessionaire has been offering “adopt a pony” programs that have been very successful and continually bring in more riders to the park.

### 5.3.3 Maintenance

The stock yards on the northern farm block are being upgraded and pads for 10 new picnic tables have been put in place. The Wainui Bridge banners have been sand blasted and repainted and new picnic signs will be complete by the summer.

The landscape team is working on finalising the new wetland track. Most of our attention is now going towards making the park look great for the upcoming summer season.

**Murray Waititi**  
Manager, Parks & Forests