

Environment Management Division update

For period ending: 30 April 2007

1. Environmental Monitoring and Investigations (Ted Taylor)

1.1 Groundwater

Groundwater levels in the deep rainfall recharged aquifer we use as an indicator are below the long term mean but above the long term minimum.

Groundwater levels in our indicator semi-confined aquifer have remained around the long term minimum reflecting high irrigation demand, low river levels and low rainfall.

1.2 Air quality

The concentration of fine particles (PM₁₀) in ambient air did not exceed the limit set by the National Environmental Standard for Air Quality (NESAQ) as recorded by our monitoring station at Wairarapa College during March.

1.3 Rainfall

Summer-like weather continued into March with generally dry and settled conditions. Rainfall was well below average throughout much of the Wellington region, particularly in the south and east. In eastern Wairarapa rainfall was less than half the long-term average. The dry conditions were due to the predominance of anticyclones to the east of the North Island, resulting in prevailing north to northwesterly airflows.

Despite the generally dry conditions during the month, a northwesterly front brought heavy rainfall to the Tararua Ranges on 17-18 March. The 200-300 mm received over these two days resulted in above-average rainfall for the month in the ranges.

1.3.1 Rainfall Totals

	March	
	mm	% of average
Angle Knob (Tararuas)	627	139
Alloa (middle valley)	56	69
Tanawa Hut (eastern hills)	46	45

1.3.2 Annual Rainfall

	Annual Total	
	mm	% of average
Angle Knob (Tararuas)	1103	85
Alloa (middle valley)	115	54
Tanawa Hut (eastern hills)	83	35

1.4 Rivers

As a consequence of the large 'fresh' on the 18 March the Wairarapa rivers with headwaters in the Tararua Ranges had slightly above average monthly mean flows.

River statistics for March are tabulated below:

	March	
	m ³ /s	% of average
Waiohine River	20.7	119
Ruamahanga River at Waihenga	49.7	101

1.5 Floodwarning

In the middle of the month flood warnings were issued in response to alarm levels being reached.

The outlet from Lake Onoke was blocked until the middle of March resulting in water having to be back flowed into Lake Wairarapa.

Warning Statistics:

	March 2007	Financial Year to end March	Previous F/Y Year to end March
No. of events	3	21	4
No of Lists Issued	9	119	21

2. Environmental Regulation (AI Cross)

2.1 Consent Statistics

In the period from 21 January 2006 to 20 April 2007 we have received 43 Wairarapa-based applications, and processed 39 consents.

Our median processing time (excluding s37 extensions) for Wairarapa non-notified consents was 16 working days, compared to 13 working days in the last period.

2.2 Key Notified Consents Update

2.2.1 Fully Notified Applications

Prema Investments Ltd

A decision was released on 28 March granting consent for Prema Investment's joint applications to discharge communal wastewater to land from a 6-lot subdivision at Whangaimoana, South Wairarapa. The decision has been appealed discussed in Section 2.3 of this report.

Stronvar Properties Ltd

These are applications for a 56-lot subdivision at Stronvar, Masterton involving applications for discharges of wastewater (from a community waste water scheme) and sediment from earthworks, taking water (for communal water supply), and erecting a dam to establish an amenity and stormwater treatment lake.

There have been delays in receiving further information on a range of substantial matters including community wastewater treatment, and the operation and integrity of the proposed lake. The delay is reasonable given the complexity of the matters being considered.

Masterton District Council

Applications for managing the closure of the Masterton Landfill and provide for ongoing waste management related activities has been placed on hold for further information. We understand that information requested is still pending, and once received we will then publicly notify the applications.

Palliser Bay Station

This is a joint application for discharges from a community wastewater scheme associated with a proposed 22-lot subdivision on Cape Palliser Road, South Wairarapa. Submissions have not raised issues relating to wastewater discharges, and are now proceeding without a hearing for the applications to GW.

Webstar

Processing on replacement application from Webstar (Blue Print Group Limited), Masterton, to discharge fine particle matter (PM₁₀) and other contaminants to air from printing and gas-fired boilers has been delayed until a pre-hearing has been

completed in mid May and a short-term trial of new discharges from new printing equipment assessed (by June). The processing of this application will consider air quality within the Masterton air shed, which sometimes exceeds NES for Air thresholds for PM₁₀ of 50 ug/m³.

2.2.2 Limited Notified Applications

M B and H F Herrick

Summer monitoring to provide assessment information to assist the consideration of replacement applications to take groundwater for irrigation is now winding up, at Taumata Island, Carterton. As previously discussed, opposing submitters are concerned about potential effects on nearby takes and Taumata Ox-bow reserve wetland, and despite misgivings from submitters, the applicant is collecting information from the current take over this summer.

2.3 Appeals and Objections

Martinborough Coastal Developments Ltd (MCDL)

We have received the consent order from the Environment Court regarding the modified community wastewater treatment system. This follows completed mediation on an appeal by D T S Riddiford on a joint decision that granted consent to MCDL in relation to discharges from a community wastewater system connected with for a 30-lot subdivision at Tora, South Wairarapa.

A E & S W Benton Partnership

Mediation on these appeals continues with the Court recently imposing a two month extension beyond the end of March for all parties to consider GW's proposed conditions, enabling us sufficient time to gain a possible agreement. There are a number of areas of contention including the duration and purpose of the revised conditions (taking water vs. pump testing for possible future use).

These appeals relate to a declined application to take groundwater from the Kahutara groundwater zone, which is affected by a moratorium not to 'accept' further applications.

Prema Investments Ltd

A decision granting consent for Prema Investment's joint applications to discharge communal wastewater to land from a 6-lot subdivision at Whangaimoana, South Wairarapa, has been appealed. The appeal has cited a condition on the subdivision consent requiring one lot (a possible additional disposal field) to be set aside until three-years of groundwater monitoring has been completed establishing whether there is a connection with the proposed disposal field. The appeal does not specifically cite the discharge permit, and we are currently seeking clarification whether or not Greater Wellington will be a respondent or a (section 274) party to the appeal.

Greater Wellington: Land and River Operations Department (LARO) – Scadden’s stopbank

No further progress has been made on A J Barton’s appeal to the High Court on the Environment Court’s decision to uphold GW’s decision on LARO’s proposal to upgrade an existing stopbank adjacent to the Ruamahanga River. The appeal relates to the status and use of a paper road and implications of the stopbank upgrade.

Masterton District Council

After a year of no progress, the Court has asked Masterton District Council to advise on steps made to establish an integrated foreshore management plan, in relation to proposed the Castlepoint sea wall.

2.4 Compliance and Enforcement

2.4.1 General

Routine and follow-up inspections of dairyshed discharges across Wellington Region continue, and we have issued a significant number of advisory notices to consent holders who are not complying with their consents. At the same time we are likely to be at least serving infringement fines on a small number of consent holders at this stage, on the basis of poor discharge practice.

Carterton District Council – land-based trials operating beyond term

This concerns a land-based wastewater discharge trial which has been operating without a current resource consent in place – for the second time in less than five years. In this case the illegal discharge has been occurring with our knowledge since the start of the year. Incomplete applications were lodged prior to Christmas and further information was not received until mid April. Earlier in late March a large degree of frustration with progress led us to ask CDC to cease the unconsented activity and instead discharge to Mangatarere Stream (which is consented). While this was not the best outcome environmentally, we believed it was at the same time it is important not to create substantial inconsistencies in the treatment of other unconsented activities. CDC has been particularly cooperative, and I expect that consents will soon be processed. The matter has featured in the Wairarapa media, although not in the last month.

2.4.2 Abatement Notices

No abatement notices have been issued in the last period.

2.4.3 **Infringement notices**

Two infringement notices have been issued to John Cook and Kevin Anderson for failure to comply with abatement notice requirements in relation to the appropriate management and relocation of around 3,000 tyres from a property in the Castlepoint area. We continue to monitor performance against the abatement notices and will take further action again should significant progress not be made.

2.4.4 **Prosecution and Enforcement Orders**

No prosecutions or enforcement orders have been issued in the period since the last Committee meeting.

2.5 **Pollution Control**

2.5.1 **Significant Incidents**

Illegal rubbish dumping in Wairarapa

We have been investigating illegal rubbish dumping – a somewhat common problem around the region. Our latest incident concerns dumping on a property in the Gladstone area, which has been reported prominently in the Wairarapa Times-Age and involved Carterton District Council (CDC) Mayor, Gary McPhee, who has denounced it, proposed voluntary clean-up work, and promised to investigate other alleged dump sites. We continue to work with CDC to both investigate and fix the Gladstone dumping issue.

Odours from spray-painting operation – Masterton

We have received numerous complaints in the last couple of months about odours from a new spray painting operation in Bentley Street, Masterton. The incidents have received a high profile in the Wairarapa Times-Age, and around a dozen adjoining neighbours have together recently signed a petition officially seeking information from Greater Wellington about investigations to date. We are currently investigating the incidents to determine what action needs to be taken.

3. **Environmental Policy (Murray McLea)**

3.1 **Regional Policy Statement Review**

Four workshops on the RPS were held with Councillors and appointed members in March and there was an additional workshop on 18 April. At these workshops staff presented draft provisions and key directions for topic areas and Councillors provided feedback. A further workshop will be held on 4 May to provide Councillors and appointed members with the opportunity to look at how “methods” are to be presented in the RPS and to consider “over-riding” provisions that staff are preparing.

Following the recent workshops, staff are preparing provisions to be posted, in full, on our website in preparation for meetings with territorial authority representatives, the Regional Land Transport Committee and the Wellington Regional Strategy Committee. These meetings at a political level will occur in May/June.

3.2 Biodiversity voluntary change programme

Greater Wellington and Wellington City Council are studying the Ohariu catchment to assess ways of promoting riparian management in catchments that are not eligible for financial assistance. This is part of a national programme led by Terry Parminter of AgResearch to develop improved policy approaches for encouraging landowners to voluntarily protect and enhance biodiversity on their own land.

The Ohariu catchment is small, close to Wellington, and has large and small farms as well as 'lifestyle' and residential homes. There are some bush fragments in the catchment but most of the stream has no vegetation cover and is unfenced. The problems affecting the stream (high levels of bacteria and nutrients, poor water clarity and high summer water temperatures) are similar to those affecting other small rural streams around the Wellington region.

The first step in the study was to assess the state of the stream and the attitudes of the residents. AgResearch completed a report in January about the attitude of Ohariu residents to stream issues based on a survey they sent out last year.

The next step in this project is to engage with the community in new ways. The advice from AgResearch is that we should be focussing upon creating social change and leveraging off individual experiences to change community beliefs, norms and values. That means always looking for how we can turn "meetings" into "events" and "technical advice" into "infotainment". This is because at a regional level we cannot rely upon behaviour change through "individual or representative negotiation" which is the way we typically operate through our land managers. We are planning two "events" with the Ohariu community this year.

If this project is successful, it may prove to be an effective model for facilitating behavioural changes in other parts of the Wellington region.

3.3 Resource consents

Resource consent applications received by territorial authorities and Greater Wellington's responses are set out below:

3.3.1 Carteton District Council

No notified applications were received.

Non Notified	Action
BS Gleeson	2 lot subdivision, Waingawa. Letter with comments about the contaminated site and water supply.
Thomsons Trail Vineyard	Winery production facility, Dakins Rd. Letter with comments on wastewater and the unlined irrigation pond.
W Spense	3 lot subdivision, Lincoln Rd, Carterton. In progress.

3.3.2 Masterton District Council

No notified applications were received

3.3.3 South Wairarapa District Council

Notified

S & P Blomfield

G Harper & S Rumph

Black Gold Truffles Ltd

Action

4 lot subdivision, Moroa Plain Rd, Greytown. Submission with concerns about potentially contaminated sites and water supply.

2 lot subdivision, Glenmorven Rd. Submission on water supply and the proximity of a piggery.

2 lot subdivision Martinborough –Masterton Rd. No submission.

Non Notified

T & J Williams

J & S Ferguson

L McLeod

A& A McLeod

Upper Hutt Developments Ltd

The Kempton Family Trust

Action

6 lot subdivision, Boar Bush Gully. Letter with comments on potentially contaminated sites, effluent disposal, flooding and the proximity of a fault line.

2 lot subdivision, Pahautea Rd. Letter sent regarding.

2 lot subdivision, White Rock Rd. Letter sent regarding creation of an esplanade strip.

2 lot subdivision, Tora Rd. Letter sent with comments on potential contamination of water supply.

17 unit title subdivision, Lyon St. No comments.

4 lot subdivision, Kemptons Line. In progress.