

## **Catchment Management Division Update**

### **for period ending 8 June 2007**

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#### **Biosecurity (Wayne O'Donnell)**

##### **1. Pest Animals**

##### **1.1 Cats desexing campaign**

The cat desexing campaigns this year was limited to the Wairarapa because of a lack of discretionary funding. The campaigns were conducted during April and May with Greater Wellington (GW) providing financial support to subsidise the cost to cat owners and to share some responsibility for advertising and promotion. One programme was organised by Vetcare Ltd and the other by the Wairarapa SPCA with the support of local veterinarians.

A total of 285 cats were treated at an average cost to GW of \$37.43. This is a similar outcome to the campaigns of the past two years which created an interim shortage of kittens and hopefully a marked decline in the amount of cats being abandoned in the countryside. Abandoned cats are a threat to our native birds and lizards and left uncontrolled impact adversely on GW's biodiversity enhancement programmes. They also spread disease.

##### **1.2 Proposal to regulate the sale and use of specified leg hold traps**

MAF Biosecurity has invited submissions on proposed policy changes for the use and sale of leg hold traps used for pest management. This follows a recommendation in 2002 by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) to the Minister of Agriculture that the importation, sale, and use of specified leg hold traps be prohibited in New Zealand. MAF then released a public discussion document which analysed NAWAC's recommendations against criteria in the Animal Welfare Act that the Minister needed to take into account before deciding to prohibit or restrict any trap.

MAF's proposed policy changes include:

- Specified leg hold traps will be prohibited throughout New Zealand by 1 January 2011.
- Leg hold traps such as those of size 1 and 1.5 (padded) are not affected and could still be used.
- All leg hold traps will be prohibited within 300 metres from a dwelling, or in any area where it is likely to trap a companion animal, from 1 January 2008.
- A person will only be allowed to use or buy a prohibited trap with the Minister's approval conditional upon specified purpose, situation and conditions of use.

Greater Wellington submissions:

- **Supported** the three year phase out period for size 1.5 hard jaw leg hold traps with compensation for costs incurred and also proposes a buy back or exchange scheme for the traps.
- **Supported** the phase out period of one year for leg hold traps larger than size 1.5, if permission to use these traps remains at the Minister' discretion.
- **Opposed** the phasing out of the Lanes Ace trap on the grounds that they are the only trap that can be effectively used to target rabbits.
- **Opposed** the 300 metre distance requirement for leg hold traps from human dwellings with suggested amendments to the proposed rule.
- **Supported** the Minister giving approval for the use of prohibited traps conditional upon specified purpose, situation and conditions of use but in conjunction with GW's proposed amendment in relation to the 300 metre rule.

The submission expressed concern about the proposed prohibitions, conditions and restrictions for use of leg hold traps and stated that GW relies on such traps as an efficient and effective means of small animal control.

### 1.3 Rabbits

A rabbit control operation is underway at the Waikanae Estuary Scientific and Recreation Reserve situated at the mouth of the Waikanae River. The operation is being carried out by the Biosecurity Department for the Department of Conservation and Kapiti Coast District Council to protect both existing and planned restoration plantings. Pindone carrot bait has been applied on three occasions at weekly intervals to the 75 hectare site.

There were a few risk management issues to contend with. Volunteer groups wanted to undertake planting during the rabbit baiting programme but this matter was readily resolved by restricting the amount of planting area and reprogramming the remainder of the planting to a later date. A Waikanae resident was concerned about the ability of children and dogs to enter into the treatment area and perhaps be exposed to risk from encountering bait. This area has been baited before without problem but extra warning signage was posted and some access points were netted off.

Rabbit control at the Waitahu Estuary (Otaki) has commenced and will follow a similar formula to the Waikanae operation. This work is also to protect restoration plantings.

Another small control operation is being undertaken near Te Horo beach and is principally to protect newly sown pasture.

Rabbit Calicivirus blood sampling has been done at IRL in Seaview, Whitireia Park and at Ian Galloway Park (WCC). An attempt was made to secure samples from Queen Elizabeth Park (Paekakariki) but no rabbits were seen. Part of this Paekakariki area is also the site of an

annual rabbit population trend monitor and the operator reported that rabbit levels are the lowest for years. This is also the case for the trend monitor site situated on the east coast of the Wairarapa. Neither the blood sampling nor night count trends have been analysed at this stage but it is obvious that RCD is still effectively culling rabbits throughout the region. The only problem areas are those where long-term intensive predator control is being undertaken for ecological enhancement.

#### **1.4 Magpies**

The annual trend monitoring survey has been started. Early indications are that magpie densities and prevalence are less than the previous two years. This is a surprising trend and no sound reason can be advanced for this occurrence at this stage.

#### **1.5 Feral Goats**

The Pest Animals team has been receiving an increased number of calls requesting goat control particularly in the western suburbs of Wellington City. It seems wild goats are getting more and more comfortable about intruding into peoples gardens and lawns. Wild pigs and deer have been sighted at Wrights Hill.

#### **1.6 Mustelid Control**

More mustelid control is gradually being introduced into pest animal management programmes in the Western Zone. Previously the focus has almost been solely on possums and rats. Recently ten DoC 200 predator traps were introduced to the Paekakariki Escarpment and others to the Tarakena Bay and Oku Street reserves on the south coast of Wellington City.

The Otari/Wiltons Bush Trust has also purchased sixty DoC 200 traps that they want to put out and have approached Biosecurity staff for advice on placement sites.

#### **1.7 Works for Parks & Forests**

The Pest Animals Section is either managing contracts or conducting predator control at several GW reserve areas including Pakuratahi Forest, Speedy's Reserve, Korokoro Valley (Belmont), East Harbour Regional Park, Whitireia Park, Wainuiomata Mainland Island, Queen Elizabeth Park, Cannons Point, and Dry Creek

### **2. Pest Plants**

#### **2.1 Contracts**

Of the 50 KNE contracts issued for the 2006/07 year, only five remain incomplete. However, all works should be finished by mid June.

The majority of other contracts involving control of eradication and containment pest plants are complete. Unfortunately, the demise of Target Pest Contracting Ltd has resulted in some contracts being delayed until the 2007/08 year.

## **2.2 Hornwort Control Trial**

The Hornwort control trial in the northern Lake Wairarapa wetlands commenced in early May. The chemical used, Endothall, was applied in two forms – granulated for application in flowing waters and liquid for still waters. The application was completed using specialised equipment owned by a Rotorua based contractor.

NIWA and GW staff are jointly undertaking post application monitoring, with water sampling and plant density assessments completed over a number of months at five locations. Information from this trial will be made available to all regional councils. This work is being partly funded by the multi agency consortium that gained ERMA approval to import Endothall for use in NZ.

## **2.3 Wonga Wonga Vine**

A large infestation of this vine has been identified near Tauherenikau. The plant appears to be more vigorous than Old Mans Beard at this site. Landcare Research have indicated that this may be only the second site in NZ where the plant is setting seed. This plant will be considered for inclusion in the Biodiversity – KNE category of the new RPMS. The vine is currently being sold in plant outlets.

## **2.4 Presentations & Publicity**

The past 4-6 weeks have been noticeable for the number of public events involving Biosecurity staff. The two major events were the Otaki Small Farmers field day and the NZ Restoration Day held at the Tauherenikau KNE site. The latter involved over 200 people actively involved in biodiversity restoration in the Region. The event was well organised and managed by staff from the Environment Division.

Other presentations included:

- Hutt Valley College Yr 13 on the RPMS, including plant biocontrol and KNE operations
- Regional QEII National Trust Day at Te Hapua Wetland complex
- Hutt Expo – Lower Hutt Town Hall
- Students of Taita College on pest plants in the RPMS
- Scout group on pest plants in the RPMS

## **2.5 Notices**

Works were completed on nine properties after complaints were laid (7 OMB, 2 Gorse) by neighbours.

One Notice of Direction was issued for OMB and four control operations were completed under Notice. One default action was completed by a contractor (OMB) after the landowner failed to take action after a Notice was served. All costs will be recovered.

### 3. Bovine Tb

#### 3.1 2006/07 programme

The table below summarises the areas contracted for the 2006/07 year

	Possum (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks	121,317	10,807		132,124
Target Pest Control	50,247	11,174		61,421
Professional Guiding	55,009	3,301	6,781	65,091
J G McCaslin	11,545	860		12,405
EPRO Ltd	14,455			14,455
KBES	5,972			5,972
L Bowring			37,362	37,362
T Oakly			100,518	100,518
<b>Totals</b>	<b>258,545</b>	<b>26,142</b>	<b>144,661</b>	<b>429,348</b>

**3.2** The following table details areas of the 2006/07 possum control programme which have been completed as at the end of May. Of the programme already let, 179,518 ha (69.4%) has been completed and assessed by performance monitor or audit. Contractors have notified in their monthly reports that they consider they have completed 211,045 ha (81.6%) of their 2006/07 possum control programme.

All pig surveys have a completion date of 30 June.

	Possum (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total Completed
GWRC BioWorks	79,659	10,807	0	90,466
Target Pest Contracting	26,688	11,174	0	37,862
Professional Guiding	50,394	0	0	50,394
J McCaslin	7,067	0	0	7,067
EPRO Ltd	14,455	0	0	14,455
KBES	1,255	0	0	1,255
L Bowring	0	0	0	0
T Oakly	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>179,518</b>	<b>21,981</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>201,499</b>

The following contractors have completed control over a number of strata. We are currently awaiting the results of performance monitors. If these strata all pass the performance monitor, 75.6% of the programme will be complete.

- BioWorks 4,616 hectares
- Professional Guiding 4,615 hectares
- Target Pests 6,682 hectares

BioWorks have indicated that 7,689 ha of their projects will not be completed by the 30 June 2007. BioWorks already had contractual approval to complete 6,045 ha beyond 30 June 2007. BioWorks also have 17,600 ha (7 strata) of aerial control to complete this financial year.

J McCaslin has indicated that 2,857 ha of his programme will not be completed this financial year.

### **3.3 Monitoring**

During the 2006/07 year, 100 trend monitors and 84 performance monitors are required.

To date 82 trend monitors have been completed. Eighteen trend monitors are still to be completed. All but one trend monitor will be completed before the end of the financial year.

Fifty-six strata have been completed and verified by performance monitor. Twenty-eight strata of the 2006/07 programme are still to be completed. Contractors have notified that 10 of these strata have been completed, and monitoring is either underway or due to commence shortly.

Ten strata have had failed performance monitors, 4 of these have since passed the second performance monitor. Only one stratum has had a second failed monitor (Target Pests). This stratum has since passed.

A registration of interest to carry out monitoring services for the 2007/08 financial year closed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Registrations were received from the South Island (Enviro-first; Independent Monitoring Ltd) and North Island (M&M Contractors; Malcolm MacFarlane; Lindsay Bowring; CMP), six in total. This compares to seven last year, of which three did not submit a registration.

### **3.4 Target Pests**

Target Pests Contracting Ltd (TPCL) went into receivership during May. TPCL still have 23,559 ha (6 stratum) of possum control to complete within the Wellington region for the 2006/07 year.

Since this announcement one stratum (1,150 ha) has been removed from their programme and an alternative contractor is being sought. Of their remaining contracts, two (6,682 ha) are due for performance monitoring and three (15,727 ha) have failed their performance monitor.

TPCL have indicated that they will rework one stratum, call for a monitor (doing no re-work) on a second stratum, and have yet to respond regarding the third failure.

### **3.5 South East Wairarapa – Stage 3**

The 2006/07 initial and maintenance programme included 30,378 ha. To date 23,994 ha has been completed. A rework is required for HR 1 (2,726 ha). This control is currently underway. HR 5 (3,658 ha) has been completed and performance monitoring is currently underway.

### **3.6 2007/08 Vector Control Programme**

The 2007/08 plan includes the following:

- 269,405 hectares possum control
- 966 hectares ferret control
- 126,187 hectares pig surveys
- 26,817 hectares possum and ferret surveys
- 85 performance monitors
- 79 trend monitors.

The proposed value of the 2007/08 programme including vector control, monitoring, Management and National costs is \$4,502,189.

To date AHB has approved \$3,631,689 of the programme; final approval of the programme is pending the results of trend monitoring being undertaken in the 2006/07 year.

Currently the first round of tenders are being prepared for release to contractors during June.

### **3.7 Feral cattle**

The Vector Management team has implemented a feral cattle control operation in the South East Wairarapa - Stage 2 operation. Local farmers had commenced control before an AHB/Greater Wellington funded operation commenced.

Thirty-five cattle were shot in December 2006, six of these cattle were dumped into an offal hole because they had suspicious Tb lesions. A further animal was confirmed Tb positive at the abattoir.

On an adjoining property an occupier who has not been presenting cattle for Tb testing had been instructed by the AHB to present these cattle for testing or GWRC will include them within the cattle control operation.

The AHB has since determined that the occupier is producing satisfactory results doing his own culling operation and is now allowing that occupier to continue depopulating at his

timeframe and expense. GWRC will aeriually monitor the property over the next financial year to ensure all cattle are removed.

### 3.8 Infected Herds

The following table provides an update on infected herds to the end of May 2007. The results confirm the continuing decline of infected herds in the Region.

Vector Risk Areas	I herds @ June 2006	I herds @ May 2007 (one clear test in brackets)	Target I herds June 2007 (cattle and deer)
Cattle	14	10 (3)	
Deer	1	1 (0)	15

## **Flood Protection (Graeme Campbell)**

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

#### **1.1 General**

The major focus of the department over the last month has been the completion of the annual works programmes in preparation for the end of the financial year. Overall progress has been good although progress on some of the major capital works has been delayed due to hold-ups in getting land owner approvals. The landowner issues have been resolved and it is expected that the lost time will be made up in the coming financial year.

Two issues have arisen over the last month that will need attention over the next few months. Firstly, the tenders received for the flood wall being constructed as part of the Whirinaki Stopbank project are all substantially higher than the estimate. We are currently considering options for reducing the costs. A meeting has been arranged with the golf club to keep them informed on the status of the project.

Secondly, the Carterton District Council has requested that we undertake a bank edge protection project on the Gladstone section of the Upper Ruamahanga River adjacent to the Cliffs and Dakins Road to protect road access. The cost estimate for the work is \$158,000 with CDC offering to contribute 50% of the cost. This work will be included in the 2007/08 works programme.

Staff have spent time over the last month putting together information relating to MfE's National Flood Risk Review and a request for comments on a proposed National Policy Statement on flood risk. In undertaking this work we are taking it as an opportunity to more clearly document Councils approach to flood risk management. The documentation of the approach will enable us to more effectively consult with the community about the issue and in particular the non structural options.

### **2. Kapiti floodplain management [Kees Nauta]**

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

The planting plan for the Waikanae River is expected to be completed by 30 June 2007. It will be sent out to all involved parties for final approval in July 2007. The plan identifies 13 areas for restoration work to be completed by the Friends. The number of sites planted each year depends on the pre-planting weed control requirements and the ability of the Friends to set and carry out the workload. Assistance in site preparation where possible will be given by Flood Protection Operations staff.

Graeme Campbell and John Bissell met with Robin Pennel from the Kapiti Environmental Restoration Management Trust to discuss their potential work along the Waikanae River. This Trust has been formed recently to address concerns by people working in the Kapiti area that some restoration sites are in danger of being let go due to the inability of ageing

volunteers to keep on top of the weed control. The Trust (KERMIT) will be taking on work along the south bank of the Waikanae River on land administered by KCDC who have supported and funded this initiative. The GW Flood Protection Group have decided to observe progress over the next twelve months before looking at any request for financial support of KERMIT. A report to the August 2007 LCC meeting will outline the proposal in more detail.

\$7,000 has been allocated to the Friends for the purpose of tree removal and site preparation prior to planting. Staff are working with the Friends to identify the sites.

Staff attended a committee meeting on 24 April 2007 where they presented the initial draft of the planting plan, discussed the proposed KERMIT Trust, tree removal, and the \$40K enhancement money from the James Cooke Park realignment. It was an interesting meeting and not lacking in passion and emotion. All issues were satisfactorily resolved at the meeting.

## **2.2 Friends of the Otaki River**

John Bissell attended a planting day at Chrystalls Bend with the Otaki Friends. The event was well patronised and gave him an opportunity to meet new people.

Staff spent half a day on the Otaki River with Barry Baston and Max Lutz looking at future planting sites. They will be preparing a planting plan for the Otaki Friends similar to the Waikanae planting plan.

## **2.3 Chrystalls Extended Stopbank**

As we advised at the last meeting submissions on the Notice of Requirement (NOR) and resource consent applications closed on the 30 March 2007. Seven submissions were received.

Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) and Environmental Regulation, GW are very close to reaching an agreement with all submitters regarding the proposed conditions. When this is finalised KCDC and GW will issue their recommendation on the NOR and decision on the resource consents respectively.

Geoff Dick, Divisional Manager, Catchment Management has delegated authority to issue a decision on the NOR on behalf of GW.

Recently approximately 6000 cubic metres of silts were excavated from the Chrystalls lagoon and stockpiled it for use in the proposed stopbank.

A number a large trees on the line of the stopbank have been removed and arrangements have been made for the boundary location to be undertaken along the alignment.

## **2.4 South Waitohu stopbank**

Work is progressing on a geotechnical assessment of site materials, detailed design and resource consent application. The programme is to gain Resource Consent approval by mid September and award the construction contract in late November.

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

### **3.1 Ava to Ewen project**

Dixon and Dunlop Ltd continues to make good progress on the Ava Rail stopbank contract. Rock supply from Takaka is continuing and by the end of May 2007, the contractor has placed about 4900 tonnes of rock out of a total of 15,000 tonnes. Concrete works to extend a pier cap of the Ava Rail Bridge was completed and the contractor has now commenced laying the new stormwater pipes. The outlet channel from the Opahu Stream culvert is now directly open to the river.

The draft tender documents for the Strand Park stopbank contract are now complete. Construction works are scheduled to commence in 2008/09. Hutt City Council (HCC) has sought our approval to construct some car parks on the Hutt River berm below Ewen Bridge. HCC will initially look for 100 car parks. We have agreed in principle to this request provided the car parks can be located so that the flood protection standard will not be compromised. HCC is now undertaking further investigations and if they decide to proceed the civil works for carparks could be included in the Strand Park stopbank contract with HCC paying the cost of that portion of the works.

### **3.2 Boulcott/Hutt stopbank**

Good progress has been made with the phase 2 of the Boulcott/Hutt feasibility study. Topographic surveys and geotechnical investigations required for this phase of the study are now complete. Two meetings were held with Hutt and Boulcott Golf Clubs to provide opportunities for them to comment on the design. A concept design for the Red alignment was confirmed through two 'River Engineers' workshops. Staff are looking at river channel improvement options which could lower the design crest levels of the stopbanks.

A newsletter, providing a project update, was distributed to the adjacent property owners and stakeholders on 31 May 2007.

### **3.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank**

Construction of the 175 metre long stopbank which forms part of Stage 1 is completed. We are now analysing the tenders received for the construction of the floodwall. The tender prices are significantly higher than estimate and we are now assessing the options. The tender documents for Stage 2 works are under preparation. We will delay the flood wall until prices have been received for stage 2. The delay will enable us to confirm whether the whole project can still be able to be completed within budget.

### **3.4 Maoribank Riverbed stabilisation**

Investigations are progressing to identify the cause/s for the continued bed degradation. A walkover of the site with specialist consultants was completed in April 2007. An Engineering Geologist from the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences was engaged to report on the rock formation. Development of a hydraulic model to identify any changes to river characteristics has commenced and a re-survey of cross sections is due to commence in June 2007.

### **3.5 District plan changes**

On 25 May 2007, a meeting was held with Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) 'Planning Team' to discuss a programme to prepare a plan change application to include the Hutt River and Mangaroa flood hazard into the district plan. At this stage, UHCC officers expect to commence this work in August 2007. Until this time, we will progress with refining the Mangaroa flood maps in consultation with UHCC.

## **4. Western Operations [Jeff Evans]**

Operational works programmes for both Wellington and Kapiti are running to schedule. The willow and native planting programmes for the coming year are now being developed. Work is being done with the Friends groups and local schools for the upcoming Arbour Day plantings.

### **4.1 Hutt River**

The Environmental Planner and the Hutt River Ranger have been identifying planting sites for this year. It was a good opportunity for them to inspect sections of the river and discuss issues.

Three new groyne have been built in the River at Whakatiki. The area of eroded bank behind the groyne will be back filled using excess fill from the Masfield Street culvert removal works which are planned next financial year. A new groyne has also been installed in the river below the Maoribank Bend.

All the river vehicle access tracks have been graded and re-metalled in preparation for the winter traffic.

Some minor channel shaping has been completed opposite Nash Street and Gibbons Street in Upper Hutt.

### **4.2 Hutt River Trail**

Maintenance has included vegetation cutback around Belmont and Taita Gorge and releasing around various native plots. There has been some vandalism repairs on various assets such as signs and seats.

This period has seen a number of events along the trail and berms. The high profile Crazyman multi-sport event was held in May and over 500 participants rode the trail from Silverstream to Hutt City. There was also the annual Children's Bike Jam at Trentham Memorial Park which used the trail.

#### 4.3 Hutt River ranging services

This period has once again seen the usual seasonal ranging duties such as patrols and regulatory issues. Presentations were made to the Hutt Rotary Club and a conservation/river evening with the Belmont School.

#### 4.4 Watercourses

Annual Stream clearing runs have been carried out in the Waiwhetu Stream, Hulls Creek, Pinehaven, Takapu, Waimeha and Korokoro Streams.

#### 4.5 Otaki River

Channel shaping has been completed to protect an area of erosion opposite the Wallace-Lutz properties. Staff have been busy release cutting and spraying around native plantings in the Chrystall's lagoon area.

#### 4.6 Gravel extraction

Gravel extraction figures to the end of April 2007 are set out below.

River	Area	Contractor	Period Year 2006/07 (cubic metres)		Year 2005/06 (cubic metres)
			Period	Year	Full Year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	5,871	39,534	49,154
	River	Horokiwi	9,081	34,521	60,680
Otaki	River	Winstones	0	40,929	41,442
Waitohu	Bridge	Albert Mills	2500	2500	
Waikanae	Above Greenaway Road	Various	1,080	3,330	9,210
	Below Greenaway Road	Gary Holland Earthmoving	0	5,360	5,040
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>16,032</b>	<b>123,943</b>	<b>165,526</b>

## **5. Wairarapa Operations [Mike Longworth]**

### **5.1 Wairarapa River Schemes**

#### **5.1.1 Annual Works Programmes**

The annual works programmes for the northern Wairarapa Rivers and for the LWVD Scheme are now completed.

#### **5.1.2 Flood Damage Repairs**

All flood damage repairs are now completed. Repairs to the Hikinui sill is complete, except for removal of the existing sill and installation of the debris barrier, which will be finalised in summer 2008. Funds for this work will be carried forward to the next financial year.

#### **5.1.3 Drainage Schemes**

All spraying and mechanical cleaning has been completed. The drains within each scheme network are in a good state for the onset of winter. Currently the Wairarapa is experiencing very dry weather conditions which is beneficial in helping to keep the electricity costs down for the pump drainage schemes.

The rebuilding of overall drainage scheme reserves with consequent rate increases is the main focus for the 2007/2008 financial year.

#### **5.1.4 Annual Scheme meetings**

All the annual scheme meetings are completed. A number of them had river inspections prior to meetings. Five schemes have adopted rate increases in line with the increase in the Cost Construction Index. Generally there has been a positive response from the scheme committees to the work the Council have carried out over the year.

The repayment of the 10 year loan for a willow clearing job on the Whangaehu River Scheme will be paid off during 2007/08. The Scheme Committee resolved to reduce the rates to support an annual maintenance programme of \$5,000 per year.

### **5.2 Kopuaranga River Enhancement Project**

A separate report has been filed elsewhere in the order paper.

### **5.3 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Review**

Following the completion of the recent public meetings staff have reviewed the points raised at the meetings. The proposed rating classification has been amended where it was considered to be appropriate. Ratepayers have also visited the office to discuss their situation. These meetings have gone well.

Legal advice has been received on how to proceed with the introduction of the new classification. The advice is not to introduce the new classification for next financial year as

there is not enough time to complete a robust special consultative process as required under the Local Government Act. Instead it has been recommended that staff should consult with the Review Committee and seek their endorsement of the proposed changes. Once the Review Committee is happy it will proceed with the special consultative process on the new rating classification. The new rating classification will not now be in place until the financial year 2008/09.

A review committee meeting is scheduled for June 2007.

#### **5.4 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Global Consent**

The LWVD Scheme Global Consent has been lodged. The affected parties and the Consent Authority have requested further details. These are being provided and further consultation is in progress to get sign-offs from the affected parties.

### **6. Planning and development services [Sharyn Westlake]**

The following table summarises the number of formal, written requests attended to during the period from 21 March – 1 June 2007:

	March/April 2007	YTD
Requests brought forward	8	4
Additional requests received	23	169
Responses provided	27	169
Outstanding requests	4	4

The Flood Protection Department is also involved with:

The 10-year review of the Regional Policy Statement, led by Environmental Policy Department. Flood Protection officers are providing ongoing contributions to the review, to ensure sustainable river and catchment management that achieves the particular level of flood hazard protection desired by each distinct community of interest.

Input into the River Managers Forum led initiative to create an informal, electronic "River Managers Guide" document which will include rules, guides, notes, procedures and practices relevant to the Management of NZ Rivers. Funding for the first stage of the project has just been granted by the Foundation for Research, Science & Technology.

Mediation regarding the objections to Kapiti Coast District Plan Change 50.

Development of maps and information for Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) resulting from the Mangaroa River Flood Hazard Study. The resulting maps and information showing the

flood hazard will be discussed with UHCC and affected parties before a future Plan Change to the Upper Hutt City Council District Plan.

## **7. Investigations and Assets [John Eyles]**

### **7.1 Waiwhetu Stream floodplain management study**

The technical work to complete Phase 2 is due to be finished by the end of June 2007. The next phase of the project, from 1 July, will involve completing the option development, formal consultation, drafting the Flood Management Plan (FMP) and getting formal signoff from HCC and GW by the end of June 2008.

Technical reports presented at the Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Committee meeting on 7 May included a paper on the Study of Upper Catchment Protection and on improving channel management. Other technical reports such as investigating bridge improvements in the upper catchment and house raising are nearly complete.

Officers are continuing to talk with Ministry officials to try to secure a viable level of funding for the contaminated sediment clean up costs. The current offer is for \$2.4M or 40% of the total clean up costs. Hutt City Council are still considering their position with respect to a local contribution. Structural flood protection works cannot start without doing the clean up work.

### **7.2 Pauatahanui Stream (in conjunction with Porirua City Council and Transit NZ)**

The recent flood hazard study showed this stream is heavily overgrown with willows and has many obstructions to flow which increases the risk of flooding.

Steve Murphy is making good progress preparing individual property reports to identify stream maintenance required and also working on a resource consent template for individual owners to use when they wish to start work. Transit has agreed to call tenders to clean up the whole stream, probably next financial year. The individual property owners have to agree to pay their pro rata share.

We will continue to liaise with PCC in developing an integrated whole of catchment approach for managing the Pauatahanui stream.

### **7.3 Detention Dams study, Stebbings Dam Hydrology**

The Building Act 2004 defines the responsibilities that dam owners have with respect to the integrity of dams and how they should be managed to protect public safety in the event of failure.

A draft report has been received from consultants NIWA that completes a review of the hydrology of Stebbings Dam. This follows similar work undertaken in 2001/02 for the Seton Nossiter dam. The purpose is to assess the maximum possible flood, with the objective of evaluating the sufficiency of the flood storage and the adequacy of current

flood warning and evacuation procedures to ensure public safety during extreme flood events. The full implications of the draft report have yet to be assessed.

#### **7.4 Asset management**

As part of the revaluation process, Flood Protection staff have developed new unit rates for Flood Protection's infrastructural assets. These are being entered into our asset registers to revalue the department's entire infrastructural assets. A draft re-valuation document has also been produced, and we are busy finalising this ready for our external peer review due before the end of the financial year.

In addition to the re-valuation exercise, we are also completing the routine year end asset management tasks specifically the annual inspections of the infrastructural assets on each river scheme.

As part of the organisation-wide asset management information system review, Officers have also attended a series of vendor demonstrations. Clarification is being sought with the vendors before a recommendation can be made for a preferred supplier.

#### **7.5 Health and Safety**

We held a successful health and safety meeting with the Operational staff of the department; this was the first combined meeting between Western and Wairarapa staff since the restructure. Health and safety systems were discussed and also areas where we can gain some consistencies, such as training and health monitoring.

Annual health monitoring for both the Western and Wairarapa Operations staff has been arranged for the end of June.

## **Land Management (Dave Cameron)**

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

#### **1.1 Sustainable Land Management – Hill Country Erosion Framework**

MAF Policy has presented their Hill Country Erosion Framework to a recent meeting of Regional Council Land Managers. The Framework is part of a suite of Government responses to long term sustainable management of land and water. Previous announcements and funding have been allocated to the Water Programme of Action, Climate Change, Flood Risk Management Review, and Adverse Events Policy.

The above programmes are very clearly seen in a context of Total Catchment Management. They are more about partnerships than directions, with regional government identified as a key partner.

The framework is about supporting and building on regional initiatives with money set aside for projects and capability building. The bulk of the money is to be directed at projects (<80%) with the balance for building capability. \$10M is budgeted to be spent over the next four years and will work in conjunction with incentives to promote afforestation. The bulk of the money will focus on the east coast North Island, Manawatu and Taranaki.

The afforestation packages will be announced later in the year as part of the Climate Change initiatives and will include further incentives for planting erosion-prone catchments and developing locally appropriate work programmes.

#### **1.2 Sustainable Land Management – Human Capability**

The recent announcements for funding regional initiatives targeting afforestation and soil erosion control programmes have highlighted a national problem of human capability.

MAF have just completed their National Capability Survey which provides information on the capacity of Regional Councils to support the delivery of recently announced Government initiatives. The findings are summarised as follows:

- Current staffing levels are not enough to fully meet erosion objectives
- Focus of work is on education and farm planning with a wide variety of tools used
- Retention and recruitment is critical
- Common range of competencies sought
- Considerable investment in training and professional development

Across the country an average of 5 FTE's are required for each Council to deliver their erosion control objectives and to be in a position to support an increase in activity as a result of Government announcements. The timeframe for Government is set at 25 years which is currently at odds with existing funding levels within Greater Wellington.

Further announcements are expected from MAF within the next two months and a full report will be forwarded to the Committee including implications for Greater Wellington within the context of the next LTCCP.

### 1.3 Catchment Schemes

Catchment Scheme expenditure has risen by \$12,000 in the last 6 weeks. This has been evenly spread across all Schemes as annual programmes near completion. River flows are very low at present enabling maintenance work to be completed.

The global consent for the Awhea/Opouawe Scheme is progressing well with affected party signatures the last act before filing of the application.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget 2006/07</b>	<b>Revised Budget 2006/07</b>	<b>Expenditure to Date</b>	<b>Storm Reserve – June 2006</b>
Awhea/Opouawe	32,000	51,326	50,339	26,281
Whareama	16,100	26,600	19,813	1,705
Homewood	10,500	17,000	13,551	16,473
Mataikona/Whakataki	12,000	12,000	5,961	10,406
Maungaraki	12,000	12,000	9,193	10,215
Kaiwhata	7,700	12,000	11,997	15,964
<b>Total</b>	<b>90,300</b>	<b>130,926</b>	<b>110,854</b>	<b>81,044</b>

## 2. Farm Plans (Don Bell)

### 2.1 New Plans and Reviews

- Fifteen Conservation Plan Reviews have been completed to date. Average Ten year expenditure for the fifteen Plans is \$38,000. The two Sustainability Plans contain a significant amount of programmed work. This is not untypical for Sustainability Plans as they contain greater analysis of farming options and have a higher grant rate than traditional Conservation Plans.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Annual Plan Target</b>	<b>Total 10 Year Expenditure</b>
New Sustainability Plans	2	3	\$248,000
New Conservation Plans	0	2	\$0
Ten Year Reviews	15	20	\$565,700

## 2.2 Annual Programmes

- Programmes are currently being finalised with farmers in the lead-up to winter, however a degree of uncertainty is becoming apparent due to the prolonged autumn drought and lower farm incomes.
- Our two recently appointed Land Management Officers, Tony Faulkner and Andrew Patrick are settling in to their new roles. Tony takes Rob Harrison's position and comes to us from URS Ltd, environmental consultants. Andrew recently graduated from Massey University and takes over from Chris Ladd.
- Various training initiatives have been taken to assist new staff, including Megan Banks who has been appointed to Michelle Bird's role while she is on maternity leave. They include Growsafe, practical pre- and release-spraying, all terrain vehicle, pole and seedling planting, chainsaw basics, and Land Use Capability mapping and First Aid. Working with helicopters is scheduled later this month.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Annual Plan Target</b>	<b>Approved Expenditure</b>	<b>Annual Plan Budget</b>
Annual programmes – Hill country	138	130	\$488,000	\$500,000
Annual programmes – Shelter	13	20	\$34,700	\$50,000

## 3. Akura Conservation Centre (Stan Braaksma)

### 3.1 Nursery Operations

- All row spraying, mowing and mulching has been completed in both nurseries. Stump extraction is almost completed at Akura and a major burning of extracted stumps completed. New cutting blocks have had been cultivated in preparation for September planting.

- Contract pole cutting is to be supplied by Bioworks. Pole cutting commenced on 6<sup>th</sup> June but only small numbers will be made available until soil conditions greatly improve in the main planting areas.
- A new Resource Consent is required for the water take of both standard and irrigation water supply at Akura.
- Soil tests have been completed after liming operations and maintenance fertiliser application last spring. Irrigation of soil appears to have had minimal impact on altering the nutrient status of soils at Akura.
- Mangapakeha Forest harvesting continues. This has an impact on Nursery access and boundary fences. We are still having minor stock ingress problems.
- The Mangapakeha nursery pines are to be extracted, the successful contractor being Whittaker Sawmilling Ltd. These 30 year old trees will yield a high percentage of pruned butt log which will be processed and used locally.

### 3.2 Trading

- A range of native species is available with the first day of trading at the Akura Conservation Centre commencing on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> June. Small numbers of poles will be carried until soil moisture conditions improve. Most lines of plant sundries and planting aids are available. A relative slow start on the sales front, no doubt due to the very dry soil conditions.
- Farmer orders for poles are still holding, but many farmers are expected to revise budgets which may reduce or cancel some orders.

### 3.3 Budget

- The first delivery of Dynex pole sleeves has arrived and is a major reason for the reduction in operating surplus from the last report. Additionally tree stocks and weedmats have also been purchased.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Budget 2006/07 – Operating Surplus</b>	<b>Revised Budget 2006/07 – Operating Surplus</b>	<b>Current Operating Surplus</b>
Nurseries	18,400	25,800	46,100
Trading	(53,100)	(76,000)	(80,200)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(34,700)</b>	<b>(50,200)</b>	<b>(34,100)</b>

### **3.4 Staffing**

- Paul Henderson has had 4 weeks with Peter Cameron in the transferring of knowledge and systems of both Nursery and Trading.
- Peter Cameron will officially retire on Friday, 8th June. He is contracted back for 8 hours per week this winter to assist Paul.
- The Nursery assistant position has been filled by Pam Russ who commenced duties on 5<sup>th</sup> June and is contracted on a fixed term until the end of September. She comes with a strong background in native plants and in commercial garden centres.

### **3.5 Research**

- Akura was visited by Alan Wilkinson, an ex HortResearch poplar and willow breeder to view both clonal performance in the nursery and in numerous field trial sites. He intends doing some private plant breeding specific to our Regional Council needs.
- HortResearch scientists Ian McIvor and Grant Douglas are to visit soon, measuring the effectiveness of tree cover on eroding hill slopes. There are very good sites to study on neighbouring properties of Waikoukou and Eringa, both victims of the intense cell rainfall last July. Waikoukou has very good coverage of spaced planting on hill slopes, and Eringa a range of partial and zero slope coverage.

## **4. Biodiversity (Megan Banks)**

- Both the NZ Restoration Day at Tauherenikau and the Otaki Small Farmers field day were attended. The days were busy with positive responses received from the public. As a result of the Otaki field day several properties have been or are to be assessed for riparian and biodiversity management within their properties.
- Site visits continued for Streams Alive with the numbers for blankings and release sprays organised. There are now four new planting sites in Otaki and three others requiring a significant number of replacements. Mangaroa also has four new sites to be planted, while there is still only one site in Wairarapa.
- Contractors have been secured for pre-planting spray work in the Otaki catchments. This is to commence any day, weather depending.
- The Ohariu workshop was held successfully with a good turnout of all involved in the research project, including staff from Environment Bay of Plenty, AgResearch, University of Waikato, Greater Wellington, DoC, NIWA and Landcare Research. A report of the meeting is in process from the AgResearch team and feedback is due on workshop recommendations at the end of June.

## 5. Operations (Kevin Burdan)

### 5.1 Silviculture Programmes

- The fire ban was lifted towards the end of April and thinning of 32.3 hectares has been completed since then. Forest conditions are again very dry with the fire risk currently sitting at “high”, however it is unlikely the ban will be imposed again.
- 371.5 hectares of thinning and pruning has been completed across 49 properties.

Activity	Completed (hectares)	Annual Plan Target (hectares)	Expenditure to date	Annual Plan Budget
Thinning	191.4	250	\$57,494	\$75,000
Pruning	180.1	250	\$110,343	\$150,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>371.5</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>\$167,837</b>	<b>\$225,000</b>

### 5.2 Conservation Programmes

- The lifting of the fire ban has also enabled 8.6 hectares of thinning to be completed at the Hiwinui Soil Conservation Reserve.
- Soil moisture levels are very low following five months of very low rainfall. There is little opportunity for a start to be made on the planting programme, however a small amount of pre-spray has been possible.
- The low level in most rivers has enabled some late maintenance work to be completed. Repairs have been made to the Bushgrove drop structure and willow cabling has been installed in conjunction with road protection worked carried out by the Masterton District Council in the Tinui area.

## 6. Integrated Catchment Management (Ian Gunn)

The main focus since the previous meeting has been fulfilling the Acting Divisional Manager’s role and supporting the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Water Programme of Action reviews. Both of these reviews are gaining momentum with the Government likely to develop separate National Policy Statements for each review. It is heartening to see both regional councils and local territorial authorities supporting the work being developed by Local Government New Zealand.

## **7. Communications (Catriona Robertson)**

From the beginning of May key communications activities for the division have continued to focus on ongoing communications planning and media work for the Mangaroa/Kaitoke, Akatarawa and Otaki possum control operations, and planning and production work for the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy.

Other media work includes the launch of the new train carriages in Masterton, the Dry Creek possum control operation, the Waitohu sand dunes rabbit control, the revised Kopuaranga River Scheme, and the opening of Akura Conservation Centre for the winter season.

There has been a lot of publishing on our website particularly in relation to the winter possum control operations and the Akura Conservation Centre. There are feature links on our home page to take people straight into these particular sites and there are individual pages with detailed information on each of the aerial operations within the possum control feature link.

Initial work on the next edition of the Rural Services Newsletter has commenced and is due for publication late July.