

Report 11.80
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Committee Environmental Wellbeing Committee
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General Managers' report to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee meeting on 15 March 2011

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of Greater Wellington activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibility.

2. Catchment Management Group Biosecurity

Cat desexing campaign for 2011 cancelled

For a number of years GW has sponsored a very popular and successful joint cat desexing programme with the Wairarapa SPCA and Vetcare Ltd. Due to a significant budget deficit the Biosecurity Department (Pest Animals Section) is unable to support any feline desexing campaigns this financial year. It is unlikely that support for the programme will continue unless additional funding is made available to the Biosecurity budget in future. The discontinuation of funding resulted in negative press in the Wairarapa media. The cost for the management and publicity of feral and unwanted cats as a threat to biodiversity for the 2009-2010 financial year was \$25,679.

The budget for this year Wairarapa desexing campaign was \$15,000. The programme was part of a wider effort aiming to minimise the detrimental effects of feral cats on native biodiversity in the region.

Problems with Kaka

There have been reports from around the country of the native parrot species kaka accessing bait stations used for rat and possum control. A small number have been confirmed by toxicology analysis as having ingested anticoagulant

baits. There are free flying kaka within our region and the reported incidents have created an awareness that our current baiting strategies may need to be modified. It seems that the kaka most at risk are those that have been raised or maintained on processed foodstuffs placed in receptacles similar to bait stations. Kaka are naturally curious with very strong beaks and legs. The Pest Animals team is aiming to trial ideas of how to modify some of the bait station models that we use to exclude kaka but not rats or possums. There are also trials and investigations being undertaken in other parts of New Zealand to mitigate baiting issues involving either kaka or kea.

BioWorks

BioWorks has currently secured 53 contract areas covering 176,207 hectares. All contracts have passed without rework requirements to date. Survey work is well advanced to meet early autumn deadlines. Approximately 60% of the contract area has been completed to date.

The business unit is currently assessing the initial round of ground control tenders for the 2011/12 year. Aerial tenders are due for assessment in late April.

Work has commenced on the Biosecurity Department's Regional Predator Control Programme contract. Initial work covers communication with landowners and installing bait stations with baits.

Land Management

Discussions with the Papawai Kaikokirikiri Trust regarding Akura nursery expansion are proceeding well. A draft agreement is being prepared to cover the lease of 15 hectares for the establishment of a willow and poplar nursery.

The judging of this year's Ballance Farm Environment Awards has been completed. Thirteen high quality applications were received.

MAF is currently reviewing the four national afforestation programmes. Of particular interest to GW are the Afforestation Grant Scheme and the Hill Country Erosion Programme. Both of these initiatives have been highly successful within the region.

The final round of funding through the Afforestation Grant Scheme closes on 31 March 2011. GW has been successful in securing grants for twenty three clients who have established 770 hectares of new forest on eroding pastoral land.

3. Utilities and Services

Forestry

Export log prices are still increasing and demand seems insatiable. We have just begun the sixth month of consistent price increases.

The current level of the dollar against the US\$ seems to ensure that the increased prices will at least continue through April.

February was the best month for years with 6407 tonnes at an average of \$54.21 net.

The increased prices and volumes are causing difficulties at Centreport where log handling is disrupted by cruise ships, scrap ships and congestion.

We have been fortunate to obtain the services of a third logging crew. At the moment this is only a two man crew but will enable a modest increase in monthly tonnages.

To the end of February, 42,181 tonnes have been harvested to date this year.

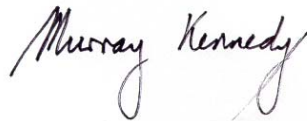
4. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

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