

Report 12.389
Date 21 August 2012
File CMG/01/14/02

Committee Environmental Wellbeing
Author David Cameron, Manager, Land Management

Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative Annual Review 2012

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on progressing the Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative (WRECI) during the 2011/12 year.

2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

3. Background

Soil erosion is a major problem that has been identified for the Greater Wellington region. The most significant erosion occurs in the eastern Wairarapa hill country. Greater Wellington (GW) helps landowners to manage soil erosion on their properties, primarily through producing farm plans, and providing advice and financial assistance for on-farm works.

Recent government funding allows GW to prepare more plans and to offer higher grant rates than previously available. This new programme is known as the Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative (WRECI) and was approved in 2008.

The WRECI programme focuses on five selected catchments and isolated hotspots. These areas are located in the Wairarapa hill country and have been selected on the basis of rates of sediment discharge and percentage of erosion prone land in the catchment.

The first three years of the WRECI programme have been successfully completed. The programme so far has involved three years of plan preparation and two years of planting. This report provides information on the results of the third year of the programme.

4. Progress to Date

		Target	Actual
Farm Planning			
Plans completed	Number	40	37
Works (from first 10 Plans)			
Poles	Number	6,250	9,175
	Area planted (ha)	89	122.5
Afforestation	Area planted (ha)	50	63.7
Total area under erosion control	Hectares	139	186
Financial			
Greater Wellington	\$	157,500	140,862
Hill Country Erosion Fund	\$	157,500	140,862
Farmer contribution	\$	80,000	84,841
Total	\$	395,000	366,565

Cost savings were again made by completing some of the plans in-house for year three of the WRECI programme. These cost savings allowed an additional 3,100 poles to be planted in June 2012 on top of the 2011 winter plantings. This took the total number of poles planted in the 2011/2012 financial year to 9175, 47% above the original target.

The 15 plans completed this year included a number of large coastal properties, which has significantly boosted the area of farms that now have a WRECI plan. In total there are approximately 53,978 hectares of land covered by WRECI farm plans. All of the six target areas of the WRECI programme now have plans completed, in line with the implementation strategy developed in 2010.

Farmers have generally received the WRECI programme very favourably. This year more farmers applied to join the programme than there were spaces available. This meant that there were replacement properties available when two farms were withdrawn from the programme due to personal circumstances. The remaining properties will enter the programme this year.

5. Whareama Catchment

The Whareama Catchment was one of five catchments selected for the programme and was a major focus in the first two years. The first 10 plans were prepared for farms in the Whareama catchment in 2009/10. A further 5 plans were prepared in the second year of the programme, and 3 plans in the third year of the programme.

WRECI programme in the Whareama catchment	
Area of catchment (ha)	53,231
Area of land within catchment with WRECI farm plan (ha)	17,310
Percentage of catchment with WRECI farm plan	32.2%
Four year target # of plans	20
Plans completed to date	18
Completed works (2nd year)	
• Number of poles planted	3,825
• Area of poles planted (ha)	47.8
• Afforestation (ha)	50.6

One of the aims of the WRECI programme is to increase the rate of plantings on farm and to reduce the time to provide erosion control to eastern Wairarapa hill country. Data for the Whareama catchment are now available for 2 planting years. The following table presents a comparison of the number of poles planted in the second year of the programme to the 5 year rolling average for the 19 participating properties immediately prior to joining the WRECI programme. This is the second year that data indicate more poles are being planted on farms because of the WRECI programme.

Whareama Pole Programme	5 years prior to joining WRECI Average	2011/12 planting
Number properties actively participating	8 / 18	15 / 18
Average poles / property participating	132	255
Total poles planted per year in Whareama catchment	1,711	3,825
Approx area planted	21.3ha	47.8ha

6. Communications

The performance of the WRECI programme will be publicised in the next edition of Rural Focus. The opportunity will also be taken to maintain the profile of the programme with external customers.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

Report prepared by:



David Cameron
Manager, Land Management

Report approved by:



Wayne O'Donnell
General Manager, Catchment Management