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Committee Environment Committee
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General Managers' report to the Environment Committee meeting 21 June 2017

1. Purpose

To inform the Environment Committee of Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibilities.

2. Catchment Management

2.1 Biosecurity

2.1.1 The Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) review

We have continued to engage with TLAs, iwi, DOC and community groups. The RPMP Discussion Document will be released to the public following these meetings. The next stage in the process is a cost benefit analysis for proposed pest management options.

2.1.2 Predator Free Wellington

GWRC has produced a draft costing for the Governance Group for Miramar rat and mustelid eradication. This is the first time that this has been attempted for an urban environment. It has been prepared with two different options: one using best practise ground control toxic baiting and trapping, and the other option based on the A24 self-resetting multi-species kill trap in place of toxic bait. These costings will be peer reviewed by external experts.

2.1.3 Biocontrol

Biocontrol agents showcased at 'Restoration Day' held in Porirua attracted significant interest from the public.

The white admiral butterfly was released along the Akatarawa road as a control agent for Japanese honeysuckle. It is the first such release in our region.

2.1.4 Regional Possum Predator Control Programme

The 2016/17 programme planned to cover approximately 74,800 hectares in 15 operational areas. Progress has been quicker than expected and it is likely that up to 84,000 hectares over 17 projects will be controlled during the year.

2.1.5 Southern Rimutaka Aerial project

Part one (2,200 ha) of the project has been completed. The prefeed was applied on 26 April and the 1080 baits were applied on 15 May. The aerial operation was audited by Regional Public Health and TBfree NZ with no concerns raised by either organisation. Ground control supporting this aerial project has commenced.

2.2 Land Management

2.2.1 Akura

Pole harvesting has commenced early this year with 3,800 predominantly poplar poles harvested out of the privately owned Mangapakeha Nursery. Poles are currently being harvested in the Akura PK Trust block with very good numbers of poles harvested per day. Demand for poles appears high this winter.

Akura Nursery opened its doors to the public on the 1st June and there has been a steady flow of customers purchasing a large selection of native and exotic seedlings. The good start can be attributed to the increased marketing primarily through radio advertisements.

The arrival of Myrtle rust in NZ is a major concern. Myrtle rust is a serious fungal disease that affects plants in the myrtle family. Myrtle rust could affect iconic New Zealand plants including pōhutukawa, mānuka, rātā, kānuka, swamp maire and ramarama, as well as commercially grown species such as eucalyptus, feijoa and guava. Akura sends seed down to a nursery in Blenheim to propagate and at this point in time is still able to supply plants in the myrtle family for internal and external customers. Staff will be working with landowners to monitor myrtle spp. during the spring months.

2.2.2 Work Programme

Contractors are very thin on the ground this year, and it is proving difficult to engage them for our work programme. This was mainly due to a number of contractors no longer working in this space. As an example of this two of our past contractors are now set up for forestry harvesting. Health and safety compliance also appears to be a turn off and changes to our quad and LUV safe operating procedures have resulted in having to turn contractors away as they cannot comply with the requirement to safely get their crews into a site.

The 2017 winter work programme is now well underway. The weather gods have been kind and the ground conditions are wet and consequently the contractors are able to easily get the poles down to depth with a pole bar. Two helicopter pole delivering flights have been completed, 1,000 poles to the Porirua area and 4,000 poles into the Tinui/Castlepoint area. The third flight is due to fly on 14 June with 3,400 poles being flown into the Awhea and Martinborough areas.



Pole delivery – Castlepoint Station

2.2.3 Work Programme

The Riparian Programme supports landowners to achieve water quality and biodiversity outcomes through the management of stock access to waterways. Part of this programme is to work with landowners to identify waterways and sites that meet the definitions for Category 1 (sites of significance) under the proposed Natural Resources Plan (pNRP).

Landowners with Category 1 waterways or sites have received a letter setting out the requirements to manage stock access and offering assistance and advice to achieve compliance with the pNRP provisions by July 2018. Staff are currently contacting these landowners and arranging site inspections. There are 251 category 1 sites identified in the pNRP. 182 of these sites have been classed as complex and as such have been prioritised for site inspections.

The project is a working example of collaboration and coordination across multiple Environment and Catchment Management Departments. It is using a behavioural change approach, developed using a stages of change model to monitor landowner progress towards the understanding and acknowledgement of the importance of these sites and acceptance of stock being excluded. The table below details the progress in assessing sites along with the recorded stages of change for landowner behaviour.

The encouraging signs from this project are that a large number of sites have no stock or already have stock excluded. And, of the remaining sites, over 50% of landowners are willing to begin considering stock exclusion.

Complex Sites Project Progress	
Number of Sites	182
Initial site assessment complete	88
Confirmed no stock	37
Already in action	11
Still to contact	94

Behavioural change monitoring - Stages of change (sample size = 88)	
No	10%
Yeah...but	22%
Ok	12%
Action	13%
Maintenance	1%
No Stock	42%

2.2.4 Farm Environment Plans (FEPs)

To date in 2016/17 eleven new FEPs have been completed, predominantly in the Wairarapa Moana catchment, bringing the total FEPs in the region to 59.

An estimated spend of \$480,000 on contestable fund projects will be spent for the financial year. The funding has been split across a variety of land uses with projects being predominantly focused on riparian or effluent management issues.

This has been the first year of the contestable fund and it has proven to be effective as a process of allocating funding to farmers throughout the region whilst targeting work on the priority catchments identified in the pNRP.

2.2.5 Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative (WRECI)

The winter pole planting season has commenced with two helicopter flights delivering over 7,000 poles during June along with 67 ha of woodlots and 136.5 ha of native reversion, all on erosion prone land. High soil moisture levels due to a wet autumn has made ground conditions close to optimum, a situation not seen for the last few winter planting seasons.



Pole planting - Pauatahanui

This winter has also seen some new innovations in Land Management systems and processes with the use of a web based pole ordering programme that was developed with assistance from ICT. Also, the data collection protocols in GIS have had an overhaul so that all planting and planning data is effectively captured which allows the sharing of pole numbers and locations between Land Management Advisors and contractors whilst making reporting information on all of the work in the WRECI programme to be easily captured.

2.2.6 National Science Challenge (NSC) – Our Land and Water (OLW)

Officers from Catchment and Environment Groups are exploring ways in which some of GWRC's emerging programmes in the Good Management Practice/Integrated Catchment Management can deliver on the OLW part of the NSC. OLW is the part of the NSC that falls in the primary industry space. The challenge laid out is to increase the value of product produced from primary industry production along the entire value chain whilst supporting better environmental/water outcomes. Much of the answer to this challenge will lie in land owner/managers ability to innovate. The opportunity for GWRC is to act as an innovation broker in this space connecting land owner/manager needs with research and development opportunities.

2.3 Flood Protection Implementation

2.3.1 Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan Implementation

Stakeholder engagement for the Hutt River Environment Strategy review commences in July, this includes both Upper Hutt City Council and Hutt City Council. Community engagement regarding the updated plan has been postponed until summer to try and capture a greater interest in the review outputs from people who use the area and participated in earlier survey work to support the review.

In July an event will be held to plant a living memorial for Robin Maud and to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Hutt River Trail. This project will be a springboard to engage with recreation users and the local community to further develop design improvements for the riverbank and berms in the Taita reach of the Hutt River.

Designs for the Waiwhetu weir repair and fish passage modification have been completed and are being reviewed by GWRC, these will be discussed with the Friends of Waiwhetu stream and if accepted a funding strategy will be developed to complete the works and fish passage improvement.

2.3.2 RiverLink Project

Hutt Valley Flood Management Subcommittee has participated in design development and review workshops in March, April and May this year. This has enabled completion of technical aspects of preliminary design and work to commence on value engineering for this project.

Information about the design is being made available to the community through online resources, the RiverLink information container which is being moved to different locations for a ten day period each month, and through distribution of newsletter updates.

A further series of workshops has been programmed for the HVMFMSc between August and November 2017 to refine the design and costs with the subcommittee before a decision can be made to proceed into detail design in 2018.

2.3.3 Waikanae FMP Implementation

Ongoing wet weather has delayed completion and impacted costs of the Jim Cooke Park stopbank upgrade project. Cost savings forecast for the project which were delivered through good contract management, design adjustments and good ground conditions earlier in the year are now forecast to be lost due to these wet weather impacts. Overall, the project is now forecast to be on budget.

2.4 Operations, Delivery and Planning

2.4.1 Western Operations

Officers have been busy over the last period completing flood damage works. Rock rip rap which was ordered several months ago has finally started arriving and progress has been made on completing several outstanding flood damage jobs in the Otaki and Waikanae Rivers.

Work was also completed on the Black Creek flood gates to remove siltation from the sill to ensure the flood gates worked correctly during high river flows.



Waikanae River Rock Line



Groynes at Tracies



Clearing Black Creek Flood Gate

2.4.2 Wairarapa Operations

Annual work programmes are nearing completion, with a small budget overspend.

All ten Wairarapa River Schemes held their annual meetings in May. Each committee expressed satisfaction in scheme performance and maintenance. Good discussion was held around popularising some of the important matters being considered in the development of the Te Kāuru FMP, such as changes to river buffer management practices, governance changes, and funding options. Each scheme advisory committee expressed concerns with scheme governance changes, however there appears to be general support for a higher level

governance group provided that appropriate measures are taken to ensure ongoing landowner and local stakeholder involvement with typical river maintenance operations.

Each committee was supportive of a “partnership approach” towards Old Man’s Beard control with GW officers facilitating, by means of providing advice and/or agrichemicals, and the landowners providing the labour and equipment to undertake the work.

In the Upper Ruamahanga – Gladstone scheme a 12 hectare river works easement has been granted to GWRC. This is a positive step towards solidifying the Te Kāuru buffer management concepts on a portion of private land and may provide some leadership for other similar agreements in the future. The easement provides GW unrestricted access to undertake river management works.

Flood Protection Operations officers are getting involved with PNRP implementation, including Mahi Waiora efforts in regards to significant wetland “complex sites”. Discussions have recently been held exploring opportunities for the Lower Valley scheme to assist with wetland protection and enhancement. Wetland kaitiaki, undoubtedly, will be an important matter for the Lower Valley scheme in the long-term.

2.4.3 Asset Management and Operations Planning

We have completed the five yearly revaluation of all our infrastructure assets. The total value of **all assets** made up of infrastructure, land, property and chattels is \$386M, effective as of 30 June 2017. Of this total \$340M is comprised of our infrastructural assets; this is an increase of \$78M since 2012.

2.4.4 River management resource consents

Submissions have now closed on the four western resource consents. Fifty-one submissions were received from 25 separate organisations or individuals. Submissions range from opposition, conditional and supporting. It is proposed to spend the next 4 months to try and resolve all submissions. A separate report regarding this project is being presented at this meeting (2017.196).

2.5 Investigations, Strategy and Planning

2.5.1 Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) Development

Waiohine FMP

The independent audit of the hydrology and hydraulics has been completed. All submitters on the plan and other interested parties were advised that the report would be posted on our web site. The audit stated that the hydrology and the hydraulic model were appropriate but did recommend further work be undertaken to test the sensitivity of the hydraulic model to key input changes and that the model be developed on a finer grid in the Greytown township area. We are currently in the process of engaging the service of a hydraulic modeller to implement the outcomes of the audit. The future governance structure for the Waiohine FMP is in development. We have meet with officers from SWDC and CDC to discuss options and also have a proposal from a group of interested

community members which will be considered before the matter is brought back to Council for consideration.

Te Kāuru Upper Ruamahanga FMP(TKURFMP)

Endorsement from the TKURFMP Subcommittee to establish a Waipoua Masterton Urban Area Project Group has been sought. Terms of Reference for this Project Group were presented to the TKURFMP Subcommittee at a meeting on 13 June 2017. The project group membership will be made up of members of Masterton District Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, Rangitāne ō Wairarapa, and officers of MDC and GWRC. The project group is tasked with facilitating the Waipoua River flood hazard mitigation option development for the Masterton urban area. The options developed will be recommended to the TKURFMP Subcommittee for endorsement and inclusion in the draft TKURFMP.

2.5.2 Investigations and Strategy

Flood hazard mapping on the internet

A new system has been developed for providing flood hazard mapping on the internet. The development of this system was identified as a project in the Long Term Plan 2015-25.

The project focussed on making flood hazard information held by GWRC's Flood Protection Department available on the internet for interested users in a readily understood and easily utilised format.

This flood hazard mapping system will allow users of the information to make informed decisions about flood risk and help to keep people safe and reduce flood damages by enabling avoidance of flood hazards.

User testing of the site has been carried out within GWRC and by TA and WREMO officers. Feedback received on the site will be incorporated before making the site available on the GWRC website on 1 July 2017. Officers have developed a communications plan to ensure that people are aware of this new service.

Rural stopbank process and specification

A rural stopbank process and specification document is being developed. A draft document has been circulated to flood protection team members for input. Once complete, this document will formalise the process currently being undertaken and provide guidance regarding: minimum requirements; stopbank lifecycle considerations; interactions with other design considerations; and the risk assessment process. This document will be particularly relevant to proposed works in the lower Wairarapa valley, but also to other areas in the Wellington Region.

3. Biodiversity

3.1.1 General

Biodiversity staff attended a Kapiti Collaborative Biodiversity Initiative meeting. This meeting went some way to identifying how GWRC, DOC and

KCDC could work more collaboratively to support community-based biodiversity projects in the future.

Biodiversity officers organised a meeting with Friends of the Otaki River (FOTOR) community group and operational staff from the Flood Protection department to discuss management options for FOTOR's restoration plantings. Biodiversity staff are supporting Flood Protection staff more broadly on future management options for these sites as part of their long term planning and budgeting.

Progress has been made on implementing the Belmont Quarry Environmental Package, which sets out mitigation for quarrying activities in a section of Belmont Regional Park.

3.1.2 Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) programme

Officers joined local volunteers to plant 2400 dune plants (pīngao and spinifex) as part of the ongoing dune restoration programme at the Riversdale KNE site. The programme is under the umbrella of the Riversdale Dune Management Committee, a partnership between Masterton District Council, GWRC, Riversdale Ratepayers Association, Department of Conservation and locals/volunteers to progressively conserve and restore the dunes.



Figure 1. Dune restoration planting at the Riversdale KNE site

Work to protect the Kaitoke and Pakuratahi KNE sites from incursion by wilding pines is underway. The felling of young pine trees alongside State Highway 2 at Kaitoke Hill has progressed well and the project will be completed in June.

3.1.3 Wetland programme

Biodiversity staff visited the Tauherenikau delta, Eastern Lake Wairarapa and Diversion Road wetlands along with staff from other departments to discuss the stock exclusion rules and explore opportunities to assist the landowner in meeting the Proposed Natural Resources Plan provisions. The Wetland programme is already providing restoration support for another wetland on this property.

Biodiversity staff met with Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki to introduce the Wetland programme and to discuss opportunities for us to work closely together on scheduled wetland sites that are of significance to iwi.



New rock ramp slows water flow and allows fish to move upstream

3.2 Biodiversity Advice and Advocacy

3.2.1 Biodiversity Advice

Biodiversity staff are coordinating a GWRC submission on the draft *Threatened Species Strategy* which has been released by Department of Conservation for consultation. The strategy describes the key elements needed to protect indigenous species, sets out goals for species conservation and provides a prioritised list of species. It also sets out how Predator Free 2050 will help achieve the strategy goals. The submission will be included in a Council Bulletin in July.

3.2.2 Collaborative Restoration: Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project

A workshop was attended by the project Governance Group and Management Team to discuss future opportunities in light of the Treaty of Waitangi settlements that are likely to occur in the next year or two.

3.2.3 Collaborative Restoration: Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and Catchment Project

A new wetland has been created to treat stormwater entering the Porirua Harbour near the Porirua Stream mouth. A newly recontoured dune area has

also been created to naturalise the site and better protect it from erosion. The works are associated with the implementation of the Porirua Stream Mouth and Estuary Edge Enhancement Concept Plan, which is a joint project between Porirua City Council and GWRC.

The first Biodiversity department school planting event of the season was successfully delivered at Battle Hill, involving around ninety students from three different schools. Two further planting events will be held in the coming weeks at Bothamley Park and the newly created stormwater treatment wetland mentioned above.

3.2.4 Biodiversity Advocacy

Biodiversity staff have successfully delivered this year's Restoration Day, which took place on May 21 at Whitireia Community Polytechnic. This annual event, which celebrates the work of volunteer restoration groups across the region, was fully subscribed with around 200 volunteers attending. Five workshop topics and four fieldtrip options were used to explore the theme of *Next Generation Restoration*. The event received a great deal of positive feedback from attendees.



Figure 2. Restoration Day 'engaging the youth' fieldtrip, delivered by Titahi Bay North school students at Kahotea Stream



Figure 3. Restoration Day 'restoring lizard habitat' fieldtrip, delivered by Whitireia Park Restoration Group

4. Environment Management

4.1 Harbours

4.1.1 Staffing

Most notably Captain Mike Pryce retired on May 19 after close to 30 years working in the Port, it was noted he had been Harbourmaster for longer than the Regional Council existed. Harbour Ranger Grant Nalder was promoted to the position of Harbourmaster.

James Allan was employed as a Harbour Ranger to fill the vacancy left by Grant's promotion.

The Council appointments for these roles were approved at the Council meeting on 25 May.



Mike with the painting of one of the Shell tankers he captained, visiting Wellington Harbour, presented on behalf of Council and staff

4.1.2 Navigation aids

Regular maintenance and inspections were carried out, including refitting the main light at Pencarrow light after testing for a fault, there was a back-up running in its absence. Battery charging faults were diagnosed and corrected on two lights prior to any service interruption.

The moorings of Barrett Reef Bouy are currently being inspected and serviced.

Reliable navigation aids are a key component of our Risk Control Measures.

4.1.3 Co-operative Greater Wellington work

Harbours staff and vessels supported Environmental Science in their program of regular sampling, plus a one-off task of core sampling for Lake Wairarapa. The core sampling involved GNS staff using a portable platform placed between our two small vessels.



As always weather is an important safety factor for working on the Lake and they definitely choose the right day.



4.1.4 Incident investigation

On April 16 one of the cross harbour ferries suffered hull damage. We reviewed this incident via our Navi-harbour system at Beacon Hill and working with the operator. We have guided them in making operational changes to improve safety, as well as assisting Maritime NZ in their investigation. This

relates to Risks ranked at 56 & 70 in our Safety Management System (SMS) and the primary risk control is improved compliance with Navigation and Safety Bylaws. The SMS is a key component of our compliance with the Port and Harbour Safety Code.

4.1.5 Recreational activity

Over summer six infringement notices (fines) were issued for breaches of the Navigation and Safety Bylaws, four of these have been paid, the remaining two are being passed to the District Court for collection.

Our Bylaws are the risk control measure that the boating public are most familiar with.

The Harbour Rangers hosted the Porirua Harbour user group meeting. Megan Oliver from E-Sci also presented information around the changing nature of the Porirua Harbour.

Stakeholder engagement is a key part of our Navigational Safety Policy.

4.1.6 Shipping news

The Kaitaki has returned from a dry docking in Sydney and has been purchased by Kiwirail and re-flagged as a New Zealand ship. Previously she was leased and registered in the UK. This means she now comes under Maritime NZ's jurisdiction with regards to on board operations, training, investigation etc. rather than the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in the UK.

The tall ship *Tenacious*, operated by the Jubilee Sailing Trust in the UK, called into Wellington for a visit on her world tour. *Tenacious* is noteworthy for both being built of timber and being designed and equipped to enable impaired sailors to work alongside their able bodied counterparts. Her visit to Wellington only took place after an unscheduled trip to the dry dock in Lyttelton due to biosecurity concerns after a prolonged visit in Australia. On Sunday June 4, when returning to the harbour after a weekend sailing, the Pilot sought permission from the Harbourmaster to deviate from the normal shipping routes as she was coming in under sail. Once other shipping was considered, he approved this request. This was assessed against the Risk ranked at 4 in the SMS and the primary risk control was covered by Traffic Information Service provided by Beacon Hill Signal Station and Directions for Harbour Navigation.



Photo: Vic Young

The jack up barge *Tuhura* arrived ahead of the resilience work being carried out by Wellington Water. It will be used to investigate the viability of taking water directly from the aquifer for Wellington City as an emergency response option. The construction company has been liaising with GWRC as this work is being carried out very close to the recommend shipping tracks. This relates to the Risk ranked 38 in the SMS and the primary risk control was covered by Traffic Information Service provided by Beacon Hill Signal Station, Directions for Harbour Navigation and Operating Requirements.

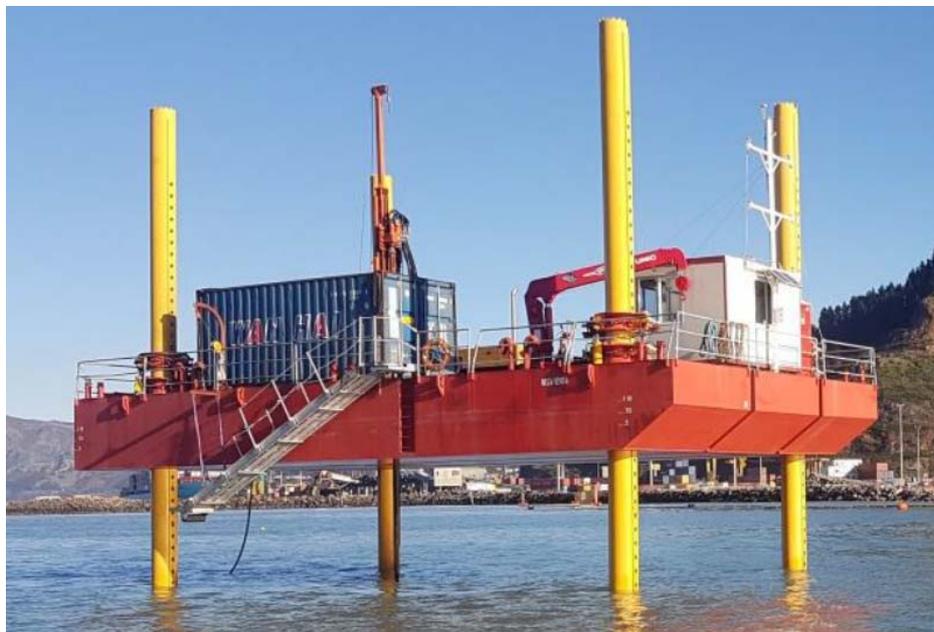


Photo: Heron construction

4.1.7 SeaCare slipping

Our workboat *SeaCare* was lifted out of the water for hull cleaning, anti-fouling and engine servicing.



4.2 Environmental Regulation

4.2.1 Lower Hutt Water Supply

Along with Environmental Science team (refer also to detail later in this report) joint work between GWRC, Wellington Water, Hutt City Council and Regional Public Health continues. Investigation work streams are progressing across GWRC and WWL primarily, and informed by GW's internal science and regulatory experts and external consultants. A technical working group has been formed, and a higher level oversight structure is also being developed to ensure the GWRC and WWL workstreams are well-integrated and build on, rather than duplicate, investigative effort. Regional Public Health are directly involved in this work to ensure community health considerations remain front and centre throughout. On that note, no protozoa or bacteria had been detected in aquifer water up to 9 June 2017.

The focus of investigation work covers a broad range of technical areas. This includes source contaminant and water quality work, hot-spot source area development, aquifer structure and groundwater changes, the development of improved monitoring systems, and forming strategic compliance approach to linking with potentially at-risk bore users.

4.2.2 T and T Landfill

Substantial compliance and investigations work continues for T and T (construction and demolition fill) Landfill. In May the Committee was updated on actions on site including the redesign and plant-out of the treatment wetland, and commencing construction on the stream diversion system to fix the contaminant discharge problem.

The site operators have finalised a package of clean water diversion and damming work to capture stream and stormwater flow above the filling site, with completion scheduled for the end of 2017. Works are progressing well.

At the same time, we are continuing to enable works without resource consents, as T and T Landfill finalise information crucial to the diversion and damming works.

Engagement with media continues, as does our regular series of updates for the community via our dedicated webpage.

Officers have been progressing establishing an on-site meeting with T and T staff, and while there have been challenges finding suitable dates for everyone, we hope to have a date finalised by the time of the Committee meeting.



4.2.3 Transmission Gully

In the May Committee report, we updated you about the structural changes afoot in the joint organisations' oversight. Further work has occurred since, to strengthen structures around the management of existing officer technical forums (approvals and compliance), and the development of an approvals workstream designed to actively managed complex pieces of approvals work across all organisations. External expertise, led by Christine Foster, has been engaged (on behalf of the TG Steering Group) to lead and manage both the approvals workstream and issues based work.

We felt that the Councillor site visit in late May was well worthwhile and provided an 'on the ground' oversight of work and relationships on the project.



4.2.4 A J Barton – Appeal to the Environment Court

Environment Court mediation is currently ongoing for an appeal by A J Barton on conditions imposed on a non-notified consent decision for taking water for irrigation purposes on land northwest of Martinborough. The decision was initially made by Council officers and then upheld by independent Hearing Commissioners following an objection by Mr Barton to three of his consent conditions. The appeal is effectively centred around the connectivity of Mr Barton’s groundwater take to the adjacent surface water body.

4.2.5 Wairarapa Gun Club

The Wairarapa Gun club has now formally applied for an additional consent to shoot lead on agricultural land east of State Highway 2 near Featherston. They had previously applied for, and subsequently been granted, a non-notified resource consent to discharge steel shot and clay targets to land. The application is currently on hold due to a request for further information around proposed mitigation of effects. We have engaged an external expert who specialises in such matters to advise us on the latest application, and we have been working with the Gun Club’s experts to resolve technical issues (i.e. managing lead shot deposition and effects).

4.2.6 Wellington International Airport (WIAL): Engaging with surfing community

We have been in discussions with WIAL to gain buy-in to an engagement process with the local surfing community, around issues relating to the Corner surf break and following the presentation by the Surf Protection Society at the last Committee meeting. We will be able to provide a verbal update to the June Committee.

4.3 Environmental Science

4.3.1 Clean Water package response

In response to the Government's Clean Water package, the regional sector has set up a Swimmability Targets project to assist councils to identify the changes required to meet national targets. A number of departments across Environment and Catchment Management Groups will be providing information to the project so that opportunities for improvement can be identified - ultimately helping to identify the contribution of each council to the national swimmability targets. The information we will be providing includes suggesting changes to the MfE maps to improve their accuracy, and listing proposed improvements to reduce E.coli and cyanobacteria levels.

4.3.2 Investigation into E.coli contamination in the Waiwhetu aquifer

E-Sci are continuing to lead a science investigations work programme in collaboration with Wellington Water Limited related to the contamination issues in the Waiwhetu Aquifer in Lowe Hutt. The work programme includes developing a definitive picture of what the recent changes in water quality results are telling us and possible reasons for these changes. This work along with a comprehensive update of the hydrogeological understanding of the aquifer itself should give some indication of what may be causing the contamination. This will in turn provide direction for future more detailed investigation work programmes.

4.3.3 Evaluating the effectiveness of our activities

The work being done between across Environment and Catchment Management Groups with iwi partners to evaluate the effectiveness of the pNRP continues to progress. The process is now at a point where criteria are being identified for where to focus evaluation and measures – and aligns with the work on shared outcomes that Environment and Catchment Management Groups are considering.

4.3.4 Safe-guarding myrtle species in the region in response to the myrtle rust infestation

Our terrestrial ecology team has been helping the Department of Conservation to safeguard myrtle species in the region by collecting seeds of manuka and *Metrosideros* species from GWRC's forests. The myrtle rust disease poses a major threat to many of our forest species and we have been providing advice to other departments about pathways and risks associated with the spread of the disease.

4.3.5 Lizard surveys in the Wairarapa

Thirty-three lizards were identified at two sites in the Wairarapa during recent lizard surveys. Three different lizard species (Raukawa gecko, copper skink and Ngahere gecko) were recorded at Fensham Reserve (one of GWRC's KNE sites). One of the Ngahere geckos was the largest the lizard experts had ever seen. No speckled skink were found however. The sites visited were the only locations in the region where this species has been recorded, but the last recordings were made over 30 years ago.

4.4 Environmental Policy

4.4.1 PNRP Hearings Update

Hearing Stream 1 of the proposed Natural Resources Plan hearings commenced on 22 May. This stream has considered the overall policy framework for the proposed plan, beneficial use and development, & areas and sites with significant mana whenua values. The Panel of three independent commissioners has heard submitters in Masterton, Wellington and Paraparaumu. This stream will conclude in Kapiti on 19 June, by when, around 80 submitters will have been heard.

Hearing Stream 2 will cover air quality management, land use in riparian margins and stock access to water bodies & soil conservation. This will begin on 10 July in Masterton.

The hearing schedule, pre-circulated and tabled evidence, and audio recordings of the hearings, can be viewed on the proposed plan website: <http://pnrp.gw.govt.nz/>

4.4.2 Consultation on NES-PF and Planning Standards.

The Ministry for Primary Industries are currently consulting on a very small update to the NES proposal on Plantation Forestry. The recent changes to the Resource Management Act enabled the charging for the monitoring of permitted activities. The proposed NES essentially sets permitted activity rules for plantation forestry and officers support the ability to charge for their monitoring if the need arises.

The Ministry for the Environment are consulting on the first suite of planning standards. The recent changes to the Resource Management Act required the first set of standards (previously called templates) to be in place within two years. The first suite includes standards on the form and structure of plans, definitions and requirements for electronic functionality. There may also be additional standards regarding spatial layers, mapping and incorporation of national direction. Officers are currently examining the proposals to determine their effect.

4.5 Parks

4.5.1 Kaitoke Regional Park

The past five years has seen strong growth in the popularity of camping at Kaitoke Regional Park, with revenue increasing 50% each year from 2013-2016. As a result, the main camping area on the river flats becomes crowded at peak times, pushing users to other areas. In response to this, and expecting growth to continue, we developed a new bbq/picnic shelter near the Park Ranger's office and four new powered camping sites. To further improve access to the wider Top Terrace, a new loop road is being constructed, funded by surplus camping revenue.



New alignment links camping areas on Kaitoke's Top Terrace

4.5.2 East Harbour Regional Park

As noted above, the first stage of the Southern Rimutaka 1080 operation was completed in the northern forest and Parangarahu Lakes Area. From a park management perspective, the operation was carried out very efficiently, with very good communications. We observed very little opposition to this work in the park, and were pleased to see a number of people taking up the offer of free dog muzzles.

The first stage of building the new “Harbour Views” trail was completed in May. Construction reached the ridgeline, and the finished portion was metalled to settle in over winter. The second stage of construction will be carried out in spring once the ground dries out. While the team contended with challenging terrain and ground conditions, there were no other disruptions to progress.

4.5.3 Queen Elizabeth Park

A further 700 metres of the North Whareroa stream has been fenced and retired from grazing with a 10 metre buffer either side of the stream banks being established. As part of an agreement with NZTA another kilometre of stream will have sediment removed from 1 July. All the newly retired areas will receive gorse and blackberry control in the coming spring/summer to be later followed by revegetation. Two other wet areas have also been retired and we are working closely with the Biodiversity department to plan the future weed control and revegetation.

Contractors have completed the first stage of works under the stream maintenance consent – the sediment removal from the easternmost section of Waterfall Stream. Approximately 600mm of sediment and celery weed was removed, along with old road cones, tyres and many plastic bottles and tin cans. Within a couple of days of this work, the flow had improved significantly and gravels were evident in the stream bed. The surveyors can now complete the cross section resurvey work to set the “trigger level” for future extraction works.



Waterfall Stream enters QEP next to SH1, flows west to join Whareroa Stream

A new pond area has been created adjacent to the new Western Depot office, from a wet paddock that had been retired. The volunteer restoration group is growing plants in the park nursery and will plant these out over the next couple of years.

All planting site preparation has been completed in readiness for the upcoming planting season beginning with the “Spade Aid” 5000 tree planting on 2 July.



US Marines and NZ Defence Force representatives at QEP for Memorial Day commemorations. Newly formed pond area in background.

The refurbished Marines Hut has been relocated to the park and was unveiled at the Marines Memorial Day 75th anniversary celebrations on 29 May. Many volunteer hours were invested by the Menz Shed team, recycling a lot of the original components as part of the refurbishment. The Kapiti US Marines Trust

developed and installed an interpretation panel near the new hut telling the story of the Marines occupation of what is now Queen Elizabeth Park.



The newly restored hut is lifted onto its footings; sponsorship from Fletcher companies supported the MenzShed restoration work and transport to the park.

4.5.4 Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

Road maintenance works have been completed around the park and slips and a washed out culvert on the Puketiro track have been fixed.

Poplar pole planting has been completed in Swampy Gully in conjunction with the Land Management team. Discussions are ongoing with Land Management, Biodiversity and ESci teams around the Swampy Gully wetland area to exclude cattle from the areas that are part of the Category 1 wetland as designated by the Proposed Natural Resources Plan.

Further downstream was the site of this year's Arbor Day planting, with around 150 children from Pauatahanui and Ngati Toa schools putting in around 1000 trees. We were very fortunate with the weather; everyone enjoyed the planting event, the sausages afterwards and it was good to see the schools taking more time to explore more of the park afterwards.

4.5.5 Belmont Regional Park

Specialist contractors have been addressing the undermining of the historic Woollen Mills Dam in the Korokoro Stream, caused by the May 2015 floods. Due to its age, and the lack of engineering drawings, the project was difficult to accurately plan and required more work than expected to reinforce the structure as water leaks destabilised the underside of the headwall. Despite these setbacks, the first concrete pour has been completed, and the team is now working on the repair of the spillway.



Contractors working underneath headwall to drill stabilising anchors ready for concrete pour; water diverted down spillway to enable repair, which will also provide for fish passage

Track and structure upgrades on the Korokoro Dam Loop track have been completed, with new alignments on the “Otonga” section and significant structure rationalisation throughout. The result is a far more resilient “roadend” track that provides well for the significant numbers visiting the dam, and gives access to outstanding natural features as well. Over the next few weeks we will connect the two sections near the dam, removing old steps and creating more user-friendly picnic areas.

Retirement fencing in the head of Speedy’s Stream has been completed ahead of the planting works that will be undertaken in June. Contractors will plant approximately 20,000 trees, which will be followed up with weed and pest control over the next three years.

All mitigation works associated with the Transmission Gully “Farm Hub” package have all now been completed. We continue to work closely with the TG project team to identify and confirm additional areas for project mitigation planting.

Consent for the new Dry Creek toilet has been granted and initial site works completed. The final installation of the toilet block and septic system is programmed for later in June.

An arborist’s inspection of the gum trees at the Dry Creek entrance found that several were diseased and recommended removal of all the trees. Surplus camping revenue enabled us to carry out this work very quickly; the value of that investment became evident as the work proceeded and several trees were found to have decaying centres. Now that these trees have been removed, the entry area will be landscaped and planted with native species.



Tree removal underway; all gums to left and right of entrance gate to go

4.5.6 Whitireia Park

Archaeological investigation works have been undertaken ahead of final consents being obtained to construct a carpark in the Pou area at Whitireia Park. This was overseen by the project archaeologist and a Ngati Toa monitor. Nothing of interest was discovered during the excavation works, and construction is expected to go ahead from September.



Test dig underway; no artefacts but a lot more topsoil than expected.

5. Climate Change

5.1 Electric Vehicles

In 2016 GWRC adopted an ‘electric vehicle first’ policy which prioritises the purchase of electric vehicles as vehicles come up for replacement.

The fleet currently contains two Mitsubishi Outlanders and one Nissan Leaf, and chargers are installed at Shed 39 and QE Park Kapiti.

Two additional Mitsubishi Outlanders and two Hyundai Ioniqs have recently been ordered, and chargers will be installed at the Masterton, Upper Hutt offices. We are investigating the ability to install two chargers at Walter st (subject to building owner approval).

5.2 Climate Change Assessment Report: Regional downscaling

The first draft of a report that provides high resolution climate change projections for the Wellington region has been received from NIWA and is currently undergoing review.

Once finalised, the projections¹ will be applicable across all GWRC departments and will provide an internally consistent resource that will inform climate change risk assessments for planning and decision making. The work progresses a number of information related actions set out in the Climate Change Strategy Implementation Plan.

The resource will also be used for community and stakeholder engagement, for example it can be applied at the Whaitua scale and will help people better understand which areas of these catchments and resources are under the greatest risk from the impacts of climate change.

6. Responses to public participation

22 March 2017

- Peter Fraser, an Economist, spoke to the Committee about Water Wairarapa. In particular, Peter raised concerns with the project around the potential for large scale dairy conversion and intensification, and the commercial aspects of the project which would make the cost of water unaffordable to farmers.

Officers acknowledge the concerns raised by Mr Fraser. It is agreed that the issue of affordability is a critical one for the project; however, to date, financial modelling which has been co-funded by Crown Irrigation Limited has indicated that the project is financially viable. It is accepted that this does need to be tested through assessing farmer demand, and this is a proposed pending stage of the project. Officers also note the concerns raised about large scale dairy intensification and conversions, and it is agreed that land use and land use change and the mix of land use options is critical to the viability of the project.

10 May 2017

- Jamie Falloon, Provincial President, Wairarapa Federated Farmers, gave a presentation about using catchment communities for implementation of

¹ The mid- and end-of-century projections are based on two IPCC Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) emissions scenarios, the moderate 4.5 scenario and the high scenario of 8.5. NIWA will also produce high resolution GIS layers.

the Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region and, in particular, the Ruamahanga Whaitua.

Officers are meeting with Jamie Falloon and the Ministry for the Environment to discuss what a trial of a catchment community approach looks like and how it links to Good Farming Practice/Good Management Practice. This meeting is scheduled for early June. The result may be a prototype test catchment.

- Michael Gunson, Surf Break Protection Society, gave a presentation requesting that GWRC investigate impacts of development activity on the natural character of the surf break at Lyall Bay.

Officers have been in contact with Wellington International Airport and the Surf Break Protection Society in the last few weeks, and issues are being progressed to have a joint meeting with all parties involved. It is anticipated this meeting will be within the next 3-4 weeks.

- Mike Roche spoke about a trial dredging operation to remove accumulated sediment from the Porirua Harbour. Rex Brady also spoke about a trial dredging operation to remove accumulated sediment from the Porirua Harbour, with particular emphasis on the impact sediment accumulation is having on boating safety.

Officers have been in contact with PCC staff (Keith Calder) and a report which has been reviewed by GWRC has been prepared for the Joint Harbour Committee. It is anticipated that feedback will be received from this process which will allow GWRC and PCC staff to look at what further work might be required around dredging, and that a joint proposal be developed between GWRC and PCC to more specifically investigate dredging options.

- Jim Mikoz, President of the Wellington Recreational Marine Fishers Association, spoke about the reclamation beside the Wellington Airport road.

Officers have been in contact with Wellington International Airport and the Surf Break Protection Society in the last few weeks, and issues are being progressed to have a joint meeting with all parties involved. It is anticipated this meeting will be within the next 3-4 weeks.

7. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

7.1 Engagement

Engagement on this matter is not necessary.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Nigel Corry
General Manager, Environment
Management

Wayne O'Donnell
General Manager,
Catchment Management

Luke Troy
General Manager,
Strategy