

Manager's Report, Resource Investigations

John Sherriff, Manager

November 1999

1. Resource Information

During the last six weeks only one special weather bulletin was received. This was received on 12 November and alerted us to heavy rainfall in Wellington City.

Two rainfall alarms were received during the last six weeks. These were:

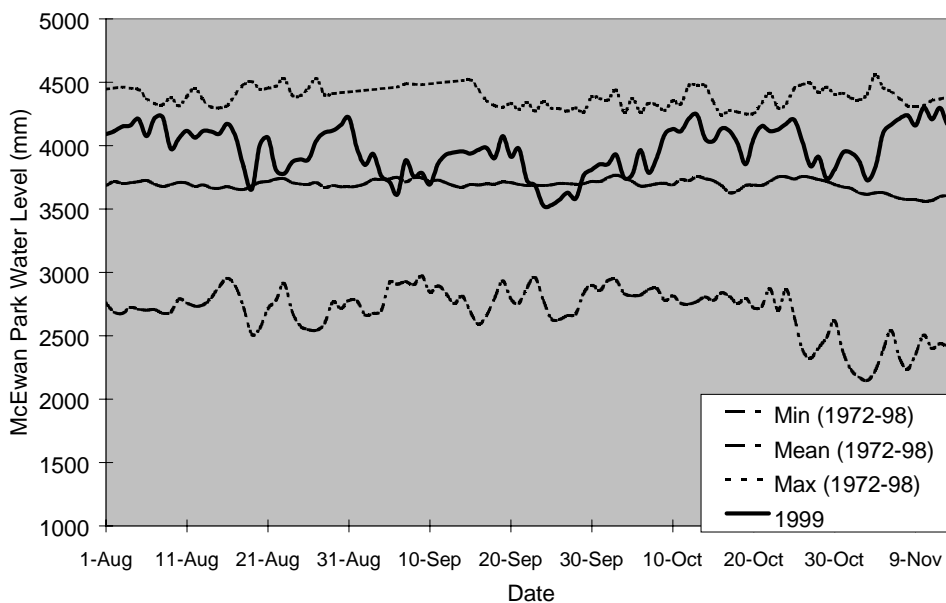
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| 24 October | Rainfall Alarm – VL, Warwicks |
| 10 – 11 November | Rainfall Alarms – Warwicks, Kapakapanui, Taungata & Porirua |

Staff are currently making arrangements to move the river flow recorder on the Waikanae River 200 metres upstream. In its present location, the record is affected by water abstracted for the Waikanae water treatment plant. The flow recorder will be re-located upstream of the point where water is taken.

2. Resource Analysis

2.1 Groundwater Levels

Groundwater Levels in the Waiwhetu Aquifer at McEwan Park have remained above average over the past month.



2.2 Moera Gravel Aquifer Bore

Work on the Moera Gravel Aquifer investigation bore has commenced. This work will help us to define the size and extent of the water resources available from this aquifer. This bore, located near the Ewen Bridge in Lower Hutt, will be about 150 metres deep. The project is expected to be completed in early January 2000.

2.3 Rainfall and River Flows

Recent rainfall events have broken the dry spell the Region has been experiencing. In a 15 hour period from early in the morning of 12 November over 60 millimetres of rain fell in Wellington City and in the Wainuiomata catchment. The Porirua Stream level rose sharply during this period but peaked before reaching alarm levels.

Rainfall across the Region throughout October ranged from 50% to 100% of average values. In recent years October and November have been the wettest months of the year, but 1999 seems to be an exception.....so far! As a consequence, river flows were low, around 50% to 75% of average values for October.

There has been a slight resurgence in the La Nina climate phenomenon. This is expected to bring below average rainfall, above average temperatures, and below average soil moisture and stream flows to the Region. Combined with the expected higher sunshine hours and less wind than normal, the summer is looking good for the masses but could potentially cause problems for agricultural and horticultural activities.

2.4 Freshwater Quality Report

The Annual Freshwater Quality Report is in the final stages of completion. It will be reported to the Committee at its next meeting.

3. Resource Quality

3.1 Pollution and Non-compliance Complaints

A summary of pollution complaints received over the past six weeks and our performance in responding to them will be reported to the Committee at the meeting.

3.2 Agricultural Chemicals

The recommendations of the Regional Hazardous Waste Liaison Group is the subject of a separate report to the Committee.

3.3 Another Pollution Prevention Brochure

A further brochure in our pollution prevention series has just been printed. This brochure addresses the issue of spray drift and stems from recent incidents within the Wellington Region. These brochures will be used by Pollution Response staff to inform people about appropriate measures to prevent spray drift.

3.4 **Quality Assurance**

We are currently developing quality assurance procedures for our incident response service. This work is being done so that we can extend the scope of our current ISO 9002 accreditation to include this element of our work. The scope extension will also include our consent management procedures. These steps are being taken to ensure that our responses are undertaken in a consistent and legally defensible manner.

The Department's quality systems will be subject to a major review in February next year.

4. **Staffing**

Gretchen Robertson has joined the Department in the role of Surface Water Quality Scientist. Gretchen has just finished a Bachelor of Science degree in ecology at Otago University.