

**Flood Protection
Strategy and Assets
Manager : Brendan Paul**

Report for Period Ending 21 January 2000

1. Waikanae River Floodplain Management [Graeme Campbell]

Implementation of the State Highway 1 to Maple Lane project has continued to be the main focus of attention over the last two months. The main river channel works are now 50 percent complete and rock supply for the remainder of the works approximately 75 percent complete. No substantive issues have arisen during construction and works are progressing to budget and programme. We have agreed with Transit New Zealand to undertake some repairs to their grade control weir immediately below State Highway 1 bridge, as part of the construction works. This work will be paid for separately by Transit but undertaken on their behalf by the Wellington Regional Council (WRC) design team and contractor.

We are still working with the 'Friends of the Waikanae River' Group to finalise their terms of reference (TOR) and working relationship with the WRC. The matter will be reported separately to the Landcare Committee for approval when the draft TOR is complete.

2. Otaki River Floodplain Management Plan [Graeme Campbell]

The last two months have been a particularly busy time on the Otaki River. Work has focused on construction of the Capital Improvements and the Flood Damage Repairs but other projects have also progressed very well. Construction is proceeding on:

- Chrystalls Stopbank
- Tidying up at Upper Rahui
- Delivery of rock to the Stresscrete site
- Reconstruction of the berms at Mangahanene and placement of rock protection.

Other flood damage repair works have been undertaken and are reported separately in Report 00.12.

Two small floods late last year caused considerable damage to the exposed berm at Mangahanene and undermined the stopbank. Repair works had been programmed for later this summer but the flood damage necessitated immediate repairs. Berm filling was completed just before Christmas and rock placement will be completed in January 2000. Because consents had been obtained, there was no need to carry out the work under emergency provisions.

As with the Waikanae River, we are working with the 'Friends of the Otaki River' Group to finalise their TOR and working relationship with the WRC. The matter will also be reported separately to Landcare for approval when the draft Terms of Reference are complete.

2.1 **Chrystalls Stopbank Upgrade [Malcolm Abernethy]**

The contract for construction of the new stopbank was let to Gary Holland Earthmoving Ltd on 9 December 1999. Construction started on the same date with completion scheduled for 6 March 2000.

Good progress has been made up to mid January 2000, with the Contractor taking full advantage of the fine weather. Construction of the gravel core has progressed from the downstream end, through the Williams property up to the existing stopbank on the Ramsbottom property. Work has also commenced stripping topsoil on the Ramsbottom property upstream of the existing stopbank.

The project is on programme and within budget as reported to the Landcare Committee meeting on 23 November 1999 (Report PE 99.690).

3. **Hutt River Floodplain Management (HRFMP) [Daya Atapattu]**

HRFMP investigations are on schedule to be completed by June 2000, though like the "design standard", the programme is extremely tight and compressed. The target date for completing the plan is June 2001.

3.1 **Non-structural Measures**

Investigations for developing appropriate non-structural measures for the upper catchment, floodplain and river corridor are proceeding. The Hutt River Floodplain Management Advisory Committee (HRFMAC) will consider them at a workshop in mid March 2000, before endorsing them for public consultation.

3.2 **Upper Catchment**

Consultants are reviewing the current planning provisions and policies in district and regional plans to determine their adequacy and whether improvements can be made to the way land is managed in the upper catchment. The target date for completing these investigations is February 2000.

3.3 **River Corridor**

Draft guidelines and hazard plans for the River Corridor are complete. They will be further reviewed, incorporating Hutt City and Upper Hutt City Council officers' comments before being presented at the HRFMAC workshop in March.

3.4 Floodplain

Draft maps that show the areas liable to flooding in the Hutt Valley are complete. A list of regulatory and non-regulatory land use methods, which can be applied to the Hutt floodplain, is complete. Draft hazard maps with corresponding land use options will be ready for an HRFMAC workshop in March.

3.5 Emergency Management

The WRC emergency management team, together with Hutt City and Upper Hutt City Council officers, are reviewing the current Flood Emergency Procedures, to determine where improvements are required. A “future directions” report will be prepared for the March 2000 workshop.

3.6 Environmental Strategy

Public consultation on objectives and options for the Environmental Strategy is complete. The public preference is for the “linear park” option. Consultants are proceeding with concept designs for this option. Draft guidelines and the report are also being prepared. The target date for completion of the draft Environmental Strategy is April 2000.

3.7 Local Area Investigations

Landcare Committee at its meeting on 12 October 1999 endorsed further investigations on “local area” Design Standard modifications. These investigations were completed in December 1999. The outcomes will be reported to HRFMAC on 9 March 2000.

4. Asset Management Plans [Malcolm Abernethy]

The generic base plan for the “Western Rivers Asset Management Plan” continues to be reviewed and refined before being submitted to Audit NZ for approval. The specification for the Data Management System is complete with work progressing well on development of the database system.

Asset maintenance requirements, based on the Zero Based Maintenance estimates presented to the Landcare Committee, are compiled for each of the five rivers (Hutt, Otaki, Waikanae and Wainuiomata Rivers and the Porirua Stream). The data details the annual and cyclical asset maintenance requirements, for inclusion in each river specific Asset Management Plan.

The Hutt and Otaki river-specific Asset Management Plans will be available for internal review by the end of January 2000.

Work will continue on the review of the Asset Valuation Methodology, the standard for valuing assets on each river system. Asset Management Plan preparation is currently four weeks behind programme, however, this will be made up by the end of February 2000.

5. **Wainuiomata Flood Hazard Assessment [Phillip Purves/Paul Ollett]**

The channel management and river morphology component of the flood hazard study has been scoped. Work to date has involved identification of channel movement and migration, over the period of available aerial photography, since 1941. The intention is to define a management “corridor” for the river that will not unduly impinge on the natural river processes. An exception is the urban area where land within the current flood defences must be maintained.

6. **Planning and Development Services [Phillip Purves]**

Written requests for information or advice attended to during December 1999:

	<u>December</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Requests brought forward	19	14
Additional requests received	36	116
Responses provided	38	113
Outstanding requests	17	17

Following the Upper Hutt City Council hearings for the “St Patrick’s College Estate area of the Special Activity Zone of the Proposed District Plan”, Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) advertised the application by ProMall Ltd for the development of a regional shopping and entertainment centre on the St Patrick’s College land. The WRC opposed the 100 year return period flood protection standard proposed for the development, on the basis that it was inappropriate for the scale of the development and was inconsistent with the design flood protection standard being considered for the Hutt Valley, through the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan process.

The UHCC has now released its decision on the ProMall application and has only required that the proposed building be free from inundation in a 100 year return period flood. This standard is significantly lower than the risk refined 2300 cumec standard proposed by the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan Advisory Committee, on which the UHCC has three elected representatives. The management decision that must now be made is, whether the WRC should appeal the UHCC decision, in regard to the floodplain management principles that this decision has apparently ignored.

7. **Manager’s Comment**

As Councillors grapple with the demands of our Long-term Financial Strategy (LTFS) along with other Council imperatives, they can be assured that work “at the coal-face” is making acceptable progress. Progress has been achieved on a wide variety of fronts with input coming to the various projects from our relatively complex staff “matrix”. The demands of this situation dictate that all completed work must be to a high standard first time up and need minimum review, requiring all staff (including our younger members) to accept higher levels of responsibility.

The construction projects are well set up with all projects either being built, ready to call tenders, or with designs well advanced. All are well placed to meet completion targets. The planning projects (HRFMP and Wainuiomata) are making good progress, the Hutt being particularly demanding due to the compressed programme. Asset Management has lost some momentum and this ground will need to be recovered in February and March.

Our focus for the coming period will be to maintain progress on all of the ongoing projects. Recruitment to fill the positions left vacant after the departure of Mark Healey and Paula Williams, along with the vacant engineering/technical officer position, will commence shortly.

BRENDAN PAUL
Manager, Flood Protection (Strategy and Assets)

**Flood Protection
Operations
Manager : Geoff Dick**

Report for Period Ending 21 January 2000

Flood Protection Operations and Maintenance [Geoff Dick]

1. Hutt River

Construction of the Manor Park Golf Course flood repairs is complete. The Golf Club is now advertising for clean fill to reconstruct the practice fairway behind the completed bank edge protection works. Final costs are expected to total about \$250,000 or \$50,000 under the approved budget. Operations staff attended a lunch at the Golf Club to celebrate the completion of the works. The Club is very happy with the completed works and the savings on budget.

Cross-blading opposite Gibbons Street, Upper Hutt, is complete. The work has halted erosion into the Totara Park horse paddocks and corrected the over-exaggerated meander pattern at this location. Many Upper Hutt residents have been concerned about the apparent “build-up” of gravel at this location and the consequent impacts on flood levels and erosion. The recently completed works should be a good step to allay some of the concerns. Some further work is planned for the autumn.

Tender documents have been prepared and tenders are being called for the demolition of the Assembly of God’s former administration building at Ewen. The building is partly located on Council land and will be demolished in accordance with the property agreement reached as part of the Ewen Floodway Project.

A further order has been placed for the supply of 11,580 tonnes of rock rip-rap for the Block Road improvements, the Owen Street and Bridge Road flood damage repairs and general maintenance works in the Hutt River. The timing of the construction of the Block Road and Owen Street works is critically linked to this rock supply.

The Hutt River berms only required their usual clean up after the Christmas/New Year holiday break. Millennium celebrations did not cause any particular problems on the Hutt River or other watercourses managed by the Flood Protection Group.

2. **Hutt River Mouth**

Winstone Aggregates Ltd have commenced dumping the surplus stone and shells from the Hutt mouth dredging operation at the approved off-shore site. No difficulties with the operation have arisen so far. Now that the Hutt River mouth dredging consents are in place, work has recommenced to finalise a contract with Winstone Aggregates for the remaining term of the consents.

3. **Kapiti Rivers**

The Mangahenene Island bank edge improvements on the Otaki River are now well in progress. A decision was made prior to Christmas that ongoing erosion into the stopbank was unacceptable. A contract was subsequently let to Rick Goodman & Sons Ltd to shift close to 30,000 cubic metres of gravel to realign the river and reconstruct the berm and stopbank. The work was completed very successfully prior to the Christmas break. The placement of 3,200 tonnes of rock to protect the newly reformed bank edge is underway. Operations staff are directly managing this work.

As part of the Mangahene Island work, a diversion cut was constructed opposite the Gas Line erosion on the south bank of the river. This erosion was also threatening the stopbank. The combination of the cut and some filling work, completed between Christmas and the New Year, has temporarily secured the location and prepared the site for the permanent rock protection works. These will proceed immediately on completion of the Mangahenene Island rock works.

Construction of the Upper Rahui edge protection works is essentially complete. The section of trench planting at the upstream end of the project was completed prior to Christmas. The trees were stripped from the adjacent former berm to make the underlying river silt available for the Chrystalls Bend stopbank.

Gravel extraction at Upper Rahui is on hold. Winstone Aggregates Ltd are currently extracting downstream of the bridges. This is aimed to avoid conflicts on the road during construction of the new Chrystalls stopbank and the extraction is helping to alleviate bank edge erosion in the lower river. At the end of November 1999, Winstone Aggregates had extracted 48,244 cubic metres of the proposed 120,000 cubic metres from Upper Rahui.

A major diversion cut was completed adjacent to the north bank bluffs at Empson's to halt the ongoing erosion at this point in the river. Some further bulldozer work will be completed shortly to help cement the diversion in place. The budget for the job is \$38,000. The work is in no way permanent but is expected to provide significant erosion benefits for at least 12 months, potentially substantially longer.

A number of large logs were removed from the Waikanae estuary during the period.

4. Watercourses

Manual clearing of aquatic weeds in the Waiwhetu Stream is currently in progress. Two teams of periodic detention workers are undertaking the work. If successful, this scheme will result in the weed clearing being undertaken on a continual basis (rather than annual or biannual clearing contracts) and at minimal cost to the Council. Council costs include supplying tools, protective clothing and removing the cleared weeds. The Waiwhetu Marae was contracted for a week over Christmas to deal with a couple of particularly choked sections of the stream through Te Whiti Park.

The Waitohu Stream mouth was cut immediately prior to Christmas. The mouth was cut because it had migrated a long way to the south and eroding foredunes adjacent to Moana Street. This cut, the second this financial year, has successfully established. Follow up meetings are planned with adjacent residents and landowners to try and agree on a long term management strategy for the mouth.

Some flooding complaints were received from residents living adjacent to the Mangapouri Stream, Otaki, following a flood event on Sunday 19 December 1999. The stream was checked for blockages and staff contacted the affected residents. Further follow up work is currently in progress. A significant flood also occurred in the Waitohu Stream from the same isolated rain event. The stream broke its banks in Whakapua Farms and, reportedly, at Convent Road. Some immediate remedial works were completed and further follow up work will be undertaken over the summer.

5. Work for Others

Mabey Road staff have largely completed the installation of a new recorder tower and access stairs on the Waikanae River. This new site is several hundred metres upstream of the old water level recorder site and makes use of a natural rock outcrop. Some further finishing work and an engineer's certification is required to complete this significant project.

6. Gravel Extraction

Gravel extraction figures for the year to 30 November 1999 are set out below.

River	Area	Contractor	Period Year 1999/2000 (cubic metres)		Year 1998/1999 (cubic metres)
			Period	Year	Full Year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	6,223	20,139	42,630
	River	Winstones	Nil	Nil	2,967
Otaki	River	Winstones	Nil	2,112	15,854
	Upper Rahui	Winstones	5,820	27,790	20,454
Waikanae	River	Winstones	Nil	Nil	Nil
TOTALS			16,738	50,041	81,905

7. **Manager's Comment**

The much appreciated Christmas break is now a fading memory and it's back into the hurly burly of completing the flood repairs, the maintenance programme, preparing business plans, obtaining resource consents for work, dealing with queries and complaints, and the general work programme. There is much to do between now and the end of June so it will be very much a case of sleeves rolled up and into it!

GEOFF DICK
Manager, Flood Protection (Operations)

Regional Parks (Strategy & Marketing)

Manager : Susan Edwards

Report for Period Ending 21 January 2000

1. Manager's Comments (Susan Edwards)

Cannons Creek and Landcorp Farming Limited

We have arranged to meet the Regional Manager for Landcorp Farming Limited in early March to discuss a number of issues impacting on both organisations in relation to Belmont Regional Park.

One such issue is the request from the Cannons Creek Valley Protection Association to undertake revegetation work on Landcorp's land within the Park and to declare a small portion of the land Reserve (as reported in my last Manager's Report).

Legal Roads within Belmont Regional Park

The Hutt City Council has been requested by a motorised recreation user to open the legal roads in the Park for motorised recreation. Many of these roads are formed as tracks and used by walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers (also for park and farm management purposes). Others are unformed paper roads. The legal roads date from the late 1800s and early 1900s.

The Belmont Regional Park Management Plan does not allow motorised recreation within the Park. Such use would severely detract from the enjoyment of other Park users. Therefore, I have written to the Hutt City Council requesting that they formally stop the legal roads and declare them as walkways under the Walkways Act.

Long-term Financial Strategy and Business Plan

Work has continued on the financial modelling of projects requested by Councillors to be included in the LTFS and Business Plan. This has involved a significant amount of my time and that of members within the Strategy and Marketing Team. The Business Plan has largely been rewritten to reflect the direction of this Council. The Business Plan will be presented to you later in February.

2. **Resource Management and Planning Issues (Anne Manley, Graham Laws & Ross Jackson)**

State Highway Upgrades

State Highway 1 - MacKays Crossing

Regional Parks staff have continued working with Transit New Zealand's consultants on the State Highway 1 upgrade affecting Queen Elizabeth Park.

The new alignment of the highway is likely to require an overbridge at MacKays Crossing. This poses difficulties providing a satisfactory entrance into Queen Elizabeth Park. We are working with Transit New Zealand on resolving the entrance problem. They have identified three options which we are currently commenting on.

Overall we are pleased with the new alignment proposal as it has less impacts on the Park than earlier options.

State Highway 58 - Haywards Hill

We are continuing to work with Transit New Zealand's consultants on this project to minimise impacts on the Dry Creek portion of Belmont Regional Park.

State Highway 2 - Rimutaka Hill

The upgrade of State Highway 2 along the Rimutaka Hill Section is now nearing completion of the planning stages. We are generally pleased with the outcome of this project. The upgrade of the existing alignment will have significantly less impact on Kaitoke Regional Park than the earlier proposal to realign the highway to the north-west of the Te Marua Lakes.

There will be some impacts on the Te Marua end of the Park, particularly in the vicinity of Te Marua bush and the escarpments between the existing highway and the water supply lakes. However, Consent conditions should minimise these impacts.

Asset Management Planning

Asset Management Planning is progressing. Work has been undertaken on:

- collecting and collating the remaining asset data;
- finalising development of the asset database;
- mapping all assets on GIS;
- refining costings for inclusion in the Long-term Financial Strategy process.

We are still waiting to hear back from Audit New Zealand on the Draft Asset Management Plan we presented to the Landcare Committee at the October meeting.

Promotion Programme and Events

During November and December several promotional advertisements and articles were put in newspapers and publications in the Wellington Region to attract visitors to the Regional Parks, including:

- “A place of beauty and tranquillity” - article on Battle Hill by ranger John Bissell, in the Independent Herald and Capital Times Holiday Guide;
- Advertisements on Regional Parks, in Capital Times Holiday Guide and Outdoor Recreation feature;
- Advertisements on Regional Parks, in *Action Wellington 2000* book available in bookshops;
- Advertisements on Regional Parks, in City Voice.

In addition, the Parks and forests featured in the Dominion’s “Getting Away” series and the Evening Posts “Take a Hike” series.

We have received a steady stream of requests for brochures and other information on the parks and forests and places to visit to undertake various recreational activities.

Work is well underway on the annual brochure updating and reprinting programme with several brochures about to be reprinted.

We have been working with Sport Wellington and the Hutt City Council on the launch of the first Regional Council KiwiWalk during the River Festival on 12 February. We hope that Councillors will attend the launch.

Marketing Strategy and Concession Policy Review

The Landcare Committee requested that we review the Commercial Recreational Activities and Concession Policy (Report 99.481). We are currently preparing a brief to put the majority of this project out to consultants.

In addition to the concession policy review, we are required to prepare a marketing strategy by June this year. We believe there are strong links between these two projects and hope that one consultant may be able to do both projects. A brief is also being prepared for the marketing strategy.

We will require that the consultants work closely with the Regional Parks team while undertaking the work.

Rewanui Bush - Wairarapa

The Wairarapa Division has asked us to prepare a *Signature* and a report on the potential value of the Rewanui Bush property in the Wairarapa as a Regional Park. Graham Laws and Anne Manley visited the site with the Wairarapa Division staff. A *Signature* values assessment and a report have been prepared. However, information on the heritage values of the land is scarce, so local iwi have been approached to provide any information that may add value to our assessment.

When that information is supplied, we will report to both the Landcare and Rural and Wairarapa Committees.

Concession Applications

November, December and January have been busy months for filming. We have had a number of applications to film television programmes and advertisements in the parks and forests. Areas used have been:

- Queen Elizabeth Park
- Kaitoke Regional Park
- Akatarawa Forest
- Belmont Regional Park
- Hutt River Trail

All requests to use the parks and forests have been permitted. However, one company that wished to use the Wainuiomata Catchment was accommodated elsewhere, although the alternative site did not meet their needs as well.

Filming requests involve a lot of staff time to process. Requests are usually made only a few days before filming commences. This means officers have to drop whatever they are doing to process the application in time.

Millennium Tree Planting Proposals

Staff have made applications to the New Zealand Millennium Office for funding assistance for the following two projects:

- (1) Battle Hill Farm Forest Park - Community Tree Planting Proposal;
- (2) Kaitoke Regional Park - Councillors Totara Grove Proposal.

Results of the grant application will not be known till April.

Two letter of support for each project have been received. Staff are continuing to work on details of the Battle Hill proposal with a Porirua based steering group and will report back to the Committee in May.

SUSAN EDWARDS
Manager, Regional Parks (Strategy & Marketing)

Regional Parks (Operations) Department

Manager: Bruce Andrell

Report for Period Ending 21 January 1999

1. Manager's Comments

Staff Recruitments

We have been busy recruiting two new appointments to the Rangers team, during the period.

A new position, the Eastern Mobile Ranger, has been created to assist with the seven day service for Kaitoke Regional Park and the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchments. The position replaces a seasonal Ranger position and a 0.5 full-time equivalent relief ranging position, required for the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo ranging contract with the Water Group. Gareth Cooper has transferred to this new role from Queen Elizabeth Park.

Nola Urquhart has replaced Gareth at Queen Elizabeth Park. Nola was previously the Council's Pest Plants Officer on the Kapiti Coast.

New Zealand Recreation Association Conference

Three Rangers and the Construction Team Leader attended the NZRA Conference in Auckland, on 7-9 November. They found the conference content stimulating and useful to draw on for managing their Parks.

New Year's Eve Millennium Celebrations

The New Year's Eve was very quiet and provided less problems than last year. This is largely attributed to: careful vetting and briefing of groups, campers and visitors prior to the event, evening showers dampening down the Parks and their campers; and a mixed family composition of Parks and forests visitors.

I would like to thank the Ranger team for working over New Year's Eve. Most staff, including myself, went off duty between 2.00 and 3.00am New Year's Day.

2. **Battle Hill Farm Forest Park (John Bissell)**

Weather affected Park use during the period with rain on most weekends in November and variable conditions in December. Significant Park activity included:

- Eight school visits with interpretative talks from the Ranger
- Pony club events and practise days - a number were rained off in November
- One school holiday programme visit
- camping picked up between the Christmas and New Year period, and
- An elm tree removed from the woolshed yard; rotten and a safety concern.

3. **Belmont Regional Park (Chris Wootton)**

Chris has been very busy during the period. Park activities included:

- Assisting the IHC annual fun run in late November. A successful event despite the wet weather; 250 competitors with proceeds going to the IHC.
- Re-opening of Zone 3, Waitangirua Farm, at the beginning of November. It had been closed for lambing since September.
- Filming of the Ivanhoe series at Dry Creek.
- Liaising with Strategy and Marketing and interested parties about State Highway 58 realignment, Hutt City Council's proposed sale of the Kilmister Block, and the Cannons Creek Residents Group.
- Field trip from Chilton St James School to Dry Creek and Korokoro Valley.
- Conservation Corps assisting with track maintenance at Cannons Creek.
- Volunteers maintaining possum bait stations at Oakley Street.
- Meeting Biosecurity staff to assess possum control in the Cannons Creek bush remnant and rabbit control on Waitangirua farm areas.
- Facilitating an application, via the Korokoro Valley Restoration Group, to set-up a revegetation plot with the Hutt Valley polytech in the Korokoro Valley floor.
- Facilitating an induction tour for Wellington City Council staff to discuss common property issues and access from WCC walkways to the Horokiwi/Belmont trig area.

4. **East Harbour Regional Park (Chris Wootton)**

Notable activity during the period includes:

- Installing joint Forest and Bird and WRC interpretation signage in front of the Lake Kohangapiripiri.
- Placing stoat traps around a falcon nest site in the Gollins Valley area. The traps will be maintained by local volunteers from the MIRO group.
- Niwa have been using the buildings at Baring Head while carrying out a meteorological study.

5. **Kaitoke Regional Park (Matt Ballantine)**

Kaitoke has entered its busy summer period. Park use was affected by variable and wet weather conditions. Camping revenue is not expected to reach budget targets and will be forecast down at the Six Month Review. Significant activity during the period includes:

- Commencing construction of the new Vodaphone cell site on the hill north of the campground.
- During the annual bird monitoring survey, we were lucky enough to locate a falcon nesting site in the Pakuratahi Forks area. We will monitor it.
- Moving the Te Marua entrance to the ridge track north to the new car park area at the road end. This has been necessary due to the removal of the Benges Creek bridge after damage by a wind fall tree. The new location is easier to find and provides a more logical location for the start of the track.
- Renewing a boundary fence on the Te Marua Pony Club's lease area.
- Water supply problems at the Pakuratahi Forks has proved a challenge to fix. We may need to replace the water pump in the near future.
- The school holidays have brought the usual behavioural problems. Matt has responded to inappropriate use of vehicles, theft of money from the BBQs, minor disputes and assaults between campers, puppies being dumped in the Park and car bodies and rubbish dumping.

6. **Hutt Water Collection Area (Matt Ballantine)**

Little activity recorded for the Hutt Water Collection Area for the period. Sixteen hunting permits have been issued. A patrol roster, including staff volunteers, operates for the summer period. All the structures and signage are in good order.

7. **Queen Elizabeth Park (Blair Ewington and Nola Urquhart)**

Blair has been acting Ranger, Queen Elizabeth Park while Nola was recruited and inducted as the new Ranger. Blair has been invaluable in ensuring continuity of the ranger service during this transition period.

Some projects have been delayed until Nola finds her feet in the role.

Notable events on the Park during the period include:

- Forest and Bird and Kapiti Environment Action assisted with maintaining new plantings in the wetland and bush remnant.
- The Paekakariki entrance playground closed following a safety audit. We are obtaining an assessment on what is required to make it comply with the Australiasian standards AS/NZS 4422:1996 and AS/NZS 4486.1 1997; assessment report due later this month. We have experienced some resistance to closing the playground despite informing the local Paekakariki consultation representatives. Eight closure signs have been vandalised or removed in eight weeks.

8. **Pakuratahi and Akatarawa Forests (Dean Hearfield)**

The forests have been relatively quiet during the period; normally busier in spring and autumn, either side of the school holidays.

There has been one vehicle accident in Tunnel Gully; the driver charged with reckless driving.

9. **Maintenance Management (Dean Munn)**

All priority one maintenance standards were met during the period except for a vandalised sign in Kaitoke Regional Park in November. The construction team was unable to repair the sign due to committing to bridge safety monitoring.

No occupational health and safety issues were observed or reported except for the dangerous tree removed from Battle Hill, and the Paekakariki playground at Queen Elizabeth Park.

10. **Visitor Activities**

Park visitation has been affected by the weather. November was wet particularly on the weekends, and December was variable. In comparison last year had extremely good weather, sunny and windless, resulting in very high visitation at Queen Elizabeth and Kaitoke Regional Parks.

See attached visitor data schedule.

Natural Forestry Department
Manager : Geoff Cameron
Report for Period Ending 22 January 2000

1. Forest Operations (Robin Blake/Geoff Cameron)

Animal Pest Control

I have been working with Biosecurity Department staff to plan the major possum control work due in April/May. The area to be treated is the balance of Kaitoke Regional Park not covered in the bovine tb operation last year, and the eastern half of the Akatarawa Saddle block - about 3,000 hectares. The normal process for gaining approval for the job has begun, and letters to adjoining neighbours will be sent shortly. We are following the same procedure that has been used by Biosecurity and ourselves over the last five years, and is fully accepted by the approving authorities.

Pest Plant Control

I prepared a contract document for pest plant control on Council lands, and had it peer reviewed by the Biosecurity Department's pest plants officers. We are using this document for contracts on the Old Mans Beard control programme, and Buddleia spraying in the Mount Climie area.

I have been involved with the Park Rangers in planning the spraying programme for pampas and blackberry at Queen Elizabeth Park, and thinking about a revegetation programme to follow.

Community Connections

We have variety of integrated pest control programmes underway at present which involve community groups. Efforts involving "conservation" funding this period are:

- possum control at Cannons Creek bush
- possum and mustelid control at Battle Hill
- a successful *Tradescantia* control trial at Te Marua Bush
- assistance with the MIRO project in East Harbour

Forest Health Survey

I have continued with efforts to finalise a new forest health survey system and contract with Forest Research Limited, through further detailed discussions with Forest Research staff and supply of detailed maps of our areas. We are still on target to undertake the first forest health survey under the new regime in April.

Endangered Species Protection

The protection of the endangered plant species *Brachyglottis kirkii*, previously reported, advanced another stage during the period. Robin Blake collected seeds in mid-December and distributed them to Otari and Percys Reserve nurseries. This work, involving the Botanical Society, has been reported to DoC as the agency responsible for monitoring endangered species. The seedlings raised will be planted out in pre-selected areas to enhance the re-establishment of this species.

2. Catchment Operations (Robin Blake/Geoff Cameron)

Animal Pest Control

I worked with Water Group Managers to produce a contract document for goat culling in the Wainuiomata Catchment, and we agreed on a tender process. The tender was advertised in early December and six tenderers submitted prices for the work. A preferred tenderer was selected on the basis of required attributes.

Vegetation Assessment

Robin Blake has worked with Park Rangers Scott Farrell and Gareth Cooper to re-measure the formal vegetation plots in the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo Catchments. Of the eight plots planned for remeasurement this summer, five were completed and one partially completed at the end of the period. The task will be finished by mid February, weather permitting. Robin has recorded many more seedlings than were present three years ago - most likely the result of the recent possum control operation. This work will be audited by Landcare Research in April, before the data is entered onto the national database.

The photo points associated with, but outside, the vegetation plots have been re-photographed.

Hunter Effort - Hutt Catchment

Robin Blake and Matt Ballantine have analysed kill returns required as part of the hunting permit system for the Hutt Catchment. For the six months ended December, 35 permits were issued but only one deer and four goats reported shot (three goats were shot by the Ranger). It is most unlikely that this is a true reflection of the hunters effort. It is disappointing to note that hunters are not co-operating by recording their hunting successes, and a positive campaign to encourage them to do so will be underway shortly.

3. Rural Fire Control (Geoff Cameron)

WRC Rural Fire District

I have managed the RFD disestablishment consultation process, with the following activities since the last Landcare Committee meeting:

- I sent copies of the draft proposal and draft advertisement, together with a letter from the Council Chairman, to Mayors of affected local authorities. The offer to discuss the issue was repeated. We explained the timetable we were working to.
- I also sent a copy of the draft proposal to the National Rural Fire Officer to check that it was in keeping with the intent of the Forest and Rural Fires Act. He replied that it provided all the information necessary.
- Councillor Macaskill and I attended a meeting of the Upper Hutt City Council Policy and Finance Committee. We made individual presentations to the Committee and answered some detailed questions. The Upper Hutt Councillors did not support their Officers' recommendation to oppose the WRC move.
- We received a letter of support from Mayor Terris of Lower Hutt City.
- I arranged for the proposal to be advertised once before Christmas, then twice in January. Advertisements were placed in the Dominion and Evening Post, and also in the Hutt News, Upper Hutt Leader and the Kapiti Coast Community paper. This level of advertising exceeds the minimum levels defined in Section 5 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act, and has given members of the public ample notification of the proposal to disestablishment the RFD.
- As I received no comments on the draft proposal from affected local authorities, I prepared the final proposal and sent it to all affected local authorities for public display. It was also made available to the public at the WRC offices in Wellington, Upper Hutt and Masterton.
- I sent copies to the Forest Owners Association, Federated Farmers and the Farm Forestry Association. The Makara Community Board (who aren't affected) requested a copy and were sent one.
- I have discussed the issue with Forest Owners, Federated Farmers and Farm Forestry executives who now fully understand our position and are comfortable with it.

The last advertisement appeared on Saturday, 22 January, and submissions close with the NRFA on 19 February. They hear any submissions, and the WRC case, after that date. The final decision will be gazetted in time for the new fire season.

Millennium Celebrations

As I indicated in the last Councillors Bulletin before Christmas, weather conditions through December weren't severe enough to justify a total fire ban throughout the rural areas of the Region. A number of permits were issued for New Year bonfires in safe places.

On New Years Eve night, I helped set up the regional rural fire Incident Control Point at Raroa Park. We had representatives from DoC, Wellington City and the Fire Service involved. Helipro moved all their Wellington based helicopters to the site, and we had aerial patrols over the likely trouble spots from 9.00 pm - 2.30 am, when it started to rain. We reconvened the next evening but again it was good fire controllers weather, i.e., wet.

I am pleased to reported that the celebrations went off without any need to involve the rural fire resources. The detailed planning that went into the evenings preparedness is not lost - we have an excellent model to follow if events in future require it.

Our communications systems - Fire Service radios, the Simoco Incident Ground radios and Fleetlink radios - all worked well. Cellphones, like most others, were the subject of "system overloaded" messages just after midnight.

Fire Training

Dean Hearfield has taken up the challenge of training Parks Operations staff to a standard that will enable them to be assessed for NZQA credits in rural fire control. Several training sessions have been held this period. The intention is for Landcare staff to be able to support volunteer crews or DoC staff without the fire boss worrying about skill levels or health and safety issues. Our people will know what to do, and so can take an active role in asset protection and emergency management.

4. Management Issues (Geoff Cameron)

Environmental Management System

This Council has been committed to implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS) since the General Manager signed environmental policies into effect in 1997. An EMS for Landcare has been programmed for development over the next two years. I have spent time this period scoping what is required for a Parks and Forests EMS so that we can have a process ready to go when the budget is approved. We already have much of what will be required; we may need to reorganise our information systems and management procedures to fit into an ISO framework.

Rimutaka Summit Toilets

Our contractors were kept busy during the period dealing with incomprehensible acts of vandalism to the toilets. The septic tank system is well maintained and functioned well over the period.

There was progress with the wind turbine in January. The company which purchased the right to supply electricity to customers at the Summit finally installed the actual propeller at the top of the pole, and the system is now generating power, much to everyone's relief. However, the turbine is only temporary and a bigger blade, to enable more power generation, is due for installation "shortly".