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## **Report 01.202**

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Report to the Landcare Committee  
From Geoff Dick, Manager, Flood Protection (Operations)

### **Kapiti Minor Watercourses – Status Report**

#### **1. Purpose**

To present to the Committee the key issues relating to the Council's management of Kapiti minor watercourses, and to recommend a management review of these watercourses.

#### **2. Background**

Report 00.152 to the 23 March 2000 Landcare Committee meeting advised of issues arising with the management of the Waitohu Stream and advised that a review of Council's management policy was now appropriate.

At the time, a number of stakeholders on the Waitohu and Mangaone Streams were questioning this Council's management regime and policy, including whether maintenance budgets were adequate. At least one submission to the Council's annual plan raised these issues.

The Regional Council manages 13 separate minor watercourses on the Kapiti Coast. These watercourses range from rural drains to streams, such as the Waitohu which poses a significant flood and erosion risk to adjacent properties.

Kapiti Coast watercourse maintenance mostly involves clearing weeds and trees to maintain a clear waterway, over a total stream length of about 42 kilometres. On the upper Waitohu Stream more intensive work including willow planting, erosion repairs and gravel management is undertaken. The total maintenance budget for Kapiti watercourses is \$59,000 per annum.

### 3. **1991 Kapiti Coast Watercourses Agreement**

The Regional Council assumed its flood protection responsibility in the Kapiti Coast area from the Manawatu Catchment Board (MCB) in November 1989 following local government reform. Key responsibilities included management of the Otaki and Waikanae Rivers' flood schemes. This Council also assumed responsibility for the administration and maintenance of a number of minor watercourses.

Soon after assuming this responsibility, it became apparent that some rationalisation was required for the management of minor streams and drains on the coast. Accordingly, Regional Council officers entered into discussions with Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) officers to agree which watercourses would continue to be managed by the Regional Council and which should be managed by KCDC. It was considered that KCDC should manage streams which were not of "regional significance", or that were largely storm water drains.

The result of this work was the 1991 Kapiti Coast Watercourses Agreement; subsequently adopted by the Regional Council (Report 91.367). Under this agreement, a number of watercourses previously managed by the MCB were "handed back" to KCDC. The remaining watercourses, now managed by the Regional Council, are shown in **Attachment 1**.

The 1991 Agreement allowed for further rationalisation after completing the Otaki and Waikanae Floodplain Management Plans. In particular, the Waimeha, Ngatoko, Rangiuru and Mangapouri Streams could be transferred to KCDC by mutual agreement.

### 4. **Management Issues**

Much of the maintenance work in Kapiti watercourses stems from policies set by the MCB. These policies were typically last reviewed 15 or more years ago. Since then, land uses have changed. Many large farms have been broken up into lifestyle blocks, and landowners adjacent to streams now may have no understanding of what work is undertaken by the Regional Council, and why.

Management issues include:

- In-fill housing development pressure on the Waimeha Stream maintenance easement.
- Increasing access difficulties for maintenance following lifestyle block subdivision adjacent to the Ngatotara drain, and potentially the Pukenamu drain.
- Service level expectations e.g. on the Waitohu and Mangaone Streams.
- An increasing community interest in the ecological and landscape values of the Waitohu Stream, which is often at odds with traditional management practices.

The specific issues for each stream are supplied in **Attachment 2**.

Most of the above issues will only be resolved by a stream by stream management review with appropriate consultation. We will also need to consider future land uses. For example, in the Te Horo area dairy farms are increasingly being sold and subdivided for lifestyle blocks. Te Horo is also seen as a location for future urban development on the Kapiti Coast.

The outcomes of a stream review are likely to fall into one of the following broad options:

- Retain the status quo.
- Change the service levels; this may require a new scheme plan and may have cost implications.
- Transfer management responsibilities to KCDC.
- Transfer management responsibilities to landowners.

## 5. Funding Practices

A review of current funding practices for maintenance of minor watercourses may need to follow the review of each watercourse group as proposed later.

### *Some History*

The Manawatu Catchment Board funded its maintenance and improvement works from:

- ‘Classified’ (benefit classification) rating schemes using its rating powers under the Soil Conservation & Rivers Control Act 1941.
- Government subsidies.

In the Kapiti Coast area there were three rating schemes:

- The Waikanae River Scheme.
- The Mangoane Drainage Scheme.
- The Otaki Scheme.

Rating schemes for the Waikanae and Otaki River works also funded maintenance and improvements in adjacent watercourses. The former scheme areas are shown in **Attachment 1**.

When the Regional Council assumed responsibility for the Kapiti Coast area in 1989 a decision was made, in consultation with the KCDC, to abandon the Mangaone and Otaki rating schemes and to fund ongoing work from Regional rates. This decision was made for pragmatic reasons as by 1989 the classifications needed updating and many rating assessments cost more to collect than the actual rates. The Waikanae rating scheme was abandoned in 1972 when the river was temporarily transferred to the Wellington Regional Water Board to manage.

### *Current Funding Practice*

Regional Council flood protection and drain maintenance work on the Kapiti Coast is now funded:

- 50% local share by way of a River Rate across the District.
- 50% General Rate.

In the Wairarapa, the local share for schemes is still collected primarily by way of classified benefit rating schemes. In addition, drainage schemes are *fully* funded by the beneficiary landowners with no regional ‘subsidy’. By contrast, landowners benefiting from the Mangaone drainage scheme, and the Otaki River scheme drains pay no rates according to direct benefit, only their river rate and general rate shares.

### ***Future funding options***

A number of options are open to the Council for funding the local share of on-going maintenance work, and possible improvements that could be considered for the Waitohu Stream for example. Funding options include:

- retaining the current Kapiti Coast (western rivers) funding model, with direct beneficiary contributions where appropriate e.g. the recent Upper Rahui improvements

or

- adopting the Wairarapa funding model for the Kapiti Coast.

### ***Funding of Drain Maintenance***

The main inequity between the Kapiti and Wairarapa areas is the funding of drain maintenance on the Mangaone Stream and the former Otaki scheme drains. A possible solution is a users pays drainage scheme for the benefiting properties.

## **6. Possible “Scheme Plans”**

Following consideration of Report 00.152 in March 2000, the Landcare Committee resolved as follows:

*“Agree that the value of scheme plans be assessed as part of planning for management of Kapiti minor watercourses.”*

The two Kapiti watercourses where a Wairarapa style scheme plan may be appropriate are the Mangaone and Waitohu streams.

In the Wairarapa, scheme plans involve the following elements:

- A scheme document which sets out the issues, the proposal for the scheme and its future maintenance, and scheme costs and benefits.
- A classified rating scheme to raise the local share of funds required.
- A scheme advisory committee for scheme ratepayer input on scheme implementation and maintenance. A key issue is rating levels.
- Scheme approval by the Council.

Implementing scheme plans for the Waitohu and Mangaone Streams would follow the programmed flood hazard assessments studies (Mangaone – underway 2000/01, Waitohu 2002/04). The additional work would comprise an options assessment, including consultation; and then the drafting of a plan for each stream. The funding of such schemes or plans would depend on the considered application of Council’s Funding Policy at the time. If the “Kapiti model” is continued, no classified scheme is required.

The notion of setting up a scheme advisory committee for the Waitohu Stream was discussed with Ian Heslop from the Wairarapa Division. The agreed view was that the full scheme advisory committee model is only appropriate where the scheme beneficiaries were funding the local share through a classified rating scheme. If we continue with the Kapiti funding model, a less formal “scheme consultative group” is considered more appropriate. Such a group would be a good point of contact to discuss management issues and direction, but would have less influence on funding levels and work programmes given that the beneficiaries would not be directly rated for half the cost of the work.

In summary:

- The need for scheme plans for the Waitohu and Mangaone Streams will need to be considered by the Landcare Committee following completion of the flood hazard assessment studies. Formal scheme plans for the other minor watercourses are not anticipated at this stage.
- A “scheme consultative group” would be a useful consultation avenue for the management of the Waitohu Stream and possibly the Mangaone Stream.

## 7. Review Proposal Summary

It is proposed to divide the Kapiti watercourses into five groups for review purposes, as follows:

1. Waimeha Stream.
2. Mangaone Stream and tributary drains (Walkers, Sages, Powles and Pukenu).
3. Otaki River tributaries – Katihiku, Pahiko and Ngatoko drains and the Rangiuru Stream.
4. Mangapouri Stream to its confluence with the Waitohu Stream.
5. Waitohu Stream and Ngatotara drains.

At present there is no specific budget in the Flood Protection Operating Plan for undertaking reviews of Kapiti minor watercourses, apart from the budgets set aside for the Mangaone and Waitohu Stream flood hazard. However, a review of some minor watercourses can be completed as part of normal operations.

The following review steps are proposed:

- That a review of the Waimeha Stream, including discussion with the Kapiti Coast District Council, be commenced immediately. A report back date of December 2001 is proposed. No additional funding for this work is required.
- The need or otherwise for scheme plans for the Waitohu and Mangaone Streams be decided following the completion of the respective flood hazard studies.
- The merits of setting up ‘scheme consultative groups’ for the Waitohu and Mangaone stream be further considered following completion of the respective flood hazard studies.

No timetable for reviewing the remaining Kapiti minor watercourses is proposed at this stage. Further consideration can be given at the 2002/03 Annual Plan update.

A report on investigations into a rating scheme for the Otaki River and its floodplain is due to be presented to the Committee by December 2001. It is proposed to broaden the report to consider funding consistencies with other Kapiti watercourses work.

## 8. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

- (1) *Receive the report and note the contents.*
- (2) *Recommends to the Policy and Finance Committee that it:*
  - (a) *Agree that the Council's current management of Kapiti minor watercourses requires review and that a number of broad management options are open to Council.*
  - (b) *Agree that for the purposes of any review that the Kapiti minor watercourses be broken into five groups and that the review proceed on a group by group basis commencing with the Waimeha Stream.*
  - (c) *Note the potential for new 'scheme plans' on the Waitohu and Mangaone streams, and that consideration for developing such scheme plans should follow completion of the programmed flood hazard assessments.*
  - (d) *Agree that the 1991 Kapiti Coast Watercourses Agreement with the Kapiti Coast District Council should be reviewed on an on-going basis as each stream group is considered.*
  - (e) *Agree that officers should consider the merits of setting up 'scheme consultative groups' for the Waitohu and Mangaone Streams following completion of the respective flood hazard studies.*
  - (f) *Note that a report concluding investigations into a rating scheme for the Otaki River and its floodplain is due to be presented to the Landcare Committee by December 2001 and that this report will consider consistencies in funding of other Kapiti watercourses work.*

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission:

GEOFF DICK  
Manager, Flood Protection (Operations)

ANDREW ANNAKIN  
Divisional Manager, Landcare

**Attachment 1** : Location Map and Former Scheme Areas

**Attachment 2** : Kapiti Minor Watercourses – Issue Summary