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Report to Environment Committee
from Barry Strong, Section Leader, Resource Quality

Investigation of Contaminated Sites Owned or Occupied by WRC

1. Purpose

To present to the Committee the results of investigations of sites that are listed on the Wellington Regional Council ANZECC Site Use Database and owned or occupied by the WRC.

2. Background

In developing its LTFS, the Council made a decision to undertake investigations of contaminated sites which it either owned or occupied. This approach was adopted to ensure that the Council had addressed its own contaminated site issues before taking steps to make other contaminated site owners address their problems.

The Council's ANZECC site use database is made up of contaminated sites and sites where, because of their past or present use, there is a potential for contamination to have occurred.

There are 10 sites included on the ANZECC site use database that are either owned or occupied by the WRC. They are:

- Ex Hukinga Sawmill site, Upper Hutt
- Ava Park Historical Landfill, Petone
- Precast Systems Ltd site, Upper Hutt
- Ex firth site, Lower Hutt
- Queen Elizabeth Park, Paekakariki
- Te Marua Water Treatment Plant, Upper Hutt
- WRC Workshop, Masterton
- Belmont Regional Park, Hutt Valley
- WRC Greytown depot, Greytown
- Pakuratahi Rifle Range, Upper Hutt

Under the RMA 1991, the liability for contaminated sites rests with the landowner and/or occupier. These sites were investigated to:

1. Confirm whether or not the sites investigated were contaminated; and
2. Identify the steps necessary to remediate confirmed contaminated sites to an appropriate standard.

This work was designed to quantify any liabilities the Wellington Regional Council may have for the ten sites so that these liabilities could be reported in the Annual Report in accordance with NZ Financial Reporting Standard No. 15. A consultant, Montgomery Watson New Zealand Limited, undertook the investigations.

The consultant visited all sites and site histories were developed for each site using WRC records, Territorial Authority records and following discussions with other parties with knowledge of the site. Any previous investigations of these sites were also found and used to better define the issues on each site.

The report has now been produced and details the investigations the consultant has undertaken at each site. In some cases it was necessary to undertake detailed sampling of the ground and groundwater at the site to determine if there were any contamination issues on or beneath the site.

3. **Key Findings**

The report is titled “Wellington Regional Council – Contaminated Sites Assessment, April 2001”.

The report has confirmed the contamination status of each site and has recommended further action on those sites where there is a risk to human health or the environment. In some cases the recommended further action is minor, in other cases more investigation is recommended. In yet other cases remedial action is recommended and detailed. Costs have been estimated for all further investigative and remedial action on a site by site basis.

A summary of the recommendations for each site is provided in Table 1. The following is a brief synopsis of the findings for each site:

Queen Elizabeth Park – WRC Occupied

The report details the history of this site and highlights the risk of unexploded ordnance in this area. During WW2 the site was used by the US Army to practice live firing. This risk is already known by the Parks and Forests Department of the WRC and addressed in the management plan for the park. Additional investigations by the consultant have identified one, possibly two, historical landfills. The consultant has also thoroughly investigated the history of the area to better pinpoint possible locations of unexploded ordnance in the park. Further detailed investigations of the historical landfill and the area at the end of Whareroa Road are recommended.

Greytown Works Depot – WRC Occupied

This site is not on a gasworks site as originally thought but is located across the road from the historical gas works site. This site has been used as a WRC depot for a number of years and practices on site may have resulted in discharges of pesticides and fuels onto the ground. Further sampling to determine the extent of pesticide residues on the site is recommended.

Belmont Regional Park – WRC occupied

A small area of this park was used for the storage of ordnance in the past and also as an ordnance destruction area. The report highlights the potential risks to park users from unexploded ordnance. This has also been recognised by the Parks and Forests Department and incorporated into the park management plan. Unlike QE Park, the area of concern is very localised. Remedial works are recommended for the ordnance destruction area.

Masterton Workshop – WRC occupied

This site has been used by WRC for a number of years and has had an underground storage tank located on it in the past. This tank was removed a number of years ago and found to have leaked. The investigations undertaken by the consultant for this project found hydrocarbons in the ground beneath the site. Further investigation to determine the nature and extent of the hydrocarbon contamination beneath the site is recommended.

Pre-cast Systems, Upper Hutt – WRC Owned

This site is located on WRC owned river reserve land. The occupier manufactures concrete slabs for the construction industry. The report suggests that there is minimal risk at this site due to the nature of the business. No further action is recommended.

Te Marua Water treatment plant – WRC Owned

This site was assessed due to the past practices that involved the discharge of aluminium sludge and due to the presence of hazardous materials on the site. Some minor improvements to existing operational practices were recommended. The consultant suggested that monitoring associated with the historical stockpile of sludge could be discontinued.

Hukinga Sawmill, Akatarawa – WRC Owned

This site was previously used as a sawmill. No significant levels of timber treatment chemicals were found on the site. It is quite probable that the site has been flooded a number of times since it was last used as a sawmill. This has probably washed away any chemical residues. No further action recommended.

Former Firth Certified Concrete Site, Lower Hutt – WRC Owned

This site is located on WRC owned river reserve and was a concrete batching plant. No potential or actual pollution problems were identified. No further action is recommended.

Ava Park, Lower Hutt – WRC Owned

This site was used as a landfill until around 1950. Investigations show no real risk from landfill gas due to the use of the site as playing fields, and minimal discharge of leachate to the Hutt River. The report recommends that a landfill management plan be developed and further sampling undertaken to better quantify the volume and nature of leachate entering the stormwater system running through the landfill.

NZ Deer Stalkers Association Rifle Range – WRC Owned

This rifle range is situated in Kaitoki Regional Park and has been used for approximately 10 years. High levels of lead were recorded in the firing butts and in the adjacent watercourse. The report recommends that stormwater runoff from the site be managed to ensure lead is contained and that the WRC enter into discussions with the users of the site to develop remedial works and programmed maintenance for the site.

4. Where To From Here?

The report has identified specific concerns at Queen Elizabeth Park, Belmont Regional Park, the Greytown depot and the Masterton works depot. Some further investigations will be undertaken at Queen Elizabeth Park and the Masterton works depot using the remaining budget available for this financial year. Additional works of an investigative nature may be undertaken next financial year

Copies of the report have been sent to Divisional Managers with specific responsibilities for these sites. We will shortly be meeting with these managers to discuss implementation of the report's recommendations and remedial actions.

5. Communications

The information gained from this exercise will be provided to the Finance Department so that they can better quantify our liabilities for these sites with a view to incorporating this information in future Annual Reports. This is a requirement of NZ Financial Reporting Standard No. 15

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Report prepared by:

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Attachments: 1