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Report 01.536

20 July 2001

File: Y/21/1

Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Wayne O'Donnell, Acting Divisional Manager, Wairarapa

Acting Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of current activities and provide information of interest since the previous meeting held on 21 June 2001.

2. Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)

2.1 20001 Winter Works Programme

There has been a slow start to the winter planting programme. Soil moisture conditions in many parts of the region are still at low levels. Recent light falls of rain have made it ideal for planting seedling trees but pole planting is still being held up.

A helicopter run is scheduled for 19 July and is being concentrated in northern Wairarapa where the most rain has fallen. A concerted effort will be required to complete the total planting requirements by the end of August. The recent employment of an Assistant Works Supervisor will greatly assist the situation.

2.2 Sustainable Farming Fund Applications

The second round of applications to the Sustainable Farming Fund have resulted in at least one project receiving funding. The project is a joint one, between Council, Massey University and AgResearch, studying sheep and cattle responses to supplementary feeding of

poplars and willows, and the dissemination of results to the farming community.

The second project, which involves soil and land mapping for farmers, will be approved subject to some reductions in budget of two or three of the larger projects. One of the larger projects is the one mentioned above and savings of \$95,000 have been ratified. This should enable the funding requirements of the farm-mapping programme to be approved. Both these projects will require significant input from staff throughout the next two years.

2.3 Akura Soil Moisture Report

During last summer, Hydro-Services of Christchurch was commissioned to begin soil moisture recording at the Akura Conservation Centre. This action was a prelude to understanding critical limits for poplars and willows, and to be better placed to investigate the opportunities for irrigation options.

The depth plots indicate that both poplars and willows extract moisture from at least the top metre of soil. During the 180 days of monitoring willows used 355 mm and poplars 330 mm. This is equivalent to an average water use of about 2mm per day. From within the 1metre measured soil depth average water use is similar, with a peak of 4mm per day. This value is of significance for irrigation design, especially for new plantings.

Both sites received about 313mm of rainfall, of which 245mm were effective. The balance of the water used was extracted from the soil. Results suggest that willows have a greater need for moisture and as a result are better extractors of moisture from the soil. Notwithstanding this fact willows were showing more signs of moisture stress during April.

2.4 Forest Health Survey

An Annual Forest Health Survey has been received from the contract provider. The report contains a Forest Health Surveillance Certificate and individual Certificates of Compliance as required by the Forest Owners Association.

The following Forest Health issues have been identified:

- **Stoney Creek**

Cyclaneusma minus – a needlecast disorder scattered infection of low to medium severity. Treatment is culling of susceptible trees at thinning.

Diplodea pinea – a secondary fungal infection (from severe pruning and possum damage) of low to medium severity. Overall

less than 1% incidence. Culling of infected trees will eliminate them from the final crop.

Some trees were suffering in wet areas. Some trees were stunted and others had died.

Possum damage was noted in two localised areas.

Wind stunting was observed on exposed ridges.

Overall the forest was in good health, displaying no nutrient deficiencies.

- Hiwinui

Diplodia Crown wilt noted on a few trees but otherwise all of this forest displayed good health.

- Tauanui

Limited access with no signs of problems requiring further investigation.

2.5 Silviculture

A total of 700 hectares of pruning, in all three lifts, and two hundred hectares of associated thinning were achieved for the year. This has caught up on the area that was carried over from the previous year. The programme will steadily decrease from now as silvicultural operations are completed.

2.6 Harvesting

The volume harvested for the 2000 – 2001 year was 11,600 tonnes for an average net stumpage of \$23.46 (\$31.02 1999 – 2000 and \$22.67 1998 – 1999).

Prices are generally down on the previous year coupled with low demand for pulp and lower grade sawlog. Difficulty securing a suitable hauler and major breakdowns once the hauler was on site limited total production for the year.

2.7 Flood Damage Repairs

The \$1.1m October 2000 flood damage repair programme has been substantially completed with an underspend of only \$67,000. Factors such as recent high river levels, unavailability of machinery, and the unwillingness of landowners to fund the local share for works have contributed to this modest underspend.

The main project completed over the reporting period was channel alignment and bank protection at the Mahunga Golf Course.

Uncompleted flood damage repair works to the overall value of \$67,000 consist of the following:

- Upgrade of the Masterton Oxidation Pond stopbank.
- Channel alignment and willow cabling at Oliver's - Ruamahanga River.
- Bank protection at the Paierau Bridge - Waipoua River.
- Kokotau Bridge bank protection – Ruamahanga River.
- Consolidation work at the Mahunga Golf Course – Waipoua River.

The intention is to complete these approved flood damage works during the current financial year.

2.8 Waiohine River & Floodplain Investigation

The Special Order rating notification process for the new Waiohine, Mangatarere, and Waipoua River Management Schemes has been completed, and no objections were received.

2.9 Gravel Extraction Licensing System

The Global Resource Consent for gravel extraction in the Ruamahanga River has been granted to the Operations Department. A gravel extraction licensing system administered by the Operations Department is operating successfully within the framework of this consent. The licensing system will provide better river management outcomes and improve service delivery for gravel extractors.

2.10 Technical Services Activities

Technical Services staff have been involved in the following projects:

- the development and offering of Arcview training courses for Consents & Compliance, Planning & Policy, Water Resources and Soil Conservation Sections
- preparation of a large number of farm maps for external clients
- the development and management of the new gravel licensing system
- a large number of mapping requests for Biosecurity
- providing assistance to the replacement of cables on the barrage gates
- planning and photographing aerial photo work for the Enaki riparian project and private forestry
- production of various reports for Engineering
- production of soil conservation maps.
- development of an itinerary and hosting of the recent Wairarapa Council tour

- finalisation of the maps for the Waiohine and Waipoua classifications
- completion of WELA maps.

3. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

3.1 Bovine Tb Update

(1) Cattle Reactors

Unfortunately, cattle reactors and cull numbers increased slightly during the last financial year with most coming out of the untreated area of South East Wairarapa. Infected herd numbers however continued on a slight downward trend with a 7.5% reduction:

	1999/00	2000/01
Herds	80	74
Reactors/culls	201	223

(2) Contracts

To date, for the new financial year, 56,944 hectares of operations have been let by tender.

Contract	Approx Ha's	Contractor	No. Tenders
Mount Bruce-Miki Miki Crown	5,270	WRC	3
Featherston-Waiorongomai Crown	11,615	WRC	2
Castlehill	4,480	WRC	2
Homewood-Riversdale	26,039	Trappersnz Ltd	3
Mataikona Block 1	5,065	Prof. Guiding Serv. Ltd	2
Mataikona Block 2	4,475	Target Pest Ltd	3

The number of tenderers were noticeably down from last year from a previous average of 4.9 per contract to 2.4 this year.

Further tenders will be let in the next two months upon the receipt of additional possum density monitoring information.

(3) Aerial Update

Excellent results continue to be achieved with the use of prefeeding for aerial poisoning, combined with good quality assurance procedures.

Twelve prefed operations have now been completed with an average RTC of 0.78%. These range from a high of 1.7% RTC to a low of 0% RTC.

The following table provides further information:

Pre-feed Aerial Data

Operation	Hectares	Prefeed Date	Days Feed to Toxic	Toxic Date	Sowing Rate kgs/ha	Overnight Temperature Low	Post RTC %
Wainuiomata	3,538	19 & 20/5/99	22/23	10 & 11/06/99	3+3	0	1.1
Owahanga	1,244	10/09/99	19	29/09/99	2+2	4	1.0
Pukunui	750	13/11/00	12	01/12/00	1.2+2	9	0.5
Bideford	3,400	13 & 14/04/00	14/15	28/04/00	2+2	3	0.0
Tinui	4,065	10/10/00	9	19/10/00	2+2	2	0.3
Tinui	2,991	19 & 20/10/00	13/14	02/11/00	2+2	7	1.4
Te Wharau	3,799	03/11/00	10	13/11/00	2+2	6	0.7
Otaki	3,240	30/11/00	18	18/12/00	2+2	14	1.7
Te Wharau	4,081	09/04/01	9	18/04/01	2+2	6	0.4
Tinui	1,100	19/01/01	13	01/02/01	2+2	6	0.6
Featherston	3,673	17/05/01	13/14	30 & 31/05/01	2+2	0	0.8
Whakatikei	6,180	08/06/01	11/12	19 & 20/06/01	1+2	0	0.9
Te Wharau III	3,954	01/06/01	12	13/06/01	2+2	0	TBM

These results indicate that most of the aerial operations achieved better than a 95% reduction in the resident possum population.

The overnight temperature low is also recorded. This follows an opinion by a senior Department of Conservation scientist that aerial results were consistently better if the bait was applied when the overnight temperature was 9°C or lower. The data collected by Council will be analysed over time to test the robustness of this theory.

The main factors contributing to the successful aerial operations are:

- prefeeding
- bait palatability; and
- precision bait application.

3.2 Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD)

During late April 2001, a random sample of 70 rabbits were taken from 5 rabbit prone sites in the Western Zone and tested for RHD antibodies at the Wallaceville Research Centre. The assay disclosed that 30 percent of the rabbits were positive. That is, 30 percent were unlikely to become infected if challenged with RHD.

Area Sampled	No. of Samples	% Adults Positive	% Adults Negative
Silverstream Bridge	16	17	83
Queen Elizabeth Park	15	8	92
Trentham Memorial Park	4	25	75
Peka Peka	18	62	38
Waikanae Park	17	31	69
	70	30 average	70 average

A total of 208 rabbits were sampled from 11 sites in the Wairarapa during December 2000. This assay resulted in an average of 45% of rabbits testing positive. Both the Wairarapa and Western Zone results indicate that there are wide variances in the intensity of the disease from site to site.

There have been no reports or indications this year of an RHD epidemic occurring in the region.

All known rabbit prone landowners have recently been contacted to reminded them of their responsibilities for rabbit control under the Regional Animal Pest Management Strategy. The landowners were advised not to release the disease onto their properties unless the RHD immunity levels were proven to be low. It was recommended that conventional control methods such as shooting, poisoning and fumigation be utilised and that they should let RHD spread naturally in the event of it recycling in their area.

3.3 Key Native Ecosystem Management

Possum control maintenance and mustelid/feral cat control is being conducted at several sites. In the Wairarapa, the focus has been on completing mustelid control in the Carterton East management area which includes significant native habitat adjacent to the Ruamahanga River.

Two KNE sites in the South East Wairarapa have received considerable damage to the understory due to cattle gaining access. These sites have had possum maintenance as part of the KNE programme for three years. Biosecurity staff have been instructed not to undertake any further works until there is assurance that the sites are stockproofed.

In the Western Zone the focus has been on possum control in the Khandallah and Johnsonville Parks, Porirua Scenic Reserve and Otari/Johnston Hill Reserves.

The East Harbour KNE contract continues with 3,836 possums, 353 rats, 6 mustelids and 6 feral cats trapped as at 12th July. The contractors are currently trapping about 100 possums per day.

The Upper Hutt branch of Forest and Bird continue with the Wi Tako operation and then will tend to the maintenance requirements at Maidstone Park, Silverstream Reserve and Keith George Memorial Park.

3.4 Rooks

Planning is underway for forthcoming rook control during the breeding season. Discussion has taken place with Horizon.mw field staff in regard to co-ordinating control works along the regional boundary. This joint approach to rook control will be fostered and should lead to more proficient operations.

3.5 Aerial Possum Control on Council Lands

The Whakatikei/Puketiro (6,180 hectares) area of Council lands, administered by Forest & Parks and/or Plantation Forestry was completed on the 20th June with a post operational residual trap catch result of 0.9%.

Planning is now underway to treat the Akatarawa/Valley View areas during October this year. This operation is contiguous to Whakatikei/Puketiro and is of similar size.

3.6 Communications

During the 2000/01 year Pest Plant staff attended six major weekend events with often in excess of 1000 people passing through the Biosecurity displays and seeking information. Seven presentations were made to educational groups and five field day displays arranged. Ongoing static displays at public libraries and shopping malls were arranged through the year. The Section was able to attract several news articles on Pest Plants in regional and local newspapers. Display material continues to be updated with three new plant identification pamphlets currently being printed.

Generally, all major displays were a combined effort with Pest Animals staff.

3.7 Notices

A total of 61 Notices of Direction, under Section 122 of the Biosecurity Act 1993, were issued during the 2000/01 year. This is 38 fewer than the previous year. These directed control work on the following species:

- Old Mans Beard 50
- Wild Ginger 2
- Cathedral Bells 3
- Gorse 4
- Ragwort 2

Five clearance programmes, under Section 128 of the Act, were carried out with two statutory land charges placed on land titles.

3.8 East Harbour KNE

The contractor originally appointed to carry out the East Harbour pest plant control contract, recently sought a release from the Contract on the grounds of ill health. This was approved and another operator has been appointed to complete the work. The change has delayed completion, with the work now likely to be finished by the end of July.

4. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

4.1 Environmental Incidents

Date	Incident	Details
11/06/01	Landowner in Gladstone area expressed concern about neighbouring property irrigating out of creek during summer	Under investigation
20/06/01	Landowner near Kopuaranga was concerned about ongoing diversion of water from a stream	Neighbouring landowner asked to fill in small section of drain in order to cease diversion
22/06/01	Three bags of domestic rubbish dumped in riverbed, South Wairarapa.	Removed by WRC staff
25/06/01	Landowner rang complaining that his neighbour had cleared an area of vegetation on his property, South Wairarapa.	Site visit undertaken and clearance of vegetation confirmed. Vegetation was not on erosion prone land or over 1 continuous hectare, therefore does not trigger need for consent. Arrangement has been made between landowner and neighbour.
26/06/01	Dead eels around a watercourse, South Wairarapa.	Dead eels were result of weed and silt removal in a watercourse. Lots of live eels returned to stream. Investigation continuing.
27/06/01	Dead cow in Mangatarere River, Carterton, had been skinned and be-headed.	Unable to be removed, no access to the site. Unable to trace owner.
29/06/01	Willow trees removed next to industrial site which has history of dust complaints, South Wairarapa. Complainant concerned that removal of trees may exacerbate dust problems.	Trees had been removed by WRC for flood control purposes. No further action taken. Owner of industrial site is undertaking their own shelter planting programme this winter.
3/07/01	Car abandoned in Waingawa riverbed, Masterton	Alleged offender provided positive admission. Infringement fee of \$500 issued.
12/07/01	Suspected poison bait found on beach, Uriti Point. Complainant thought it may have been washed up from the Kaikoura spill	Biosecurity staff were unable to find any baits. No further action taken.

4.2 Enforcement

Abatement and Infringement Notices

- An abatement notice was issued requiring measures to be installed to prevent future diesel spills from industrial premises contaminating a water race. An Infringement Fee of \$1000 imposed.
- A notice was issued requiring unconsented discharge of contaminated stormwater from an industrial site to cease. An explanation has been requested before any further action is considered.
- A notice was issued in relation to the dumping of a car body in the Waingawa River and a fee of \$500 was imposed. The offender subsequently removed the car body.
- The hearing of a defence lodged against an infringement notice, issued in relation to unconsented wild flood irrigation, has yet to be heard. A callover was held before a District Court Judge who then held the appeal over so that he could better determine the issues and process. A second callover is set for 30 July when it is expected that a hearing date will be set. Normally, hearings under the Summary Judgements proceedings are heard before a Justice of the Peace.

Prosecution

Hearing of a prosecution against a dairy farmer for the alleged discharge of dairy shed effluent by direct pumping into a stream, has been transferred to the Environment Court, Wellington. A hearing date has yet to be set.

4.3 Notified Consents

JNL – air discharge variation	Previous application for variation withdrawn. Awaiting revised application. No recent action by the applicant.
Martinborough sewage – discharge	On hold with applicant requesting further time for comment provided to consultants on draft AEE.
Featherston Sewage – discharge	On hold awaiting full assessment of effects and consultation. Agreed lower priority than Martinborough.
Masterton Sewage – discharge	On hold. Progress with rapid infiltration trials held up by landowner negotiations. No recent action by the applicant.
Owahanga Station – coastal	Meeting held with owner’s representative to clarify scope and requirements. No further progress.
Martinborough Landfill	Consent granted with no subsequent appeals. Now operative.
Genesis Power – 7 consents – Kourarau	Sole objection resolved by agreement. Proceeding to granting without hearing.

Kopuaranga River - 5 takes	Consents granted with no subsequent appeals. Now operative.
S McLachlan – Rathkeale – underground takes	Number of submissions received. Pre hearing meeting to be held late July.
N Davies Lake Meadows partnership - takes - Lake Wairarapa	Pre hearing meeting held. Issues resolved and sign off being pursued. Unlikely to require a hearing.
Water Races - 6 - Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils	Applications and AEE's received. Applications being assessed.

4.4 Resource Management Charging Policy

This has been approved by Council and is now operative. A letter is being written to each submitter advising them of the outcomes. All consent holders will be informed of the changes in the Consents newsletter that will accompany this year's charges when they are sent out later this year.

4.5 Hydrology

Rainfall

Rainfall figures also follow the same trend as the previous month with figures well below average. The table below is for 3 rainfall sites.

Site	Location	June 2001 (mm)	Average June (mm)	% of average
Angle Knob	Tararua Ranges	436.5	627	69.6
Alloa	Middle Valley	60.4	112	53.9
Tanawa Hut	Eastern Hills	70	148	47.3

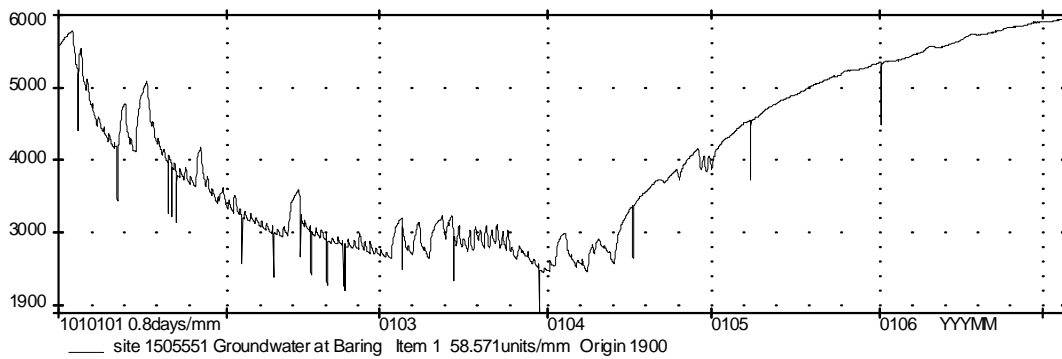
There was only one north-westerly event (9th) during the month, which was not significant (no alarm levels reached). However there were a few short southerly spells giving rise to periods of more normal 'winter' conditions. The dearth of north-westerlies is a pattern that has carried through from the summer.

Rivers

The rivers in the Wairarapa have continued their trend from the proceeding month with flows well below their average. The table below is for 2 of these sites.

Site	June 2001 Flow (m ³ /s)	Average June Flow (m ³ /s)	% of Average
Waihenga	56.7	112.2	50.5
Waiohine	17.2	26.9	63.9

Groundwater



The graph above identifies the trend in groundwater from the telemetered site at Baring's (east of Carterton – Parkvale #3). The data depicted is unprocessed but can be used to identify the current trend.

After the irrigation season has ceased recovery is now taking place. Full recovery is not expected until November, at which stage the data can be compared with previous years to assess the effect of the current low rainfall patterns.

A consultant review of three aquifers has been completed for the Martinborough Terraces, the Huangarua Terraces, and Battersea. These reviews provide an improved basis for processing consents to take water from these aquifers and to apply appropriate conditions to ensure the resource is monitored and sustainably managed.

4.6 Bore Permits

The effect of drought and high agricultural commodity prices has seen a high demand for underground water for irrigation. A total of 100 bore permits were issued in the last financial year, a 51% increase on the previous year. There is a trend towards larger bores which is raising concern against existing users in certain areas such as Parkvale.

4.7 Water Quality

With the appointment of two replacement water quality scientists, opportunity has been taken to review duties and monitoring and reporting requirements so that a targeted and consistent Regional approach is taken. Quarterly water quality meetings have been initiated.

As a key component of the three riparian protection pilot study areas, initial habitat and survey work has been completed with baseline water quality measurements now underway. This will utilise new equipment that provides a continuous record of key parameters as opposed to one-off sampling.

A report covering habitat assessment of water races has been completed by Victoria University.

4.8 WELA

The annual meeting of the Wairarapa Engineering Lifelines Association has been held with a good attendance. John Begg of IGNS made a presentation on the results of trenching studies on the Masterton and Carterton faults. These have confirmed that the faults are active and can be expected to move every 1000 to 2000 years accompanied by a magnitude 6.5 to 7.5 earthquake. Once the report is finalised, discussions will be held on furthering the recommendations of the report. It was interesting to learn that a layer of ash from an early Taupo eruption was clearly evident in the base of one of the trenches.

4.9 Iwi Activities

Two small Iwi projects were contracted involving urupa protection and planting at Hurunui o Rangi Marae - Gladstone, and the former Taumatararaia marae at Taueru. An Iwi workshop has been held on water management, with several Wairarapa staff participating. A workshop on gravel is to follow on 8 August at Papawai marae.

4.10 Publicity

Karen Brewster - Section Leader Policy and Planning - provided an article for the NZ Coastal Society newsletter on the recent Coastal Forum and Coastal Strategy Group.

Phillip Percy - Resource Advisor - featured in a two page article on the pitfalls in living in the country, explaining the issue of 'reverse sensitivity'.

Steve Blakemore - provided comment to an article on using agrichemicals according to label, with particular reference to porina control.

4.11 Oceans Policy

The Ministerial Advisory Committee on Oceans Policy, chaired by Dame Catherine Tizard, is travelling the country between 25 June and 11 August to meet with New Zealanders and to listen to their views about the oceans. The government is developing an Oceans Policy to provide more effective ways of managing the human impacts on the marine environment. A meeting will be held at the Masterton District Council on 26 July from 5.30 - 7.30pm, and will be chaired by Cr Buchanan.

5. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Wayne O'Donnell
Acting Divisional Manager, Wairarapa