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Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Colin Wright, Divisional Manager, Wairarapa

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of current activities and provide information of interest since the previous meeting held on 9 July 2002.

2. Divisional Matters

2.1 Financial Year

The final numbers for the Division for the 2001/02 financial year have now been processed and are reported in a separate report.

Overall, the Division has had another successful year with virtually all projects completed or on track, and with financial results close to budget.

I would like to thank all managers and staff for their various inputs to this very satisfying result. I also express my appreciation for the many contributions throughout the year from members of the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee.

2.2 Mangaroa-Kaitoke Vector Control Operation

Committee members will generally be aware of the ongoing difficulties being experienced by staff with regard to the Mangaroa-Kaitoke-Whitemans Valley Bovine Tb vector control operation.

Recent events have caused us to work closely with the Police as we endeavour to ensure the safety of our staff and protect Council property. I wish to sincerely acknowledge the work being carried out

by a number of Biosecurity staff in very trying circumstances. We will all be very pleased when the operation has been completed!

2.3 Annual Leave

I would also like to acknowledge the good work carried out by Ian Gunn and the other department managers during my recent period of extended annual leave. It was pleasing to return and find that everything had run smoothly during my six weeks absence overseas.

I did give the last meeting of the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee a passing thought when I wondered how the meeting was proceeding. It was, however, a rather brief thought as at that particular time we were completely lost in Cambridge, England, as we endeavoured to find our way back to our lodgings in the dark without a map or even the address that we were staying at!

2.4 Staff

Colin Morgan, Support Officer, retired on 2 August after 32 years with the Council and the predecessor Wairarapa Catchment Board. A suitable function was arranged to farewell and thank Colin for his contributions over the years.

Rachel Hornsby commenced with us on 22 July. Rachel is from Australia and has had several years experience in planning issues.

Una McCafferkey, an Irish agricultural and environmental science student from Tullamore, recently spent six weeks on work experience with us. Una also spent time working on a farm near Martinborough.

3. Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)

3.1 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Review

Background research for the LWVDS review is now underway. Also Engineering Consultant Phillip Wallace has been briefed for the computer modelling phase of the investigation. The computer model will include the Ruamahanga River channel, the floodway system, Lakes Onoke and Wairarapa, and the Barrage Gates. The main purpose of the modelling is to determine how the current Scheme performs, and to identify opportunities for the optimisation or upgrade of the Scheme.

3.2 Asset Management Plan Update

Asset management plans have been updated, and performance statements prepared for the five main Wairarapa river management

schemes. Also an asset revaluation process has been completed by staff, and checked and certified by an independent valuer. The results of this exercise are reported on in an attached report.

3.3 Winter Works Programme

Winter is normally the best time of year for planting willow poles and carrying out willow bank protection work. Unfortunately higher than normal rainfall has occurred during July, and a combination of wet ground conditions and high river levels have slowed progress with the programmed willow work. Staff are hopeful of catching up with this work over the period to early spring.

3.4 Tui Glen Stopbank – Waiohine River

The realignment of a vulnerable section of the Tui Glen stopbank has been completed. This work has improved the stopbank's flood capacity and reduced the risk of erosion, which has significantly reduced the flood threat to Ahikouka and SH2.

3.5 Conservation Forestry – Planting

Re-establishment of the areas in Hiwinui harvested in the past year is virtually completed. The most recently logged area (harvested June – July) is yet to be replanted and is awaiting the flying in of seedlings by helicopter this week. A buffer zone of tree lucerne is planned to act as the start of a native riparian zone adjacent to the stream.

3.6 Silviculture

Despite the wet conditions at Stoney Creek, pruning and thinning is progressing steadily.

3.7 Logging

No logging is happening at present. Dialogue is ongoing to secure a suitable hauler for Wairarapa harvesting.

3.8 Tauanui Access

Dialogue is continuing between the parties.

3.9 Motuwaikeka Riparian Management Group

A meeting was held with interested parties from the Riversdale Beach community to discuss the formation of a Care Group to specifically address the issues of riparian management on the Motuwaikeka Stream and its major tributaries. Groups represented included members of the local ratepayers association, District and Regional Councillors, landowners, and a representative from Camp Anderson.

There was general interest in the concept of riparian management and the meeting has agreed to Stage I which involves the willow clearance, fencing and planting in the side tributary that runs behind Camp Anderson. The second stage targets the Motuwaikeka Stream itself and will be subject to gaining additional funding.

The Council has approved \$17,000 over three years. An application is to be made to the NZ Landcare Trust Fund for a further \$15,000, the balance of the programme will be completed through in-kind contribution from landowners. The overall cost will be \$40,500.

3.10 Riverside Field day – Poplars and Willows for Fodder

The annual Riverside field day was held on 16th July. The major focus of the programme was the use of poplars and willows as a pasture supplement during times of drought. The Hon. Jim Sutton opened proceedings that involved a series of presentations from participants in the trial work and a field inspection to view the use of willows in a coppice situation.

The day was very well attended, with a pleasing number of farmers and secondary students. The trial has another two years to run and is shifting the focus from research based initiatives to farming systems that will enable the findings to be implemented at the farm level. The two particular aspects to be studied are the feeding of willow biomass from coppice blocks, and the pruning management of trees planted for soil conservation purposes.

3.11 Soil Conservation Works Programme

Rainfall at Tanawa Hut in the headwaters of the Tinui River, recorded 205mm for July. This is one of the only times in the last two years where monthly rainfall averages have been exceeded. While this amount of rain was good for raising the soil moisture contents to levels that greatly assist the pole planting process, it also served to slowdown the rate of progress. Steady progress is however being achieved, and the bulk of the programme will be completed by the end of August.

Staff are very busy through this period of the year and at any one time can have up to eight contract gangs in action. Additional to this workload is the delivery of poles to those farmers who plant their own, and the organisation of helicopter schedules to reach the more inaccessible sites.

4. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

4.1 Key Native Ecosystems

July was a particularly wet month with rain on at least 21 days. This impacted adversely on fieldwork. Vehicle or motor bike access becomes difficult and bait (even that in bait stations) becomes damp and less palatable in continuing moist conditions. Possum trapping is less affected.

During the past year, 30 Key Native Ecosystem Management Areas (KNEMA's) totalling 10,492 hectares were treated for possums and/or predators, mainly feral cats and mustelids. Some goat control was also undertaken. The KNEMA programme outlined in the Regional Pest Management Strategy Operational Plan for 2001-2002 was overspent by 8 percent (\$25,325). However, savings were utilised from the rook control and rabbit control budgets for KNE purposes. A comprehensive report of the year's activities will be presented in the RPMS Operational Plan Report scheduled for late September 2002.

Of note is that the large East Harbour KNE operation (2,300 ha) utilised 59 percent of the available funds. East Harbour is the 'gem' of the current KNE's, and the investment involved in the initial possum control programme was weighed up prior to the programme commencing. A detailed post-operational report for East Harbour is being written and forward programming for maintenance and more integrated management is underway. The plans involve;

- Setting up a matrix of bait stations to facilitate lower future maintenance costs and to enable predators and possums to be targeted.
- Adding value to the programme of the Eastbourne based MIRO Group by supplying additional hardware, increasing their operational area to include the Gollans Stream plateau and assisting them with recruitment of personnel.
- Attempting to re-vitalise the Eastbourne 'Possum Busters'.
- Attempting to form a Care Group for the Wainuiomata side of the area.

The prioritisation of KNE/Biodiversity works for the future is continuing. The six key areas were outlined in the Divisional Manager's report to the meeting of 9 July this year. Focus at the moment is on the consolidation of works to a selection of the very best sites (e.g. Porirua, Wellington City, East Harbour) and continuation and possible expansion of the possum control programme through self help, volunteers and Care Groups. Currently 17 'active' KNEMA's have either full self help or other voluntary assistance, and 12 other

potential sites have been identified. More detail will be available for the Councillors Biodiversity Workshop later this month. Some KNE operational activity and forward planning is being deferred pending the outcome of the workshop. Meetings also have to be arranged with the Western Zone Territorial Authorities to formalise this year's programme and undertake planning for the future.

4.2 Possum and Mustelid Trap Trials

Pest Animals staff are testing two new trap designs for the control of possums and mustelids.

The "Warrior" kill trap is touted as the most versatile and effective kill trap in NZ. It has several desirable features in that it can be used to target multiple small mammal pest species, is compact, lightweight, robust, humane (meets the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee guidelines) and can be safely set in areas inhabited by ground birds such as kiwi and weka. The trap was designed through Landcare Research Ltd and partly funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology.

The SaF trap is also a kill trap and designed for mustelids and rats. Its features are that it is compact, has twin independent trapping units, is easy to set, incorporates the tunnel and trap in one unit and is said to be humane.

4.3 Public Relations and Communications

Pest Animals staff have attended the following scheduled events.

- The Annual General Meeting of the East Harbour Environmental Association on 1 July.
- St Patricks College small farmers display on 5 July.
- An "interested parties" meeting at the Nga Manu wetlands (Waikanae) on 11 July.
- A meeting of the MIRO Group at Eastbourne on 23 July.

Upcoming events are the Otari Plant Sale (15 September) and the Wellington Home and Garden Show (27-29 September). The latter show will provide an excellent opportunity to showcase the Council's new brand.

4.4 Garden Waste Dumping

A further meeting with Territorial Local Authorities has been held to investigate the problem of the illegal dumping of green waste. With the exception of one Wairarapa district council, all city and district councils have representation on the group formed to prepare a publicity programme in an attempt to counteract this regional problem. A range of options have been discussed and at this stage it is intended to have

some material available in time for the Home and Garden Show at the Westpac Trust Stadium in late September.

4.5 Hornwort

The other lakes and wetland areas in the Wellington Region associated with Forest Lake at Otaki have been inspected. No infestations of Hornwort were located. However, because this submerged species is difficult to find in its early stages the areas will be constantly monitored, with particular attention over the summer period.

Dr Paul Champion, a NIWA scientist specialising in aquatic plants, will assess the results of the initial application of Diquate herbicide to control Hornwort at Forest Lake. The costs associated with Dr Champion's involvement are to be met by the Department of Conservation.

4.6 Climbing Asparagus

Work has commenced on clearing a large infestation of Climbing Asparagus scattered through an area of privately owned bush at Ponatahi, Carterton. As Climbing Asparagus is a Containment Category species in the Wairarapa, a progressive control programme, funded by Council, is planned to continue over the next four years.

4.7 Boneseed

The owners of properties where infestations of Boneseed have been recorded at Lake Ferry and Ngawi have been offered clearance at no cost. All Boneseed sites on private land in the Wairarapa are required to be cleared. This service is funded by Council. It is intended to commence the first stage of the clearance programme in late August. Some problems are arising where occupiers have managed the boneseed as shelterbelts. Agreement with individual landowners will be required to plant alternative species.

4.8 Registrations of Interest

Ten applications have been received from contractors seeking to tender for pest plant control contracts in 2002/03. The contracts will range from river margin works to smaller operations in the heart of urban areas.

4.9 Bovine Tb - Operational Progress

At 30 June 2002, 58,856 hectares were uncompleted from the 2001/02 vector control programme. This area is split between the Bovine Unit and private contractors.

However, most of this work was completed during July. At the end of July the only outstanding control areas included:

Mataikona	4,609 hectares
Woodside	2,560 hectares
Owahanga	1,000 hectares
Total:	8,169 hectares

Delays occurred in these areas due to access and unfavourable weather conditions. Monitoring for these operations is scheduled to be completed early August.

Control has commenced within the Mangaroa-Kaitoke operation using Brodifacoum and traps. The approval document from Upper Hutt City Council has not arrived at the time of writing, despite their Council approving the operation on 24 July. Once this approval arrives, control can commence using 1080 and Cyanide.

4.10 2002/03 Programme

Currently the Bovine Unit is undertaking control within the following operations:

Mangaroa-Kaitoke
 Bideford
 Kahutara-Pirinoa (Boggy/Matthews wetlands)

(1) Contractor Interest

Eleven contractors registered their interest to work within the Wellington Region for the 2002/03 year. Since the registration, three contractors have notified us that they do not wish to tender in this Region.

On 6 August a contractors meeting was held to discuss the 2002/03 programme. Two contractors failed to respond to the notification of the meeting following their Registration of Interest.

At the meeting six contract organisations were represented, including the Horizons.mw Regional Council Business Unit.

(2) Contract Availability

In this initial contract round, 107,281 hectares will be available, broken into 11 contracts.

Contract Areas

	Hectares
Martinborough	22,041
Ponatahi-Longbush	7,411
Ponatahi-Longbush	4,721
Whangaehu-Mauriceville	8,938
Haurangi-Kahutara	13,988

Homewood-Riversdale	6,302
Homewood-Riversdale	12,478
Taueru-Maungaraki/Te Wharau	6,876
Tinui	10,714
Tinui	7,031
Mataikona	6,781

A second contract round will occur later in the year.

5. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

5.1 Environmental Incidents

Date & Time	Incident	Details
2/07/2002	Work being done by bulldozer in Mangatarere stream, creating potential flood problems for downstream landowners, Carterton.	Found to be permitted activity.
18/07/2002	Dead stock being dumped next to river, rural Masterton	Farmer has buried stock, no further action required.
18/07/2002	Dead sheep in river, Masterton	Removed by WRC
23/07/2002	Soft sand created by diversion of stream across beach, Riversdale, Masterton.	Activity permitted by rule in regional plan.
23/07/2002	Milk tipped into creek, Carterton.	Found to be small amount. Farmer warned, and is to be re-inspected.
25/07/2002	Diesel spill from truck crash, rural Masterton	Found to be minimal environmental risk. Site continues to be monitored
26/07/2002	Suspected paint poured in stream, rural Masterton.	Found to be pollen. No further action required.
31/07/2002	Putrid odour from industrial site, Masterton.	Company responsible will be installing pollution equipment later this year.
5/08/2002	Salt water intrusion into bore at Riversdale.	Under investigation

5.2 Enforcement

Abatement and Infringement Notices

No notices have been issued since the last report.

Waingawa Chemical Spill

Guilty pleas were not entered to all charges as expected. The matter has now been transferred to the Environment Court and may proceed to a defended hearing.

5.3 Notified Consents

Carterton - Kaipatangata water take	Submissions closed 23 May 2002. Further information provided by applicant. Pre hearing meeting to be held.
Featherston Sewage – discharge	Draft AEE completed and consultation proceeding. Application expected soon.
Martinborough sewage – discharge	Granted without appeal.
Masterton Sewage – discharge	Application received and notified. Prehearing meeting held. Proceeding to hearing.
Ballance Agri-Nutrients – Discharge to land	Jointly Notified. Submissions closed 19 July. On hold at applicants request
East Coast Abalone, Tora – Coastal permit	Jointly Notified. Hearing scheduled for 19 August July 2002
Water Races - 6 Masterton, Carterton, and South Wairarapa District Councils	Applications received for all races. All awaiting further information.
Tyer – Coastal Permit	Granted without appeal.

5.4 Coastal Strategy

Frank Boffa and Isobel Gabites gave a presentation to the Group on progress with their Landscape and Technical Reports. The Group meets again in September to consider key stakeholders responses to the Discussion Document. Major emphasis is now being given to completion of technical reports and planning and preparation for the summer public consultation programme.

5.5 Waste Management Wairarapa

The Committee met to consider areas of risk associated with the Wairarapa Waste Management Strategy. A suitable site for a Wairarapa landfill is now being pursued.

5.6 Hydrology

Rainfall

Rainfall figures for July were down from June in the Tararua Ranges and Lower Valley but well up for the eastern hill country. Angle Knob rainfall in June (1270mm) was over 200% of its monthly average, whilst in July rainfall of 677mm was on average. An insignificant amount of this would have been snow, with a few cold snaps coming through. Alloa's July total of 133mm (115% average) down from June's 183mm (163%).

The big change was in the eastern hill site at Tanawa Hut. Since March the figures from this site have been significantly below average. July's total has jumped up from 54mm last month to 216mm this month at 128% of average.

The tables below are for these three representative rainfall sites showing rainfall figures for July and also June's for comparison.

Site	Location	July 2002 (mm)	July Average (mm)	% of average
Angle Knob	Tararua Ranges	677	633	107
Alloa	Middle Valley	133	117	115
Tanawa Hut	Eastern Hills	215.5	168	128

Site	Location	June 2002 (mm)	June Average (mm)	% of average
Angle Knob	Tararua Ranges	1269	627	202
Alloa	Middle Valley	183.2	112	163
Tanawa Hut	Eastern Hills	80	148	54

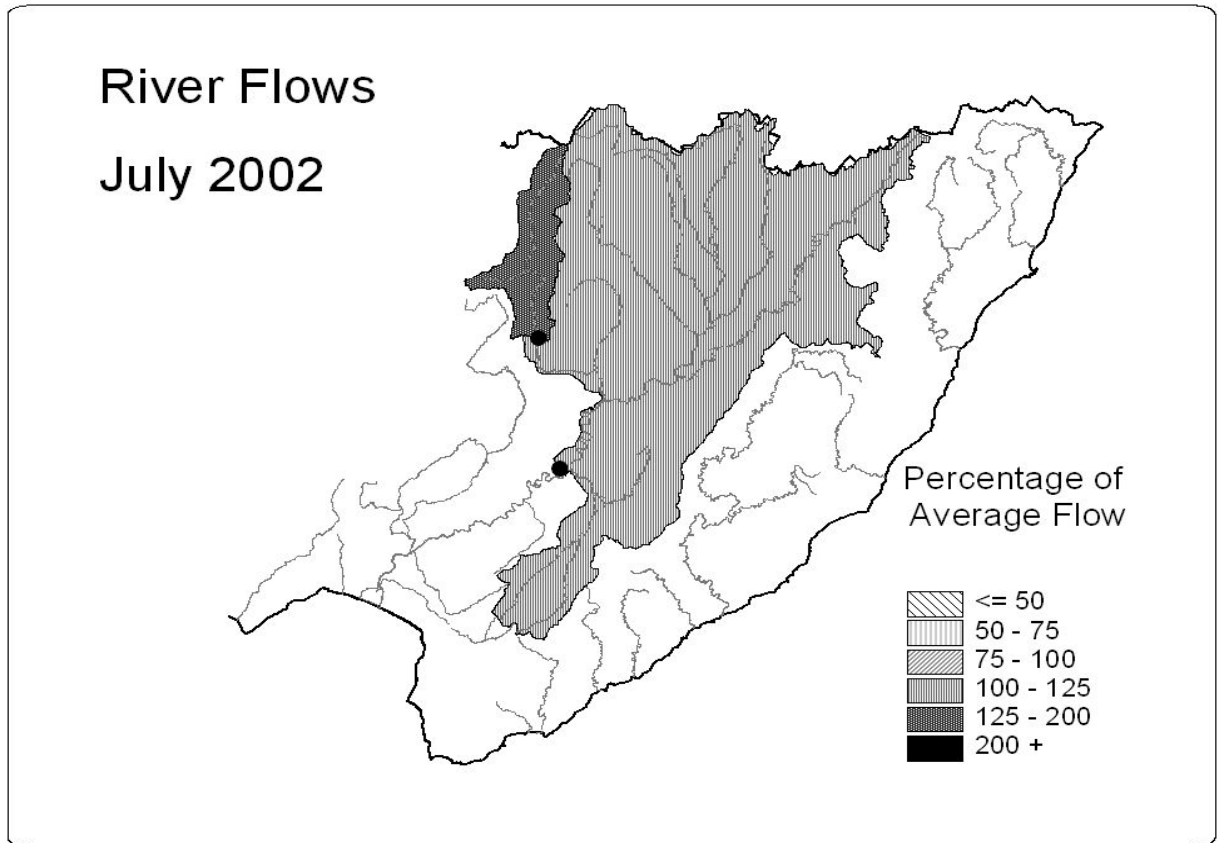
Rivers

River flows were above what is expected for July.

The tables below for two representative sites show both July and June flow statistics for comparison.

Site	July 2002 Flow (m ³ /s)	Average July Flow (m ³ /s)	% of Average
Waiohine	40.1	29.5	136
Waihenga	173	141	123

Site	June 2002 Flow (m ³ /s)	Average June Flow (m ³ /s)	% of Average
Waiohine	45.3	26.9	168
Waihenga	153.9	112.2	137



Floodwarning

	July	Financial Year to date	Previous Year to Date
No. of events	2	2	1
No of Lists Issued	7	7	2

The telemetry system failed to page the Duty Flooding Officer when flood trigger levels were reached during the night of 14 July. The problem was picked up first thing the following morning during normal base/station checks. The missed floodwarnings were then promptly issued. We received no complaints for this delay in issuing these warnings. The fault was traced to the base station and has now been rectified.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa