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Report to the Landcare Committee
from Steve Murphy, Operations Support Engineer

Waiwhetu Stream – Management Plan and Proposed Resource Consent Application

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on the Waiwhetu Stream Management Plan and to request endorsement of the proposed renewal of the existing resource consent for the spraying of aquatic weed.

2. Background

2.1 Management

The Wellington Regional Council and its predecessors have managed the Waiwhetu Stream channel for many years. Maintenance work is done to maintain the flood carrying capacity of the stream. Work includes debris and rubbish removal, bank edge maintenance and control of aquatic weed. Weed control is the most significant of the day to day maintenance tasks.

2.2 1994 Resource Consent

In 1994 a consent to use both diquat and glyphosate for the removal of weed on the bed and banks of the stream was granted by the Planning Tribunal. This three year consent was subject to a number of conditions including:

- setting up a stream liaison group.
- preparing a flood hazard assessment.
- undertaking monitoring of the effects of chemical used.
- preparing a stream management plan to consider long-term strategies for the removal of weed and the impact of these methods on the Waiwhetu Stream.

2.3 Existing Resource Consent

In 1998, having met all the conditions of the earlier consent, a further resource consent was granted. This resource consent reflected the recently completed Management Plan (see below) which emphasised non-chemical methods of weed control.

Under the 1998 consent, spraying of diquat and glyphosate is permitted as a contingency where other methods of weed control prove impracticable or unsuccessful. In addition, spraying is subject to monitoring, notification and investigations being undertaken prior to each spraying operation. The spraying component of the consent was granted for five years and expires in February 2003. **Attachment 1** provides a chronology of events from 1978 to the present.

We propose to again apply for a renewal of the existing consent to control aquatic weed by using diquat. The emphasis for weed control will continue to be on manual methods, with spraying as a contingency should manual methods fail.

As part of the application we will be seeking to extend the current consent term from 5 to 10 years and to reduce the number of consent conditions. In particular, we will seek a reduction in the number and location of samples required to be collected, and the investigations required. These changes reflect the results of monitoring undertaken since 1996, which have consistently met consent conditions. A copy of the most recent compliance report is attached as **Attachment 2**.

3. Waiwhetu Stream Management Plan

The Waiwhetu Stream Management Plan was prepared to provide a sustainable, long-term maintenance strategy for the Waiwhetu Stream. The Plan sets out the approach agreed in 1997 for the next 15 years (1997–2012). In summary, the Plan states that the principal nuisance weed (Cape pondweed) and other aquatic weeds are to be hand cleared with a major effort required in the first year. Trees are being planted to suppress weed growth by shading to a level where the weeds can easily be controlled by hand. Spraying is permitted but only as a contingency while the trees are establishing, and mechanical dredging may be used if required. Stream maintenance runs are completed on an annual basis.

Since February 1998, aquatic weed growth in the Waiwhetu Stream has been controlled by manual methods. In 1998 and 1999 eradication of the most troublesome weed Cape pondweed was attempted by digging out the plant's tuberous roots from the bed of the stream. This was unsuccessful, as it proved impossible to completely remove all the bulbs. Regrowth of plants was quick and numerous.

Between November 1999–present, Periodic Detention workers have manually cleared weed from the channel on a regular basis, by removing the foliage. This approach was successful up until last summer, when for a number of reasons, the amount of weed growth in the stream became unacceptable and the stream was sprayed. This was the first time the stream has been sprayed since April 1997.

Some aspects of the Management Plan have proven impracticable to meet, particularly in regard to reduction in weed density, and have highlighted the need for an eventual review of the Plan. The development of the 'Waiwhetu Stream Action Plan' by the Waiwhetu Stream Working Group, also impacts on work in the stream. Future integration between the two plans is desirable.

4. **Where to From Here?**

During the period July – September 2002 Flood Protection is progressing the resource consent by undertaking the following tasks:

- Meeting with the Waiwhetu Stream Working Group (18 July 2002).
- Newsletter to adjoining residents and interested parties (2 August 2002).
- Draft Resource Consent circulated for comment (mid August).
- Lodging the Resource Consent with Consents Management (by mid September 2002).

5. **Communication**

Control of weed growth in the Waiwhetu Stream is of great interest to local residents. A newsletter explaining the background to the latest consent application has been sent to all residents along the stream.

6. **Recommendations**

That the Committee:

- (1) **Receive** the report.
- (2) **Note** the contents of the report and the need for an eventual review of the Waiwhetu Stream Management Plan.
- (3) **Endorse** the proposed renewal of the existing resource consent for spraying aquatic weed in the Waiwhetu Stream as a contingency measure.

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Attachment 1 : Chronology of Events – Waiwhetu Stream (1978 – present)

Attachment 2 : 2001/02 Compliance Report