

Flood Protection Manager's report for period ending 17 November 2004

1. Manager's comments

1.1 Staff

The Flood Protection Department has a very full work programme for the current year, which will be a challenge to complete. Our work includes construction of new capital works, flood hazard investigations, an advisory service, comprehensive maintenance programmes and asset monitoring and management. Our key work areas will be summarised for the Committee as part of the introductory workshop.

Most projects are now well underway for the year and are largely on track to be completed or on programme at year end – June 2005. The key thing we don't want is another large flood like February 2004, which usually results in additional things to do, and holds up to construction and maintenance work.

2. Waikanae River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]

2.1 Friends of the Waikanae River Inc.

Support for the Friends Group is continuing with a number of issues having been dealt with over the last two months. One of the main activities has been the annual walk-over on 28 September, where GW staff highlight the works undertaken over the last year and discuss the works proposed for the next year. About 30 people attended this year's walk-over, which went from Jim Cooke Park to the sea.

The Friends have raised concerns about the poor state of the haul road on the south bank. The recent gravel extraction operation has caused a number of wet spots and damaged the track surface. We are discussing the matter with the extraction contractor and propose to undertake work to upgrade the track. This issue has highlighted the increased demand for recreational access on the south bank and the desirability of developing a separate track for walkers, which can then be maintained to a suitable standard. The preferred solution to this issue will be addressed at the next LTCCP round.

2.2 Jim Cooke Park realignment

Work on this project is progressing and a separate report (04.633) updating the Committee on progress is contained in this order paper.

2.3 River management within the Waikanae River Mouth Scientific Reserve

On 14 October 2004 Cr Chris Turver attended a meeting called by the Otaihangā Boating Club at which members raised concerns about the build-up of gravel at the mouth of the Waikanae River. They are concerned that the build-up is blocking off the mouth of the river, increasing the potential for flooding and erosion in the area, and making it difficult to navigate small boats between the boat launching ramp and the sea. Graeme Campbell and Garry Baker have now inspected the area from the boating club to the sea, and agree that the build up of gravel is continuing and that it will cause an increase in the flood and erosion potential if nothing is done.

The build-up of gravel is a process that has been monitored for a number of years and we have identified the need to extract gravel from the above area from the results of past surveys. We expect the next survey to further reinforce this need. However working in the area is a complex issue, as it is within a Scientific Reserve.

In the short term we propose to:

1. Obtain agreement from DOC to extract approximately 3000m³ of gravel from the reach between the Otaihanga Boating Club and Queens Drive using our existing consents. We have had initial discussions with DOC's Waikanae Field Officers and do not expect any problems getting this approval and undertaking the extraction in February 2005. As part of this extraction we will be able to do some work around the boat launching ramp that may help with the boating issue.
2. Survey the Waikanae River Cross sections to confirm the overall changes in riverbed levels. The regular 5-year survey of the 59 river cross sections is programmed to commence in December 2004. We will report the results of that survey and the associated gravel analysis to the Committee in April 2005 and then to the Otaihanga Boating Club.
3. Meet with DOC to reach an agreement on the wider issues of river management and possible extraction within the Scientific Reserve. We hope to have this initial meeting shortly, but expect any agreements on the broader management issues to take some time. Once we have an overall agreement, we will need to apply for resource consents to extract gravel in the reach from the area adjacent to Queens Drive to the mouth. We originally included this extraction in our earlier one-off consent but deleted this component of the consent because of difficulties reaching agreements with all parties considered affected by the work.

3. Otaki River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]

3.1 Friends of the Otaki River

The Friends Group annual walk-over was held on 30 September 2004 with about 40 people attending. The main new issue was raised by Fred McDonald of Rangioru, concerned that more needed to be done to protect that area from local stormwater flooding. Fred McDonald was advised that this issue was considered in detail as part of the Otaki Floodplain Management Plan and that the best time to reconsider the matter would be at the next plan review in 2008. The Friends AGM was held on 27 October 2004 with the majority of the community at large representatives being re-elected to the executive committee. New KCDC and GW representatives have yet to be appointed. The Chair of the committee will be elected at the next executive meeting on 24 November 2004.

3.2 Capital works

The extension of the Winstones Rock line is the main capital work progressing this financial year. The work went out to tender in early November 2004, with a resource consent application lodged at the same time. Construction is programmed to commence in March 2005.

In addition to the rock project, we are completing some tidy up works on the walkway around the Winstones Aggregate Plant and placing 1800 tonnes of rock rip-rap just below Chrystalls Bend on the right bank of the Otaki River. Preparatory work is also underway for the South

Waitohu Stopbank and the Chrystalls Extended Stopbank works both programmed to commence in the 2005/06. The high profile of these projects has meant that we have had to commence discussions with affected landowners earlier than we had anticipated.

3.3 KCDC District Plan change

Submissions on District Plan Change 50, updating the flood hazard information, closed on 30 September 2004 with approximately 30 submissions received in relation to the information GW had provided on the Waikanae and Otaki Rivers. The updated information in the District Plan is to take account of the physical works that have been undertaken since the mid 1990's to improve the flood hazard in the Kapiti area as well as adding new information that has been collected. We are now working with KCDC to address the submissions.

4. Hutt River floodplain management [Daya Atapattu]

Good progress has been made in implementing the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan (HRFMP) since it was published in October 2001. The Plan recommends a number of structural and non-structural measures, to reduce the flooding risk to the Hutt Valley (estimated then to cost \$78 million) which are to be implemented over a 40 year period.

We are currently progressing three structural upgrade projects as well as implementing non-structural measures. The HRFMP budget for 2004/05 is \$3.6 million and at this stage, we expect to complete all works programmed for this financial year.

4.1 Ava to Ewen project

The Strand Park river realignment is currently underway and progressing well. This work is costing \$4.9 million and forms stage 1 of the \$16 million Ava to Ewen project, which has the highest priority in the HRFMP.

The river realignment involves placing around 30,000 tonnes of rock and excavating about 100,000 cubic metres of material in Strand Park and the river channel. At the end of October 2004, the contractor (Cashmore Contracting Ltd), had placed about 11,000 tonnes of rock and had started excavating Strand Park. The key to the successful completion of this project by May 2005, as programmed, is the rock supply. The rock supply sub-contractor (Linton Quarry in Palmerston North), is struggling with both rock quality and supply rate due to very high demand for rock as a result of flood damage repairs in the Manawatu – Wanganui area.

The other quarry nominated by the contractor, and capable of supplying large quantities of the required grade of rock, is located near Wanganui. The contractor is particularly concerned as to the ability of the Linton Quarry to supply about 3000 tonnes of the larger size rock (of average 1.0 metre diameter) so is also investigating alternative sources in Westport and Nelson for the larger rock.

The Alicetown stopbank upgrade forms Stage 2 of the Ava to Ewen project and the detailed design and tender documents for this upgrade are essentially complete. We expect to appoint a construction contractor by August 2005 and the work is scheduled for completion by December 2006.

Upgrading of the Ava Rail and Strand Park sections of the eastern stopbank forms Stages 3 and 4 respectively of the Ava to Ewen project. Report 04.617 provides an update on this project

Hutt City Council has engaged consultants to complete the detailed design and tender documents for the proposed Opahu Stream pump station. This pump station is a joint project between HCC and GWRC and forms a part of the Ava Rail stopbank upgrade works. The primary purpose of the pump station is to reduce stormwater flooding in the Opahu Stream catchment, though it will also allow the training bank under the Ava Rail bridge to be removed.

4.2 Belmont improvements

The Belmont structural works, as originally planned, were completed in the 2003/04 financial year. The completed works included bank edge improvements, along an 850 metre length of the river, a small stopbank with a gap at the southern end of Norfolk Street, a walkway and environmental planting. However, this project has been continued through to the 2004/05 financial year to complete minor additional works necessary to address community concerns over remaining erosion and flooding hazards following completion of the substantive works.

4.3 Whirinaki Crescent upgrade

This project is to upgrade the existing Whirinaki Crescent stopbank in Heretaunga to the 2300 cumec design standard recommended by the HRFMP. The project includes land purchase, community consultation, detailed design (including landscape works) and construction. We have consulted with the major landowners (Wellington Golf Club, Silverstream College Board of Proprietors and Upper Hutt City Council) on a preliminary design prepared by the Flood Protection Department. A proposal to locate a section of the stopbank to encompass the Wellington Golf Club's proposed sub-division, instead of the being along their southern boundary, was accepted by the club. If this is feasible, this section of the stopbank will be constructed in 2005/06 on a cost sharing basis. Public consultation on the principal stopbank and its construction are scheduled for 2005/06 and 2006/07 respectively.

4.4 District Plan measures

Changes to Hutt City Council and Upper Hutt City Council District Plans have been proposed as part of the non-structural measures aimed at managing new development in areas liable to flooding and erosion from the Hutt River.

Pre-notification consultation on the proposed changes to the Hutt City District Plan is currently underway and we expect the Hutt City Council to formally notify the proposed changes by March 2005. The Upper Hutt City Council now has an operative District Plan (September 2004) and we intend to commence similar Plan Change discussions with that Council in the 2005/06 financial year.

4.5 Emergency Management measures

Hutt City Council and Upper Hutt City Council are responsible for implementing emergency management procedures during Hutt River flood events. The HRFMP recommends a number of emergency management projects arising from a joint evaluation of existing emergency management procedures, with HCC and UHCC officers being responsible for implementing these projects. Seven projects were completed by June 2004 and a further five projects have been taken up for 2004/05.

4.6 Voluntary actions

A flooding hazard fact sheet for the Hutt River, which gives advice on how to live with the flooding hazard, was prepared and distributed in June 2004. We continue to provide flooding information to public on request. There are no special projects programmed for 2004/05.

5. Planning and development services [Phillip Purves]

The Flood Protection Department receives many requests for flood hazard information, or advice in regard to flooding, and the department has a target of answering 90% of all written requests within 10 working days. The response rate to date (2004/2005) is around 95% within 10 working days.

The following table summarises the situation in regard to the number of formal, written requests that have been attended to during the First Quarter (July to September 2004) and during October:

| | First Quarter | October 2004 | YTD |
|------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----|
| Requests brought forward | 16 | 7 | 16 |
| Additional requests received | 52 | 9 | 61 |
| Responses provided | 61 | 11 | 72 |
| Outstanding requests | 7 | 5 | 5 |

The Flood Protection Department has been asked to participate in Porirua City Council's proposed design workshop to discuss options for the private development of the former Whitby Golf Course. This has become a very contentious local issue and, although the administrative control of Duck Creek rests with the PCC, the various parties see the Flood Protection Department as potentially providing an impartial engineering overview in the consideration of the flooding issues and options.

6. Investigations [Phillip Purves]

6.1 Waiwhetu Stream floodplain management study

The Waiwhetu Stream floodplain management study (WSFMS) is a specific investigation proposal in response to the February 2004 flood event that caused relatively extensive flooding in the Waiwhetu Stream catchment.

The scoping report for the WSFMS was finalised in August 2004, following discussions with Hutt City Council officers on the draft report. Report 04.599 presents the scoping report and provides detail on the background and the proposed programme of investigations.

6.2 Waitohu flood hazard assessment

The Waitohu Stream Flood Hazard Assessment commenced in 2002/03, with the aim of producing updated flood hazard maps and a review of the community's aspirations for the future management of the stream. In February 2004, the project was expanded to include

environmental aspects, noting that the additional consultation would delay the completion of the summary report until December 2004.

Work is continuing on collating the consultation feedback and the preparation of the summary report. It is intended that the outcomes of this joint project will be reported to the Landcare and Environment committees in March 2005.

6.3 Mangaroa River flood hazard assessment

The two-year, capital funded Mangaroa River Flood Hazard Assessment commences this year (2004/05). Scoping of this project is nearing completion and the opportunity was taken to carry out laser ground survey while the equipment was in the area.

7. Operations

7.1 Wellington [Jeff Evans]

The Hutt catchment and tributaries received some unwelcome rainfall on the morning of 16 October 2004. The rain resulted in high river levels in the Hutt River and many of the surrounding streams. It was pleasing to note that there was no major damage to any of our protection works, other than some isolated areas of lateral erosion opposite Manor Park Golf Club. There was also some superficial damage to parts of the river trail and access tracks, but other than that we came through relatively unscathed. The new river protection works put in opposite the large slip by the Te Marua Golf Club also held up well, and the large build-up of excess gravel in the channel has now cut itself back to original bed level.

The native planting season is now complete and staff are well into the willow layering programme. It is hoped that this work will be completed by the end of November 2004.

Drainage work has also been undertaken on the river berms in the Silverstream to Moonshine area to stop water ponding on the grassed areas and access roads.

Hutt River trail

Timber bollards have been installed at the river access points at Belmont, walking access tracks to the Hutt River trail have been created and the road ends have been mulched and planted out.

The trail has been filled and raised on the left bank below the Kennedy Good Bridge. Once this work has been completed bollards will be installed to stop vehicle access to the area.

Seasonal maintenance has included tidying up around planting areas, car parks and trimming back overgrown sections of river trail. New updated maps are being installed on the trail in the lower river. Repairs to seats, tables and signs are ongoing as well as waste and rubbish removal from the berms.

Hutt River ranging services

Ranging and patrol services have continued on most weekends over this period, and bird monitoring of the river berms has also been undertaken.

There were several planting days in September including an interpretation afternoon held at Carter Street with the Belmont Scout Troop and a planting morning held with Hutt Central School in the same area.

The Hutt Valley Marathon Clinic held its annual fun run/walk along the lower reaches of the river while the Upper Hutt City Council held the bridge-to-bridge fun run along the upper reaches of the river.

In late October the Outdoor Expo and Race weekend took place at Poets Park in Upper Hutt. This is a two-day event consisting of competition mountain biking, walking and running.

Watercourses

Temporary protection works have been undertaken at Faulke's footbridge on the Wainuiomata River, to give protection to the right bank bridge abutment. These works will be incorporated into more permanent works once the owner has been granted a resource consent

A stream clearing run has been completed in the Pinehaven Stream with overhanging branches and flood debris in the channel being removed.

Work for the other departments

An artesian bore was capped and sealed at the new Pak-N-Save site in Lower Hutt after being exposed during earthwork excavations. The IBM bore has now had a site refit and all the old pipe-work has been removed. A new chamber cover and inspection lid was installed at the Assembly of God groundwater site in Lower Hutt. This work was carried out at the request of the Resource Investigations Department.

Work is currently under way on prefabrication and installation of three air quality meteorological monitoring masts for Wainuiomata, Upper Hutt and Porirua.

Staff have also assisted the Harbours Department with the six monthly servicing of the MSA oil spill response equipment.

7.2 Kapiti [Garry Baker]

Otaki River

Although two 2-year flood events were experienced in the Otaki River during September and October 2004, no major damage was sustained. With river levels now tending to be lower than over the winter months, gravel extraction has re-commenced. We expect that Winstone Aggregates will extract its full annual allocation of 40,000 cubic metres this financial year.

A brief spell of fine weather has allowed a catch-up in the mowing of stopbanks and berms.

Waikanae River

Two annual flood events were experienced in the Waikanae River during September and October 2004, with no damage sustained.

The annual willow and poplar tree-planting run has been completed.

In preparation for the 5-yearly cross section survey, all survey sightlines have been cleared, survey pins located, and marker posts replaced.

Waimeha Stream

The Waimeha Stream outlet was realigned for the second time within two months. Heavy seas and high tides had eroded the northern sand dunes, leaving a high unstable vertical escarpment. A hand-clearing stream run was carried out at the rear of the residential properties.

Waitohu Stream

The annual willow and poplar tree-planting run has been completed, and a series of small tree blockages at the Porirua Trust Farm were cleared.

7.3 Operations Support [Steve Murphy]

Health and Safety

We are working through the Health and Safety objectives for the year and have just completed the first of the quarterly depot H&S meetings. This meeting included an educational talk by OK Health Limited regarding hearing protection and was well received by operational staff.

As well as the usual ongoing review of our operational safety procedure sheets and associated hazard assessments, this year we are also auditing several of our high-risk operational procedures. To date the trench planting of willows poles has been audited, with staff adhering to all requirements of the safety procedure sheet.

Native plant trials

The joint trial by Greater Wellington and the Wellington Botanical Society, to assess the ability of native plants to replace introduced species such as willows and poplars, is now in its second year. Inspections of the trial sites, at three very different locations on the Hutt River, took place in September 2004 and were independently audited at a later date by Tim Park from Queen Elizabeth II National Trust and Tim Porteous of Greater Wellington. Although there have been varying degrees of success at each of the sites, both auditors thought the results and lessons learnt so far from this trial were invaluable.

Manual clearance of the Waiwhetu Stream

Excell Corporation Limited has successfully undertaken the contract for the manual clearance of aquatic weed from the Waiwhetu Stream for the past nine months, with approximately 24 tonnes of weed and rubbish sent to landfill. Unfortunately, in order to avoid exceeding the annual budget, we have decided to lower our current standard of clearing.

We have had discussions with the contractor and those reaches worse affected by the weed will be concentrated on. We will be actively managing this contract to ensure that the public are not adversely affected following the completion of the Hutt Riverbed survey

7.4 Gravel extraction

The recommendation to the Hutt River Advisory Committee (Report 04.542) that the volume of gravel extracted be increased from 10,000m³ per year to 30,000m³, has meant that changes are required to the extraction licence held by Horokiwi Quarries. We are currently negotiating the volume increase with the contractor.

Gravel extraction figures to the end of September 2004 are set out below.

| River | Area | Contractor | Period Year 2004/05 (cubic metres) | | Year 2003/04 (cubic metres) |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | | Period | Year | Full Year |
| Hutt | Estuary | Winstones | 4,578 | 12,054 | 40,698 |
| | River | Horokiwi | 748 | 748 | 10,380 |
| Otaki | River | Winstones | 484 | 484 | 28,088 |
| Waikanae | Above Greenaway Road | Various | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Below Greenaway Road | Gary Holland Earthmoving | 0 | 0 | 7,310 |
| TOTALS | | | 5,810 | 13,286 | 86,476 |

Geoff Dick
Manager, Flood Protection

Parks and Forests Managers report for period ending 17 November 2004

1. Manager's comments (Murray Waititi)

As usual this time of year we are focussing on getting the parks and forests in top condition in anticipation of a busy summer season. Our work crews are making sure that the lawns are mowed, picnic areas look smart and all our facilities are in good working order.

We are also preparing to launch our summer programmes. As you will see in the December version of *Elements*, there is something for everyone to enjoy. I always look forward to this time of year, it is when all the hard work that the team does really pays off.

2. Planning and policy (Dr Philippa Crisp)

The last couple of months have been very busy. Hutt City and GW officers completed the agreement for transfer of management of Hutt City land in Belmont and East Harbour regional parks to GW. An agreement was prepared, land parcels checked and park maps updated in collaboration with HCC officers and the GW property managers.

The architect has completed specifications and contract documents for the new Ranger's office at MacKays Crossing, Queen Elizabeth Park. Tenders closed 26 October 2004 and are being assessed. Construction is planned to start in December 2004 with completion in March 2005.

Throughout the period, concession applications have been reviewed and ongoing meetings with community groups attended, including ARAC and the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park. Two newsletters have been sent to people with an interest in Queen Elizabeth and Kaitoke Regional Park advising them of the management plan review and its progress.

Briefly, the planning and policy team has undertaken a range of activities. Staff have continued updating GIS data with track categories, field surveys (GPS) and utility services (power, gas, water etc). Regional cycle routes have been discussed with Ian Kirkman (Transport Division) and maps reviewed and commented on. A scoping report for a potential wind-farm along the Climie ridgeline in the Pakuratahi Forest was completed. Staff attended a Heritage Workshop in August 2004 that was organised by the Department of Conservation and IPENZ.

2.1 Management plans

The draft Kaitoke Regional Park management plan was written and released for further public consultation, after a successful Councillor workshop. Thank you to all those that attended.

We also notified Greater Wellington's intention to review the Queen Elizabeth Park management plan and called for public submissions. The regional community has until the end of the year to provide us with comments on both of these regional park management plans.

Fifty-one submissions were received from the community and government agencies on the draft Regional Forest Lands Plan: Future Water Collection Areas. Some submitters wish to be heard and we will be organising a hearing date shortly. Copies of the submissions will be circulated prior to the hearing but are available earlier, if you would like to see them, please contact Trecia Smith and she will provide you with a copy.

Our new Advisor, Fiona Shaw, started in the last week of October. Fiona has just returned from Australia where she has been working for the National Parks and Wildlife Service. She will be responsible for Queen Elizabeth, Belmont and Battle Hill regional parks.

2.2 Pest Animal Control Operations

A ground based 1080 possum control operation was completed in the Lakes block of East Harbour Regional Park during September 2004. The contractors successfully reduced the possum numbers from 38.1% to 1% residual trap catch, which is an outstanding result. Possum control operations are currently in full swing in Speedy's Reserve in Belmont Regional Park and in the northern block of East Harbour Regional Park, (in association with Mainland Island Restoration Organisation MIRO).

Major goat control operations have recently been completed in Kaitoke Regional Park and the Akatarawa Forest. A total of 54 goats, two deer and two pigs were culled in Kaitoke Regional Park and Judas goats placed in all known goat "hotspots". This contract completes the intensive hunting phase and Judas goats will now be used to keep goat numbers down in the park.

In the Akatarawa Forest, high goat numbers were reduced around Mt Wainui during the previous goat control operation in March 2004. In September/October 2004, Mt Wainui was revisited and the area hunted extended further into the Akatarawa Forest. A total of 60 goats and 13 pigs were culled and a Judas goat was placed in each of the hunting blocks.

2.3 Pest Plant Control

We are now starting into the third year of pest plant control, as detailed in the pest plant plans that have been prepared for each park and forest (except for East Harbour Regional Park). Pest plants controlled over the past few months include:

- montbretia, tradescantia, Japanese honeysuckle and aluminium plant at Dry Creek
- German ivy, karo, elderberry, Italian buckthorn and cape ivy at
 - Queen Elizabeth Park

- old man's beard in Akatarawa Forest
- old man's beard vines and seedlings behind Totara Park and at Dry Creek.
- tradescantia and club moss in the Battle Hill bush block.
- hawthorn, broom, gorse and himalayan honeysuckle in the Te Marua bush remnants.

In East Harbour Regional Park, we are beginning the first year of control after mapping the extent of pest plant infestations last year. The most weedy species are being tackled first. Old man's beard, Japanese honeysuckle, climbing asparagus and banana passionfruit have been controlled in the last month. MIRO have been informed about the next steps in the weed control work at East Harbour Regional Park through a presentation given by the Environmental Ranger.

2.4 Monitoring

Bird monitoring is currently underway in the Parks and Forests. Volunteers have completed the recordings in Belmont Regional Park, while in Queen Elizabeth park, Rangers have been working with a volunteer to note all birds seen or heard on the transects established through the park. A recent highlight of this monitoring has been the first recording of bellbirds in Korokoro Valley, Belmont Regional Park. Bellbirds have not been recorded in this valley for many decades and it is thought that they are now returning because of the pest control that is being completed throughout the region. The spread of the bellbirds and other bird species is assisted by the Parks and Forests possum control programmes in place on Greater Wellington land and the Biosecurity Departments KNE programmes underway on Local Authority and private land. This work reduces bird predators and competitors, which improves habitat for birds throughout the region and helps some species to increase their range.

2.5 Dune care

A dune blow-out occurred at Queen Elizabeth Park. In order to help the dune to recover, staff from a number of Council departments came together to plant 1000 spinifex plants on the site in a day.

3. Marketing and design (Amanda Cox)

3.1 Information boards

New information boards for the Wainuiomata Recreation Area have been completed and recently installed – one in the kiosk near the carpark and the other near the Hine Road entrance. Including information on the guided walking tours in the Wainuiomata Water Collection Area, these boards are already helping visitors find their way around.

Next on the list is an information board for the kiosk at Days Bay, to be displayed alongside one from Hutt City Council and a second from the MIRO group.

3.2 Rimutaka Rail Trail/ Incline Interpretation

The opportunity has arisen to work with the Department of Conservation on a combined interpretation project for the Rimutaka Rail Trail and Incline, over which approximately 30,000 visitors walk or bike each year. Together we have developed a combined interpretation brief and a project outline that we can use as a starting point for discussions with relevant community groups. The aim is to launch this new trail at the 2005 celebrations to mark 50 years since the closure of the line and the opening of the new rail tunnel.

3.3 Parks research framework

The aim of this project is to develop some robust, cost-effective quantitative and qualitative research tools to help make decisions on future needs in the Parks. These will include tools to monitor visitor numbers, demographics, patterns of use, and the drivers of satisfaction and enjoyment.

Recently we have convened two focus groups of regular park users and are to have two more of light park users and non-users, to find out their views of the parks and forests.

3.4 Regional outdoors programme

We now have some very good ideas for the summer programme, and we are on track to finalise this by the end of October 2004. The programme will be published in the December 2004 issue of *Elements*. The first event – *Beginners Guide to the Rainforest* is planned for Thursday 6 January 2005 and the final – *the Rotary Centenary event on the Rimutaka Rail and Hutt River Trails* – on Sunday 20 March 2005. Interesting additions this year include *Give Kids a Ride Day* (on a variety of vehicles such as a fire truck, a garbage truck and a 4WD), *Walk Transmission Gully*, and *Gollans Valley Adventure* (in East Harbour Regional Park). As part of the *Pauatahanui Food & Farm Festival* in March 2005 we have also encouraged the Plimmerton Rotary to include a Ngati Toa guided walk up Battle Hill

3.5 Website development

The first stage of the Parks and Forests section of the website is now complete and the information for the website is being written. We expect our new site to be far more user-friendly and easily updated than the current one, and are looking forward to having it up and operational.

3.6 Landscape architect projects

In recent months our landscape architect Annabel Riley has been busy with the following projects:

Queen Elizabeth Park

- Developed landscape plans for the restoration of Whareroa Stream in consultation with the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park
- Implemented planting plans around the Whareroa and Paekakariki toilets

- Developed signs asking people to use the marked access ways and protect the dune areas

Belmont Regional Park

- Planned for the removal of pines at Oakleigh Street and planting in the entrance area.
- Developed a report and sketch drawings of possible designs for the Korokoro Dam in Belmont in consultation with a Friends of Belmont Regional Park.
- Started a concept plan for the Dry Creek entrance, now that the barn is to be removed.

East Harbour Regional Park

- Developed a combined information panel for the kiosk at Williams Park, Days Bay, in consultation with MIRO and Hutt City Council.

Akatarawa Forest

- Completed a landscape concept plan for the Bulls Run Road entrance to enhance opportunities for picnicking and swimming.

4. Western sector (Matt Ballantine)

4.1 Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

Weed control has been the main focus on the farm for work in the last two months. Ongoing thistle work over the past three years is paying off and the whole farm has been covered to ensure that the level of control is maintained. Gorse control for the year is just starting and the farm will be covered to ensure that any new plants are killed.

The southern boundary fence upgrade has been completed. This project was brought forward several months due to a large tree falling across the fence. Along with this, several fence lines on the farm have been upgraded to make them goat proof. This will enable goats to be grazed in two more paddocks on the farm, thus improving the pasture quality and cutting down on the amount of thistle control needed.

The cattle yards are now complete and as well as being a lot safer and more functional they have certainly tidied up the look of the woolshed and yards area.

Lambing has been highly successful this year due to reasonable weather and the ewes being in such good condition when they went to the ram. A few lambs were lost to bad weather early on but we hope that is now behind us. As with the last two years, parts of the park were kept open during lambing and the public made the most of it when the weather permitted. The education sheep mob were lambed a month later to coincide with the start of the school visits and the children have enjoyed seeing newborn lambs and helping to feed them.

Another community planting day was held on the park in September and despite the weather not being that pleasant, a dozen hardy souls turned up spade in hand. The area worked in this time was the Swampy Gully wetlands. This area is looking great after this season's planting.

Education programmes are starting to get into motion as they do each year about this time. A good number of visits are booked in and this year the Ranger will also be doing some visits to talk at the schools.

Park Ranger John Bissell had an interesting visit from two gentlemen who used to hunt and tramp through Battle Hill and into the Akatarawa's in the 1940's. They kindly donated several photos they took in 1948 looking down on Battle Hill from the hills at the back of the farm. It was interesting to hear from them first hand what the area was like back then.

Sadly last month an icon of the valley Bob Guyton passed away. Bob had lived and worked in the valley most of his life which included some time on Battle Hill. Ranger staff attended the funeral, which was well attended by local residents.

While carrying out pest control work on the park in October 2004 John Bissell made a rare find. A golden possum was sitting in a paddock in Transmission Gully. The possum was dispatched and will be sent to the taxidermist and then put up in the education centre for children to see.

A good number of bookings for events are already coming in and the riding season has just started following the farm reopening before Labour weekend.

The Pauatahanui Inlet Trust held a field day at Battle Hill for small block owners to look at riparian planting. It was well attended and the people present obviously learned a lot of valuable information to put in to practice on their blocks.

4.2 Belmont Regional Park

Detours in the Korokoro Valley have been put in place to allow access to most areas that were affected by storm damage earlier this year. We are planning further work to clear windthrown pine trees that block the track to Baked Beans Bend from the Forks. Contractors have felled and cleared a large number of pine trees upstream of the Forks to allow public access back into this popular area.

Staff have repaired other tracks including the Stratton Street stream track, allowing access for various school groups using the area for the Take Action programme.

Staff have also been involved in opening the Rahui Grove Millworkers track. The track provides access from the end of Rahui Grove, Korokoro, to the Cornish Street entrance of the park. Previously access from Korokoro to the park has been limited to the Cornish Street entrance. Opening the Millworkers track allows residents better options to access and use the park. Residents have

been helping out with the track work, with regular working bees led by the Korokoro Environment Group (KEG).

Lambing on Waitangirua Farm has finished, with public access restrictions lifted and full access to all park walkways now allowed. This regular annual closure for lambing is important for Landcorp in order to be able to carry out their farming with as little interference as possible by the public over this sensitive time. Park users are accustomed to this temporary closure and most respect that the area is closed for a short period. The Ranger's role over this period is to ensure that all entrances onto the farmland are signposted as closed, and to respond to any problems or public enquiries concerning the closure.

Two successful Mountain Bike events were held at Dry Creek on 19 September and Stratton Street on 31 October with over 100 riders attending each event.

4.3 Queen Elizabeth Park

The planting season is now drawing to an end this year. Over 8000 plants have been planted in the Park, many with the help of volunteers and community groups. During the next few years this will certainly enhance the park both environmentally and aesthetically. Seeds sourced from the park have already been collected and germinated for next years planting season.

As the busier summer period approaches, the focus in QEP is shifting to maintaining the picnic and amenity areas that are high profile areas for our casual visitors. Landscaping projects around toilet blocks at both Whareroa and Paekakariki have been undertaken and, with the opening of the new toilet block adjacent to the equestrian area at Mackays Crossing, we have been able to remove the old block that was next to the Rangers office. With age this toilet had become quite an eyesore.

Other work in the picnic areas includes the pruning and lifting of amenity trees and a general tidy up of the gardens and edges of the picnic areas. Rangers have also continued with revegetation and nursery work. Even though the planting this year is complete, there is plenty of nursery work with recently propagated seedlings ready to be bagged on. We are now getting a consistent group of volunteers spending time at the nursery helping us out which is excellent for all involved.

Other continuing work includes both animal and weed pest control. Rangers are working well with the new grazing leaseholders in both areas with weed control programmes being agreed upon and put into action and animal pest control operations undertaken.

The MacKay's Crossing overbridge project has began. Staff attended a Transit NZ partnering workshop with other key project stakeholders to increase familiarity with each other and the projects details. We have been heavily involved with Transit regarding the Mackays Crossing overbridge project. A number of workshops and meetings have been held that requires our attendance

and input. The impacts of a project of this scale are widespread and as a result there are many smaller satellite issues that need to be dealt with.

The horse riding stables will be moved shortly to make way for the new north bound on-ramp which, in the short term, will hold all of the State Highway 2 traffic while the overbridge is constructed.

Rangers have recently started working with the Porirua Community Corrections Service. We are providing areas within the park that can be utilised for their work gangs to serve their community service hours. Our focus for them is to weed around plantings in our revegetation areas. Other activities involving Rangers include continued work with the QEP Friends of the Park group and assisting local ornithologists with the annual bird count monitoring.

Wellington Eventing have held two significant horse events over the last couple of months as well as several training days. These are all well attended and popular events within the equestrian community.

5. Eastern sector (Fraser Oliver)

5.1 Akatarawa / Pakuratahi Forest

Maintenance during this period has been mainly routine i.e. clearing debris from watertables, culverts and general runoff maintenance.

Windthrow trees continue to fall down in various places as a result of the strong winds we have been experienced at times, however they have not caused any major issues of late. We have been fortunate that the four wheel drive clubs have assisted on various occasions with the removal of these trees.

Recent heavy rain at the beginning of October has created one issue in the Hukinga Valley. An old culvert has failed and consequently the water and debris have built up to the stage where they have taken out the culvert and the piece of road above it leaving a large impassable chasm. This has been sign posted and taped off to prevent public access and we will be liaising with our Plantation Forestry department as to how we best reinstate this section of road.

Due to the high number of events over this period, the ranger has spent a considerable amount of time working with the organisers to ensure there are no clashes between the various user groups.

Events this period include two mountain bike rides, two driver training exercises, one crosscountry trail riding event for a horse club, 14 Army exercises, 15 four wheel drive club events, one car rally, six motorcycle club events and three quad motorcycle club events. This usage is fairly normal for late spring and early summer as many of the clubs try and get their events completed before the busy Christmas period.

Although the forest has had heavy usage during this period the roading network has stood up well. This is a result of good regular maintenance we have in place.

5.2 Pakuratahi Forest

We continue to work on the watertables throughout the Rimutaka Incline Walkway, Station Drive and the Tunnel Gully / Maymorn forest area. This involves removing large amounts of debris that have accumulated in areas over the last two to three years. Although we maintain the watertables periodically we still need to do a large scale clean out of all watertables every second year or so.

The prison inmate work crews have been kept very busy with a range of jobs such as re-mulching of the riparian plantings, installation of gates around recent logging areas, ongoing potholing throughout the roading network, fertilising of recently grassed areas, painting of fences and bollards in Tunnel Gully reserve, assisting with the installation of new bollards and gorse removal in Kaitoke Regional Park.

We have had one horse event in the forest this period and have had numerous requests from both private parties and commercial firewood merchants to recover firewood

5.3 Kaitoke Regional Park

Preparing the park for the busy summer season is top of our list of priorities this time of year. At the moment this includes cleaning all septic tanks, installing a new pump to increase water flow and pressure to the facility buildings, and applying a non slip coating to the Pakuratahi Forks toilet floor.

We have also had to repair the Pakuratahi Forks swing bridge guy wires, which came adrift when the rock wall they were attached to collapsed due to heavy rain.

The Weir Track has been reopened after its closure during the winter months due to a potential rock fall hazard and damage to a fence that was destroyed by a landslide during the February floods. This track is actively managed for rock fall and is closed during the winter months and during periods of high rainfall. The track is popular with park visitors and is important in showcasing part of the water supply network.

After 16 Kereru were found shot in 2002 it is encouraging to see their numbers increase again. Recent pigeon counts in the campground area where they are flocking to feed on the new willow shoots, averaged 56.

Over 30 Totara were planted at Te Marua to launch the Celebrate Life Totara grove. The trees are planted to recognise milestones in peoples' lives, whether it be the birth of a new child, remembering a relative, completing a marathon, or to celebrate a marriage. Participants received a certificate to mark the occasion. This will be an ongoing informal planting event advertised on the website and will also have two specific planting days next year.

5.4 Wainuiomata

Maintenance has been carried out on all tracks used in preparation for the upcoming season's tours. A small digger was used to remove slips and clear culverts on the walking track to the Huia pipe bridge across the Orongorongo River. Five staff spent a day on the Pack Track removing windfalls, slips and debris. Ongoing work continues on the Wainuiomata side of the Pack Track.

Maintenance has continued on the Orongorongo access road, the remainder of the snow fallen trees have been removed, culverts have been cleaned and a small area of subsidence repaired. A complete list of culvert numbers and accurate distance measurements have been recorded on all roads within the Catchment. This information will be used for the installation of permanent culvert markers. The markers will assist in future maintenance and assessments after bad weather.

Parks and Forests staff, Gareth Cooper and Owen Spearpoint were used to remove a lone wilding pine in the Orongorongo Catchment. The tree was in a very awkward position. Gareth and Owen were taken in by helicopter and had to use ropes and climbing skills to be lowered down to the tree. Once cut down they climbed back onto the ridge and walked out to their vehicle. This was considered a stroll for the pair who successfully climbed Mt Cook earlier in the year.

Bulldozing work has started on the third stage of the boundary fence. This section runs down the Moores Valley ridge. The contractor is realigning the track so it is completely on Greater Wellington land. This will reduce future issues with the neighbouring landowners.

Initial planning stages have begun for the Wainuiomata Mainland Island (Super KNE). A field trip included an inspection of the boundary fence and views into the proposed area. Discussions were undertaken and progress made on the direction of the project. Staff from a number of different areas within Greater Wellington shared positive input on the project.

Initial meetings have also been undertaken regarding next year's 1080 poison operation within the Catchments. This has involved planning of the consents process and consultation with the Department of Conservation who are the major neighbour of the Water Collection Area.

Our first tour of the new season was cancelled due to bad weather and the rivers running high. The safety of the public is the number one priority when we bring people into the Catchment. Two tours are scheduled for November with all involved looking forward to some fine weather.

Visitor numbers have been low in the recreation area due to the bad weather, however this is on the increase as the sun comes out. A number of swimmers were seen in the swimming holes during October, very brave indeed.

5.5 East Harbour

Vegetation cutbacks have now been completed on all tracks throughout the northern block.

The new entrance information panels have now all been installed, this includes one in the Butterfly Creek valley and one on Mount Lowry Lookout (making 20 in total). All internal directional signage also been installed which now means there is directional information at every junction on the track network. And major step up for the park!

Track work is currently underway on the Mackenzie track in the Butterfly Creek valley. This work includes the upgrade and minor re-alignment of the track surface and the installation of some boardwalks. Minor track and run-off work has also started on the entrances to the Kowhai and Mackenzie tracks.

The new bridge, which will replace the current structure at the Butterfly Creek picnic area, has been constructed and will be flown in to the site in early summer.

The 7km run section of a Multisport event was held at East Harbour on Saturday 9 October. The run started at Wainuiomata using the Puriri track, the Main Ridge track and the Ferry Road track to finish at Wellesly College in Days Bay. The Pencarrow coast road was also used as part of the 20km mountain bike ride. The event was completed with a 27km road cycle on the Wainuiomata Coast road and a 7km-kayak section on Wellington Harbour.

An Orchid Walk event on the 31 October was organised by the East Harbour Environmental Association and run by Ray Smith. Topics for the day included looking at orchids and other interesting plants and also discussing the history and geography of the area.

Murray Waititi
Manager, Parks and Forest

Landcare Support, Divisional Accountant's report for period ending 12 November 2004

The financial summary for the first 4 months of the 2004/05 year looks reasonably dramatic at first glance, with \$3 million + variances in four line items. However, these variances are the result of the "good news story" of the sale of surplus land at the Mabey Rd Flood Protection depot.

The net sales proceeds of close to \$3.4 million have been applied to Flood Protection internal debt which effectively spreads the financial benefit across several years. The impact of the disposal for

| Landcare Division | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Financial Summary Statement | | | | |
| For the 4 months ending 31 October 2004 | | | | |
| \$000 | | | | |
| | Year to Date | | | Full Year |
| | Actual | Budget | Variance | Budget |
| External Revenue | 4,652 | 4,670 | (18) U | 14,133 |
| Internal Revenue | 314 | 359 | (45) U | 1,077 |
| TOTAL REVENUE | 4,966 | 5,029 | (63) U | 15,210 |
| Direct Expenditure | 2,484 | 2,694 | 210 F | 9,271 |
| Indirect Expenditure | (1,845) | 1,342 | 3,187 F | 3,955 |
| TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE | 639 | 4,036 | 3,398 F | 13,225 |
| OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) | 4,327 | 993 | 3,334 F | 1,985 |
| Add back non cash items | (2,771) | 347 | (3,119) U | 969 |
| Net Asset Acquisitions | (3,374) | 226 | 3,599 F | 250 |
| Capital Projects (loan funded) | 684 | 1,056 | 372 F | 4,647 |
| Net Reserve/Investment Transfers | 1 | (20) | (21) U | 354 |
| Internal Debt Repayment | 4,071 | 783 | (3,288) U | 2,350 |
| NET FUNDING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) | 857 | 351 | 506 | 0 |

the four months to October 2004 on the net funding position is approximately \$80,000 favourable.

The remainder of the \$506,000 favourable year to date variance in the net funding surplus is mostly due to timing differences - \$197,000 in net asset purchases and \$210,000 in operational expenditure.

Capital expenditure is significantly underspent for the 4 months although as it is loan funded, it has limited impact on this years funding position. Of the underspend, approximately half is due to timing variances, with the balance of around \$180,000 relating to the Jim Cooke Park river realignment. This job is unlikely to progress to the planned position by year end.

Tina Walker
Divisional Accountant, Landcare