

Catchment Management Division

Departmental Managers' Update
for period ending 3 October 2008

Biosecurity (Wayne O'Donnell)

1. Pest Animals: (Ray Clarey)

1.1 KNE Programme

The servicing of all KNE areas continues, with a regular 3 month refilling of all bait stations. A new system has been implemented for recording station information, and good headway has been made on updating the GIS maps for the bait station network.

Vegetation re-growth has been very vigorous in the absence of possums. Access lines are becoming over grown faster than previous years, with considerable effort going into maintaining access to bait stations.

The anti-coagulant bait Pindone (cereal pellets) will be integrated into existing control areas that have very low possum numbers. This bait is less toxic than brodifacoum - the current anti-coagulant used in most areas. Trials at Wrights Hill over the last three years have shown Pindone will keep rats at low levels. Pindone is not very effective for possums, so these areas will have to be watched carefully for any possum incursions. Other baits and anti-coagulant toxins will continue to be trialled as and where appropriate. Cereal baits are most appropriate for urban jobs as risks to domestic cats are negligible.

A big focus for Western Zone staff has been updating Vertebrate Toxic Agent signage to be compliant with new HSNO and ACVM requirements in all KNE areas. This is a major task, and is creating some renewed interest, both good and bad, in our urban control programme. The new signs have to be bigger than existing signage, and more signs are required for each area.

1.2 Feral pigs in urban areas

Pig damage to residential properties is becoming an increasing problem in parts of Wellington City. Some areas are difficult to ground hunt with dogs due to traffic hazards, difficult terrain, dense bush, close proximity to housing and public perception.

Due to this increasing problem the staff are trialling two traps:

- A large live capture trap constructed of steel mesh secured to the ground with warratahs. The trap has a one way swinging door which animals push under/through to get into the trap where the baits are laid.

- A leg holding snare that uses a spring loaded pipe attached to a wire trace (noose). A foot plate is placed under the noose and activates the spring once it is stood on, closing the noose around the animals leg. If the animal runs the spring inside the pipe absorbs the force and prevents the animal from damaging itself or the trap.

The traps are being used in conjunction with a number of baits to attract pigs to the traps. These traps have been used on farms and forests both in New Zealand and internationally.

Pigs have been caught in both types of traps, including a large boar from the Brooklyn area in south Wellington.

1.3 Rabbit control - Kaitoke Regional Park

A large pindone carrot operation has been undertaken at Kaitoke Regional Park over the last month. It was important to get this operation completed before the busy summer months in the park. Rabbit browse was damaging new plantings, and rabbit droppings and scratchings were littering the camping areas. Blood sampling of the population showed 73% immunity to the rabbit calicivirus, meaning the natural cycling of the virus was unlikely to reduce the population.

19 hectares of the picnic and camping areas were baited, with a total of over 1 tonne of bait laid. Pest Animal's staff prepared the pindone bait from fresh diced carrots, which were dyed green and coated in pindone poison. Burrow fumigation was also undertaken in some areas.

Post-operation spotlight checks have sighted no rabbits in the baited areas.

1.4 New external funded operations

- Wellington City Council have allocated funding for possum and rat control in the large bushed gully which contains the Southern landfill in Happy Valley. Biosecurity staff will manage the project with the first stage of line cutting beginning soon, and the control work starting in the new year. This work links in with Carey's Gully KNE to the north.
- Rare birds such as saddleback are jumping the Karori Sanctuary fence and setting up in nearby bush areas, so this is a great opportunity to extend the predator controlled areas of Wrights Hill, Long Gully, Denton/Polhill Reserve and Carey's Gully which adjoin the Sanctuary.
- 90 DOC 200 mustelid traps are being installed at the Lakes Block (Southern part of East Harbour Regional Park) to protect rare seabirds that nest at the two large lakes within the park boundary. Biosecurity staff will install these traps and service them at regular intervals.
- The Korokoro Valley possum and rat control operation in Belmont Regional Park is being extended to cover the rest of the Regional Park land that adjoins Horokiwi Road. A contractor will prepare bait station lines, with Biosecurity staff completing

the control work in the new year. This work will join up with the Horokiwi/Grenada and Seton Nossiter KNE to the north-west.

1.5 Annual Rook Control

The annual rook census survey was completed across the Wairarapa region on 16th and 17th September. All known historical breeding rookery sites were checked for the presence/absence of rooks. As earlier predicted, rookery numbers have increased from 12 known breeding rookeries last year to 21 breeding rookeries at the conclusion of this survey.

Some population increase was forecast due to strong winds at the critical baiting period over the last two breeding seasons.

The survey was brought forward by two weeks this year with the aim of starting control earlier to beat the winds. The aim was to bait nests containing eggs and chicks rather than wait for the main hatch to occur and risk compromising a favourable outcome due to the weather.

The first round of nest baiting commenced on Friday 19th September and was completed on Saturday the 20th. 19 of the 21 rookeries were baited with 109 nests containing eggs and a further 22 nests containing chicks, with a total of 131 nests baited.

On Friday 26th September Amalgamated Helicopters NZ Ltd discovered a further rookery while undertaking agricultural activities. This rookery was treated on Monday 29th September with a further nine nests baited. There are now 22 known breeding rookeries in the Wairarapa.

A second and final baiting run will be carried out in approximately two weeks time.

Although there is an increase in rookeries it is pleasing to see that nest numbers overall are quite low, with the highest count being 28 nests at the Otahome rookery. We suspect that there may be some fragmentation occurring as a result of the nest baiting programme, but response by the public to rook related media coverage has been excellent and enabled us to identify several new rookery sites.

1.6 RPMS review

The review of the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022 (RPMS) is in the final stages.

Public submissions and hearings on the proposed Strategy were heard and considered, with further amendments made to produce the final RPMS document. It is proposed to have the RPMS ready for Council approval this calendar year. All submitters will then receive a written response detailing GW's decision on their submission, and have the right to appeal to the Environment Court. The final Strategy document will be publicly notified and come into force when all appeals (if any) have been concluded.

Response letters to those who submitted on the proposed RPMS are currently being finalised.

2. Pest Plants: (Richard Grimmett)

2.1 Regional Surveillance Species

This year Biosecurity staff will increase efforts to complete more surveys. Priority has been given to delimiting around known Total Control and Surveillance species sites. Data gained from this work will be of significant benefit for future cost assessment and forward programming.

A rural survey is planned for farmed land adjoining Lake Wairarapa to delimit the Hornwort infestation, assess best process to survey rural properties, and provide the Parks Department with information on potential pest plant infestations.

Since the previous CM meeting, 1,284 properties were surveyed with 7 Regional Surveillance, 12 Total Control and 10 Site Led species found.

All LINZ properties in the region were recently surveyed to assess if additional pest control was required. LINZ has been allocated additional Crown funding to ensure compliance nationally with RPMS rules. Most LINZ sites were very small and only a few boundary control species were found. No request for additional work was made following the survey.

2.2 Boneseed

The boneseed control programme commenced early following initial inspections that showed most plants were budding.

Areas controlled were increased as control boundaries are pushed inland from affected coastal areas. This exercise is to identify the inland boundaries of the infestations which will enable accurate forecasting for future operations. Areas affected include:

Mataikona, Castlepoint, Riversdale, Whangaimoana, Mangatoetoe, Lake Ferry, Whatarangi, Ngawi, Porirua Escarpment, Kapiti urban.

Kapiti: All boneseed work is now complete across the service delivery area north of the Waikanae River to our Horizons Manawatu boundary. Less than 500 plants have been controlled across this large area, a significant decrease from seven years ago when tens of thousands of plants would have been present. Over 250 residential properties were inspected as part of this programme. Work has also been completed on this species in reserves being worked on for biodiversity restoration.

South Wairarapa: Considerably less boneseed plants now visible. Previous work by abseilers in difficult terrain has been very successful. Some inaccessible areas have been treated by aerial application. This contract was completed on the 13 September.

Two Wairarapa College students joined staff searching for boneseed at Ngawi for a few days. The students were excellent value. Positive feedback was provided to their supervisor.

Masterston: The Riversdale operation is progressing with large numbers of plants removed from sites where there has been fire, soil disturbance and other events. This operation has gone very smoothly with no complaints or incidents reported. The contractor commenced survey work at Castlepoint during August. Two work experience students were utilised in the dune areas.

3. Bovine Tb: (Graeme Butcher and Grant Crawford)

3.1 2008/09 vector control programme

The AHB approved vector control programme for the 2008/09 year includes:

- 191,965 ha possum control
- 12,145 ha possum control carried forward from 2007/08 year.
- 40,293 ha of possum and ferret surveys
- 210,670 ha of pig surveys
- Trend and performance monitoring.

The table below summarises the areas contracted for the 2008/09 year.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GW BioWorks	83,227	0	26,161	0	109,388
J G McCaslin Ltd	23,262	0	0	0	23,262
Professional Guiding	67,783	0	14,132	0	81,915
T Oakly	0	0	0	210,670	210,670
Still to be let	29,838	0	0	0	29,838
Totals	204,110	0	40,293	210,670	455,073

The following table details areas of the 2008/09 control programme which have been completed as at 30 September 2008.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GW BioWorks	1,799	0	418	0	2,217
J G McCaslin Ltd	0	0	0	0	0
Professional Guiding	4,385	0	0	0	4,385
T Oakly	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	6,184	0	418	0	6,602

To date, only 6,184 ha or 3.0 % of the control programme has been completed and assessed by either a performance monitor or audit.

Approximately 1.0 % of surveys have been completed and assessed by audit.

An estimate of contractor possum control progress as at 30 September 2008 has been made following a review of their monthly reports. Contractors estimate they have completed approximately 22,461 ha (11.0%). This progress includes partial progress on several contracts.

3.2 Preferred Supply Option

A preferred supply parcel of 10,607 hectares (4 projects) has been awarded to J McCaslin and approved through the AHB VectorNet system.

3.3 Monitoring

During the 2008/09 year, 110 trend monitors and 38 performance monitors are required.

The first monitoring tender round has been released and will close shortly. Awarding of these contracts should occur mid October.

The AHB still need to approve the budgets for 47 trend monitors. Once this occurs these projects will be let in a final parcel.

3.4 Contract Termination – Stratford Pest Control

During the 2007/08 year, four strata were let to Stratford Pest Control under the AHB's proposal to increase contractor capacity within the Wellington Region. Stratford's performance is as follows:

Stratum 1: passed on second monitor

Stratum 2: passed first monitor

Stratum 3: failed first monitor, no attempt to rework occurred.

Stratum 4: completed half of the project, then returned to the South Island and have not returned.

From May to September GW staff made several attempts to get work plans and proposed timeframes from these contractors to determine how they propose to complete their contract.

Due to unsatisfactory and insufficient progress the Stratford Pest Control contract was terminated on 18 September. This decision was made after consultation with the AHB.

The following strata will be now be released as a preferred supply contract following the termination:

- South East Wairarapa – Stage 3 HR 2
- Stronvar HR 1

3.5 Tendering progress

There is still 29,838 hectares of possum control to be let in the 2008/09 year.

In the AHB tender round two, six projects including nine strata (24,019 ha) were released. Tenders for this parcel close on 17 October and it is proposed to have them awarded by 30 October.

3.6 2007/08 Contracts - Incomplete

The following projects should have been completed in the 2007/08 year. These projects have been carried forward into the 2008/09 programme.

Project	Stratum area (ha)	Contractor
	Total ha	
Te Wharau HR 4	1,610	J McCaslin
Waiorongomai HR 2	4,717	J McCaslin
Sth East Wai – Stg 3 HR 2	1,119	Stratford Pest Control
Stronvar HR 1	4,700	Stratford Pest Control
Totals	12,146	

Progress to complete the carry forward operations had been minimal during July to August due to unfavourable weather conditions. However, J McCaslin has made good progress during September.

- J G McCaslin Ltd Waiorongomai 65% complete, Te Wharau will commence as soon as this project is completed.
- Stratford Pest Control No progress made. Contract terminated on 18 September.

3.7 Pig Survey Progress

The following table details pig survey progress to date for the 2008/09 year. The number of returns has steadily progressed in recent weeks.

Project	Area (ha)	Required Samples	Samples received to date
Akatarawa	20538	30	16
Bideford	39023	40	6
Castle Hill	4529	30	13
East Alfredton	4900	20	8

Homewood Riversdale	25789	120	14
Kapiti	30,966	50	2
Mataikona	6,779	40	27
Moonshine	6,035	20	18
Otaki Crown	3,551	15	4
Pakowai	6,909	60	45
Stronvar	25,976	85	17
Tinui	35,675	120	77
Totals	210,670	630	247

3.8 Feral Cattle

Local occupiers have reported that some feral cattle remain in the vicinity of the South East Wairarapa Stage 2 and 3 operations.

Three feral cattle have been seen on Timbrel. Approximately 20 cattle have been seen in Te Munga and other cattle have been noticed within Stoney Creek.

GW is waiting for funding to be approved by the AHB to renew the contract for control and inspection in the area.

3.9 Tb Infected Herds

		I Herds @ June 2008	I Herds @ end of August (one clear test in brackets)	Target I Herds @ June 2009
	Cattle	0	0	9
VFA	Deer	0	0	
VRA	Cattle	9	9 (4)	

Flood Protection (Graeme Campbell)

1. Manager's comments

Work is progressing well on a wide range of activities within the region. Of particular note are:

- Commencement of the Strand Park Stopbank upgrade (the 4th and final stage of the Ava to Ewen upgrade)
- Preparation of the resource consent for the Waiwhetu clean up and channel improvements.
- Meeting Mangaroa residents with Upper Hutt City Council to explain the outcomes of the flood hazard assessment work undertaken by GW
- Input into the development of the Councils new asset management system
- Establishing an Advisory Committee for the preparation of the Waiohine Floodplain Management plan.

All work is progressing as we had programmed at this stage. The Mangaroa residents meeting will however require some considerable unplanned input.

We now have a full complement of staff with the appointment of Irene Trumper as the Department Secretary and Tony Vatselias as a River Hand based in Masterton.

2. Western Floodplain Management Plans [Daya Atapattu]

2.1 Ava to Ewen Project

Goodman Contractors Limited was appointed for the Strand Park reconstruction contract on 10 September 2008. The contractor has now commenced setting up site facilities and safety fencing. Construction works will commence from the Market Grove end and proceed towards the White Line West. During October and November 2008 the contractor will work on the Market Grove access and the St Albans Grove stormwater pipe. The stopbank footpath will be closed during the construction period and alternative access will be provided along the riverbank walkway.

A second community planting day for the Opahu Stream was held on 27 September 2008. This completes the planting programme for the year.

2.2 Boulcott/Hutt Stopbank Project

At the September 2008 meeting the Hutt River Advisory Subcommittee endorsed the implementation programme for completing the Boulcott/Hutt stopbank project. Staff have now started the process for obtaining statutory approvals required for commencing construction. This phase of works involves refining the feasibility design, completing land entry agreements with the two golf clubs and preparing designation and resource consents applications.

2.3 Whirinaki Crescent Stopbank

Our application to remove 5 trees to enable site filling to complete the Whirinaki Crescent stopbank is currently on hold and staff are working with the Wellington Golf Club and the developer to look at options to reduce the number of trees requiring removal. If an alternative alignment cannot be agreed staff will proceed with our current application and go to a resource consent hearing.

2.4 Maoribank Investigations

Outcomes from Stage 1, risk assessment, were presented to the Hutt River Advisory Subcommittee on 25 September 2008. The risk assessment has identified three areas at high risk of erosion damage caused by bed degradation. Officers are currently preparing concept designs and cost estimates for three options that can be considered by GW to lower the above risks to an acceptable level. The budget requirements for the most urgent works have been included in the Flood Protection Operating Plan for consideration through the next LTCCP (2009-2019).

2.5 Kapiti Floodplain Management

2.5.1 Waikanae River

Officers have prepared design drawings for the proposed strengthening of the river bank adjacent to the Otaihanga Boating Club. This involves the construction of 150 metres of rock rip rap along the river bank to the design alignment. This work is permitted under the current operational consent and is programmed to be completed during February 2009. The Otaihanga Boating Club has requested that a ramp and steps be incorporated in the design to allow access to the river for recreational purposes, such as canoeing. We are currently working with the boating club to confirm the final details.

Preparations have commenced for the 10 year reviews of the Waikanae and Otaki Rivers Floodplain Management Plan. As these are the first FMP reviews to be undertaken by GW, a workshop was held to discuss the scope and programme for completing these reviews. The first task will be to commission NIWA to review the hydrology for the two rivers. This will update the rainfall and flood frequency data and assess climate change impacts.

Following this the hydraulic analysis will be undertaken and we will fully review the past and future works and planning procedures. A detailed scope and programme of these reviews will be prepared and presented to the Committee in November 2008.

A Manager's walkover of the Waikanae River was completed on 28th August. This enabled officers to review the effectiveness of previous years work and discuss future works. Generally the assets along the river are performing very well. However there is the usual amount of minor maintenance required, including willow management, groyne erosion repairs, gravel extraction and track improvements. Operations staff will prioritise this work and compile a works programme for the year.

2.5.2 Friends of the Waikanae River (FWR)

There is continuing interest in the rehabilitation of the Dricon site on the Waikanae River. This forms part of the Waikanae River Planting Plan. Honda NZ has allocated \$2,225.00 to FWR for the restoration work at this site.

The FWR walkover is scheduled for 9th October 2008.

2.5.3 Otaki River

A Manager's walkover of the Otaki River was completed on 11th September. The assets along the river are performing well. As for the Waikanae River, ongoing maintenance is still required, including willow management, debris fence repairs, rock edge protection, channel realignments and gravel extraction.

2.5.4 Friends of the Otaki River (FOR)

Honda NZ have allocated FOR \$2,225.00 for restoration work at Chrystalls Bend.

The annual walkover of the Otaki River with FOR was successfully held on 25 September 2008. Approximately 40 people attended the walkover covering the area from Upper Rahui to the mouth. One of the main issues to come out of the walkover was that of maintaining the native planting. There is no easy solution to this and is something we will continue to work on with the Friends Group. Their desire is for an additional river hand to be located in Otaki to help with environmental work on both the Waikanae and Otaki Rivers.

FOR are currently applying to DoC for funding for the restoration of Otaki River estuary. Council staff are helping FOR prepare a management plan for the area which acknowledges the importance of site preparation, planting and maintenance work necessary for the estuary site.

The FOR AGM is scheduled for the 8th of October 2008, at 7.30pm

2.5.5 Chrystalls Extended Stopbank

As part of the environmental enhancement funding for the Chrystalls Extended stopbank a second footbridge was constructed across the Waimanu Stream. This was the last stage of the new walkway between SH1 and the Chrystalls lagoon, providing safe access for the general public to and around the lagoon.

2.5.6 South Waitohu Stopbank

We have finalised the stopbank design, which will utilise locally sourced sand as well as imported material. A draft resource consent has been prepared on this basis and circulated to key stakeholders and directly affected landowners. We are currently awaiting comment from them before we lodge our application at the end of October. An easement agreement has also been agreed in principle with the landowner.

3. Western Operations [Jeff Evans]

3.1 Hutt River

The Hutt River bed level survey is now underway, with staff cutting survey sight lines every 100 metres, from the mouth of the river through to Te Marua Lakes. Native planting is still in progress and willow rejuvenation work has been carried out in Upper Hutt. Access track and drainage repair work has also been carried out between Silverstream and Moonshine.

Staff have also prepared the Opahu Stream site for the public planting day.

3.2 Hutt River Ranging Services

Despite the continuing bouts of wet weather the river trail had steady usage throughout with the usual walkers, runners, cyclists and dog owners.

There were a number of events over the period. The Capital Multisports held a half/full marathon along the river trail with 300 participants and the Ixion motorcycle club held a trials event down by Ewen Bridge. The Sensing Murder film crew also used the Belmont flats to film a sequence for their television documentary.

3.3 Otaki River

Staff have been busy removing wind blown trees from access roads along the river, and willow rejuvenation work is also underway. Native plant mulching has been undertaken in conjunction with the Otaki friends. Trees were removed and the berm levelled in preparation for planting at the gas crossing site on the lower river.

3.4 Waikanae River

The old fence line on the Howarth property has now been removed and the area is being cleaned up of unwanted vegetation. Track clearing work has been undertaken in the Dricon area.

3.5 Watercourses

Willow rejuvenation work is underway on the Wainuiomata River and a number of large storm damaged trees have been cut out of the Kenepuru and Porirua Streams.

4. Wairarapa Operations [Mike Longworth]

4.1 Wairarapa River Schemes

The work programmes in the Wairarapa rivers for this financial year 2008/09 are under way with planting approximately 50% completed. The main construction work will get underway once the summer starts and river levels are lower.

Wairarapa staff ran a workshop for all the Departments operational staff to examine the methods, including dozer work, that have been employed over the last few years in the Wairarapa rivers. The consultant Gary Williams critiqued the work examples examined which was very useful and informative for the staff. The main points from the day were the importance of the design alignments, buffer zone planting and the sparing use of the dozer for river alignment to support the plantings.

Staff are meeting with Fish and Game to discuss the year's works programmes in an effort to build a better rapport and understanding with the new staff at Fish and Game. Fish and Game have been critical of GW work over the last year so it is important to build up a better understanding of our respective work.

4.2 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme

Development Work LWVD

The detailed planning for the development work budgeted at \$752,000 for this year is being developed. Construction work will not start until the summer.

4.3 Gravel Extraction

Most of the gravel extraction licences for 2007/08 have been issued which takes up close to the full year's allocation of gravel in the upper Wairarapa valley. This is a similar pattern of licence issuing as in previous years.

4.4 Investigations and Technical Advice

Waingawa River Scheme Review

Staff and consultants associated with the review are making good progress with the analysis of data associated with the scheme review. A meeting of the Scheme Advisory Committee on the 14 October will be presented with the findings to date.

4.5 Waiohine Stopbank Upgrade

A staff steering group is overseeing the planning of this project. A separate report covering progress is included in this order paper. The project will encompass more than just upgrading the stopbanks as it will also look at the flooding risk and how to mitigate the risk to the adjacent flood plain.

4.6 Technical Advice

Staff have responded to 13 significant requests for advice over this reporting period. These include information requests from the public, local authorities and also flood protection comment on resource consent applications to Greater Wellington.

4.7 Drainage Schemes

The drainage schemes are being closely monitored by staff. At this point there is nothing significant to report.

5. Investigations and Assets [John Eyles]

5.1 Waiwhetu cleanup project

Staff are on target to lodge a notified resource consent application in October. A lot of effort has been put into public consultation during the detailed design phase. This is paying dividends as we are finding strong community support for the clean up, and widening and deepening. We are hopeful of receiving many submissions of support and that the consent can be granted before Christmas without the need for a hearing.

Detailed design costings for the clean up and flood protection parts of the project will be available in early October. We still expect construction to begin in March 2009.

The next Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Subcommittee meeting scheduled for 14 October has been postponed to 10 November. This is to enable the project team to concentrate on the delivery of project outputs and to give adequate time to prepare for the WSAS meeting.

5.2 Asset management

Flood protection assets in our region are generally in good order and are being maintained appropriately. The results from the annual asset audits are reported separately in the order paper.

Staff are heavily involved in the blueprinting of flood protection requirements for SAP asset management project. The impact on current business processes is being assessed.

6. Strategy & Technical Support [Sharyn Westlake]

The following table summarises the number of formal, written requests for advice responded to over the period from 21 August – 26 September 2008. These include information requests from the public, local authorities and also Flood Protection comment on resource consent applications to Greater Wellington.

	21 August – 26 September 2008	YTD
Requests brought forward	4	2
Additional requests received	39	92
Responses provided	36	87
Outstanding requests	7	7

On 23 September officers attended a public meeting arranged by Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) to discuss the Mangaroa River flood hazard maps. The meeting was chaired by Mayor Wayne Guppy and attended by officers from UHCC, the Flood Protection Department and more than 120 members of the public. Affected landowners and residents were very vocal, with questions and opinions about how the results of the study are being used for planning and resource consent purposes, and referred to in UHCC LIM's. Concern was expressed about potential effect on property values. Further detail about technical aspects of the study, including hydrology, hydraulic modelling and erosion hazard derivation was requested and another public meeting will be held in a few weeks to present more detailed information and answer further questions.

Over this reporting period the Strategy and Technical Support team has provided comment on the Hutt City Council Draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy, and proposed Plan Change 79 to the Kapiti Coast District Council District Plan.

The draft National Policy Statement for Flood Risk Management has been received from the Ministry for the Environment, and we are in the process of providing comments on this draft before it goes through the Section 32 reporting process.

Land Management (Dave Cameron)

1. Manager's comments

1.1 Winter Works Programme

The winter works programme has largely been completed. In the main it has gone very well. This has been aided by a smaller than usual pole planting programme, a direct result of the consecutive droughts faced by hill country farmers. Generally landowners have done a smaller programme than usual rather than cease work completely. This is very encouraging.

Soil moistures have remained at high levels throughout the latter part of the winter, however September rainfall was about 35% of long term monthly averages. Coupled with recent high wind run from the north-west the soils are drying out very rapidly.

A highlight for staff has been the establishment of the first Afforestation Grant Scheme forest in the region. The block has recently been release sprayed and staff are extremely satisfied with the overall result.

1.2 Akura Nursery Expansion

Presently GW has the ability to produce 20,000 poles from its existing nurseries. Should the Hill Country Erosion initiative be funded through the 2009-19 LTCCP process then additional poplar and willow poles will be required to meet long term demand.

In addition to maximising production from our existing land base, options currently being pursued are land purchase, lease, and a possible joint venture with the Masterton District Council. Funding scenarios for each option will be presented to the November meeting of the Catchment Management Committee, including discussion on existing arrangements for payment of dividends and overheads.

1.3 Ohariu Rural Living Day

The second Ohariu Rural Living Day was held on Saturday 27 September. This field day offers a great mix of information and entertainment for Ohariu community based around sustainable rural living and the Ohariu Stream. The day is part of a nationally run voluntary incentives programme where selected communities are encouraged to undertake environmental programmes at the individual or community level.

The day involved either demonstration or talks on the following subjects:

- Fencing
- DVD on endangered longfin eels
- Kereru discovery project
- Electric fishing
- Stream health monitoring

- Rural fire fighting
- Forestry and carbon
- Ecosourcing

An excellent turnout ensured the success of the day.

1.4 Issues for the next period

- Debrief the winters operations
- Model options for Akura expansion
- Prepare Department Health and Safety Plan for 2008/09

2. Farm Plans (Don Bell)

2.1 Delegated approvals - New Plans, Reviews and Annual programmes

Approvals	New Plans, Reviews	Annual Plan Target	Total 10 Year Expenditure	
New Sustainability Plans	0	3	\$0	
New Conservation Plans	0	2	\$0	
Ten Year Reviews	2	20	\$84,760	
Programme delivery	Annual Programmes Undertaken	Annual Plan Target	Expenditure to date	Annual Plan Budget
Annual Programmes	130	150	\$273,100	\$565,000
Isolated works	2	5	\$464	\$10,000

2.2 Planning Comment

In the period 22 August to 3 October, twenty-eight hill country erosion control Annual Programmes were approved totalling \$101,932 (\$38,278 Regional grant).

Land Management staff have completed the hill country winter works programmes including the follow-up weed control. A small number of biodiversity programmes are still in progress.

The Makoura Stream Care Group under Tony Faulkner's guidance, have organised public planting days on three sites in the mid and lower reaches of the stream.

A small willow clearing trial was also completed by the Care Group adjacent to the sewerage treatment ponds in conjunction with the Masterton District Council and Stuart Forbes, involving a digger fitted with a grab and cutting head. A very tidy job was achieved in a cost-effective manner. A significant advantage was the ability to cut and remove trees in the water.

2.3 Taueru Willow Debris

Concerns have been expressed by landowner Tom Lett relating to the build up of willow debris on the Taueru River and the potential threat to the bridge on the Castlepoint Road, staff surveyed the Braemerton – Taueru reach and identified one large log jam and other areas of scattered debris.

This debris has been building up over the last two winters and discussions will be held with landowners and Consents staff to identify a course of action.

3. Akura Conservation Centre (Stan Braaksma)

3.1 Nursery Operations

- While pole demand is down by 30% on 2007, supply has been a well managed such that there are minimal numbers of unsold poles. Our own 3 metre pole cut was 12,000, with a further 5,500 poles purchased from Aokautere and a local supplier. Flood Protection have taken all the available willow supply comprising 8,000 2m poles and 4,000 stakes.
- Shelterbelts were trimmed mid winter and the mowing and mulching of slash at Akura is well progressed at present. Mangapakeha nursery has had all heavy and reject pole material removed to a burning pile, and the remaining material is ready for mulching. Soil conditions are still extremely wet for vehicular traffic. Mangapakeha main track has been graded, metalled and water tabled following a sustained period of logging traffic. Log harvesting has finally finished on the neighbouring forest.
- 600 new cuttings were planted and released in mid September with some blanking of rows required to maintain an even age class.

- Row release spray is due to commence and a maintenance fertiliser order is in place for mid October application.
- Mangapakeha nursery has had a major stock ingress due to floodgate damage from the July easterly storm. This floodgate has had temporary repairs to block stock movement. Early detection has minimized damage to stool beds.

3.2 Trading

- Trading has been solid throughout the winter. Unlike last winter when very dry soil conditions were experienced, this winter soils have been very moist, even saturated in some locations. Early indications are that there has been an improved sales season on 2007. While major woodlot species are down there has been improved turnover in natives, riparian and aesthetic species.
- Plants traded include 172,000 P.radiata, 20,000 for exotic woodlots and 48,500 native species.
- 200,000 P.radiata seedlings have been ordered from Cambridge and Arborgen Nurseries for 2009. Clients have been asked to place forward orders. Where these are large orders they will be secured by a deposit.
- Much of the eco-sourced seed collected has now germinated at Morgans Road Nursery in Blenheim and a 2009 seedling order is being established. Masterton based Stars Trust will establish species from cutting stock and has collected seedlings from other forest sites for potting. We anticipate a total of 30,000 native seedlings in 25 different species fully eco- sourced for 2009.
- There has been a pleasing return of used Dynex sleeves for recycling. Many are still entire and are sorted for re-use. The recycling programme and costs will be reviewed after the winter, as currently there is no discounting for recycling or the existence of a recycling levy for new plastic product. Our ongoing commitment is to encourage the collection of plastic off farmland.
- The end of year sale on Sept 29 and 30th, was well supported with minimal plant stocks remaining.

3.3 Staffing

- The current staffing of Paul Henderson and Raewyn Hullena have coped very well this winter. The trading has been more constant and consistent than last year. We are well ahead in the winter tidying operations on planting, mulching and mowing. The pole cutting crew has done a considerable amount of work in tidying stoolbeds.

3.4 Budget

The Akura Business Unit operating surplus at the end of September is showing a large surplus in nurseries and a small surplus in trading. The traded result is reduced because we have surplus pole protection sleeves in stock. Most costs are to hand, however additional revenue will be posted in early October to improve the overall surplus at the end of the major trading part of the year.

Activity	Budget 2007/08 – Operating Surplus	Operating Surplus to September 2008
Nurseries	9,000	(21,300)
Trading	(44,000)	7,700
Total	(35,000)	(29,000)

4. Biodiversity / Streams Alive (Michelle Bird and Jacki Byrd)

Western Zone

- Planting has been completed in the Waitohu Stream with the planting of 4,000 plants.
- The review of the Streams Alive programme is nearing completion. Recommendations are being redrafted in light of wider staff consultation. The report will be presented to the November meeting of the Committee.

Eastern Zone

- Planned and ran the Ohariu Rural Living Day as part of the Ohariu Voluntary Incentives Project, including distribution of a newsletter
- Met clients in the Mangaroa, Wainuiomata and Karori catchments to plan this years work
- Pre-plant and blank spot spraying and planting at Mangaroa catchment. 18 sites on 16 properties with one more property to complete. A total of 4,740 plants planted.
- Pre-plant spot spraying and planting at Wainuiomata catchment on two properties. 330 plants
- Pre-plant spot spraying and planting at Karori catchment on one property. Two more properties to complete. 50 plants
- Pre-plant spot spraying and planting at Upper Ruamahanga at the Springlea site. 1,500 plants

- Attended the Biodiversity Practitioners meeting and New Zealand Ecology Conference in Auckland

5. Operations (Kevin Burdan)

- The 2008/09 winter work programme is all but completed with a little release spray to complete, along with a few small late planting jobs. The weather for the past month has been most conducive for the pole and seedlings to get a good start. A limited amount of rain and warm days have really boosted the plantings.
- There was no silviculture done during this period. This activity will start in the middle of October.
- The Onetai forestry venture planting was completed. This is the first of GW's plantings under the Afforestation Grant Scheme and the establishment to date has been most successful. The release spraying of this 90 hectare block has also been completed

Contract Pole and Seedlings Planting – Year to Date

Activity Contractor	Completed this Period	\$	Annual Plan Target	Year to date ha	\$
Pole Planting	3,920	15,198	11,000	9,395	37,018
Seedling planting	22.5ha	12,441	150ha	115.5ha	55,553
Release Spraying	92,570	21,326	170,000	95,000	21,942
Total		48,965			114,513

- Properties involved with contract pole planting this winter numbered fifty one. Contract pole planting normally accounts for 65% of the programme. The remaining pole planting is undertaken by landowners.
- Properties involved in contract seedling planting and release spraying this winter numbered twenty four
- There have been four helicopter pole flights this winter. This is less than usual and reflects the reduction in numbers of poles planted this year.