

## Catchment Management Division

Departmental Managers' Update  
for period ending 14 November 2008

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### Biosecurity (Wayne O'Donnell)

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#### 1. Pest Animals: (Ray Clarey)

##### 1.1 Improvements to the KNE bait station system

The Western Zone urban and peri-urban Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) possum and rat baiting programme has undergone a number of improvements since the return to servicing by internal GW staff.

Improvements have included:

- Recording the exact location of over 7,000 bait stations in the system - made possible by affordable hand-held high sensitivity GPS units.
- Re-numbering of bait stations to correct errors such as repeated numbers and missed stations.
- The development of a spreadsheet form for each control area. This allows quick, clear recording of data and access to relevant information. These forms are printed on the back of the aerial photo maps.
- Utilise GIS mapping system with new layers to show lines, routes and tracks on each map, and the fastest access route. The information also includes which stations were full or empty at the last service. This allows decisions about the optimum bait/toxin matrix and will result in less bait being used.

The detailed information will also assist with service line cutting, maintenance and countering theft and vandalism. With increased public awareness surrounding toxin use, it is important to have quick access to detailed information where control is being undertaken.

##### 1.2 Submission on proposal to ban glue board traps

Biosecurity submitted on the proposal by MAF BNZ to ban the use of glueboard traps for rodent control on humane grounds. Glueboards are a non-drying adhesive panel which is placed on 'runs' used by rats and mice. The rodents stick to the board when attempting to cross it, and they remain alive and cannot escape.

In the submission GW acknowledged the potential animal welfare issue with the traps, and supported the phasing out of their use over a five year period. GW also expressed concern over the loss of glueboard traps for rodent control in high value biodiversity areas. If traditional trapping or baiting techniques are not successful, glueboards can provide a valuable alternative as they do not require the animal to eat bait or physically enter a trap. GW requested the right of Ministerial exemption for the use of glueboards in high value

biodiversity areas or in the event of a human health disease outbreak. If this is approved, GW recommended the current rules for other live capture traps being applied to glueboards.

### **1.3 Submission on the proposal to allow the importation of dromedary camels into New Zealand**

Biosecurity submitted on the proposal to ERMA to allow the importation of dromedary camels into New Zealand for a tourism venture. A number of questions were raised regarding the proposal including quarantine restrictions, the potential of camels as vectors for human and animal disease and restrictions on the ownership, breeding and fencing of camels.

A primary concern is if the animals became a popular amenity species for lifestyle farmers, such as llamas and alpacas. Overseas ownership show that camels are very difficult to contain and the standard New Zealand farm fence, and even deer and cattle facilities, would not be suitable. Biosecurity staff could be faced with the task of destroying any escaped animals. Police recently destroyed two escaped water buffalo in Auckland, an example of another large exotic species not suited to local farming practices.

### **1.4 Submission on the proposed MAF BNZ Surveillance Strategy**

Biosecurity submitted on the proposed MAF BNZ Surveillance Strategy for New Zealand. This document is intended to lead biosecurity surveillance across all fields, and could impact on the current surveillance work of GW. Comment was made on the proposed generalised national aspects of the strategy, and the requirement to meet minimum surveillance standards.

Because every region undertakes surveillance for specific pests in a specific way, it would be difficult for national standards to meet the requirements of every stakeholder and region. Meeting generic national guidelines may compromise our regional surveillance, and utilise extra resources and time without adding surveillance value. GW requested more detail on what would be expected of GW under the strategy, how this would affect our RPMS and where funding for any additional spending would be sourced.

### **1.5 Rising material and compliance costs**

Rising raw material costs are beginning to be transferred to the consumer by a number of our material and service suppliers and providers. World feed crop prices have raised the price of bait, increasing fuel has raised helicopter hourly charge rates, and world lead and brass prices have increased the price of ammunition.

For example, Animal Control Products, the major supplier of our brodifacoum, Diphacinone and 1080 possum baits have raised their bait prices effective from January 2009. A 25 kg bag of 0.15% aerial 1080 pellets has increased from \$63.00 to \$66.00. Based on a 9,000ha aerial 1080 operation the new price would increase the total cost of toxic bait by \$2,160. Although a relatively small increase, this price would be added to an increased charge for helicopter time, rises in staff hourly rates and additional compliance and administration costs from new

ERMA regulations following the 1080 review. When compiled, the number of small increases will have a noticeable impact on the overall costs of our operations.

## 1.6 Argentine ant incursion

An incursion of Argentine ants on the Miramar peninsula was reported by a member of the public in October. It is suspected that the ants were accidentally transferred to the site in materials used on a nearby construction site.

Argentine ants are listed as a Surveillance species in the proposed RPMS. They are a highly invasive exotic species, which pose both a biodiversity and human health threat. They compete with native species for resources and cause considerable human nuisance in homes and gardens. Argentine ants are known to be present in Kelson and Petone, and it is possible that this new population has been transferred from one of these sites. Biosecurity staff are currently investigating the feasibility of monitoring or control on the peninsula. Victoria University has been approached about providing suitably experienced students to undertake or assist with a delimiting survey. The University has been involved with the Kelburn ant situation for many years. The survey needs to be undertaken during warm sunny weather.

## 1.7 Control works for Parks Department

The following is an update of the pest control works arranged and carried out for the Parks Department during September and October 2008.

**Pakuratahi Forest (Tunnel Gully)** - Volunteers are actively trapping this area.

**Speedy's Reserve** - Half of the bait stations were serviced on 20 October. The remaining stations are currently being serviced.

**Korokoro Valley (Belmont RP)** - Bait station servicing was completed by 4th September and some service lines were re-cut and marked by Hutt Valley Contracting Services.

**East Harbour RP** - Hutt Valley Contracting Services completed a service round of the core area during September. There was an 8.3% decrease in the consumption of rodent baits compared to the previous service round in July. The MIRO volunteers are targeting wild cats around the core area which is being referred to as 'the mainland island'.

Over 70 DoC 200 predator traps were installed around the Pencarrow Lakes Block during October and will be serviced monthly. The target species are mustelids and rats.

**Whitireia Park** - A night search for possums was carried out on 9 October 2008. No possums or hares were observed but 20 rabbits were shot.

**Wainuiomata Mainland Island** - All bait stations and traps were checked and serviced during September. Carrots were used to bait the possum traps and Diphacinone paste in biodegradable bags was used in the bait stations. A new rodent sausage type bait is being trialled and shows promise as an additional rodent control tool.

**Cannons Point** - Servicing of these bait stations was completed during September.

**Dry Creek** – Servicing of these bait stations was completed during October by Hutt Valley Contracting Services.

**Kaitoke RP** - Pindone carrot bait was used to control rabbits throughout the campground and top terraces of the park during August and September. The operation was considered to be very successful.

## **1.8 Pest Control at Pukaha-Mount Bruce**

The Department of Conservation is going to undertake an intensive operation to control ship rats and possums within the Mount Bruce Reserve commencing 10 November 2008. This is an integral part of the Pukaha Forest Restoration Project and complements the regular control work carried out within the buffer zones by Horizons and Greater Wellington.

Two Biosecurity Department staff will assist DoC for two days as there is a need to have several service providers that are Approved Handlers with Controlled Substance Licences. One of the methods to be used is 1080 pellets in bait stations. DoC has offered reciprocal assistance whenever required.

## **2. Pest Plants: (Richard Grimmett)**

### **2.1 Annual Meetings with TA & Crown Agencies**

The annual meetings with TA's have been completed. Discussions focused on road reserves, monitoring and biocontrol opportunities. Road reserves are a natural pathway for the transmission of pests. Opportunities exist for TA's to invest in biocontrol initiatives to reduce operational input requirement. Monitoring discussions centred on opportunities to use the skills of GW staff to assist in planning, data collection and analysis. All items discussed were received favourably. Further meetings will occur next year with the intention of formalising some initiatives.

The first series of meetings have also been completed with Govt entities (DoC, OnTrack, NZ Transport Agency). The series of meetings provided an opportunity for each organisation to give an overview of current strategies and operations and then discuss common ground where collaborative work was possible. A major outcome from all of these meetings has been discovering that each agency is completing a lot of biodiversity and biosecurity work individually and in conjunction with Community Groups and/or Territorial Authorities. A key project will be to complete a stock take of pest species within each agencies area of control, identify and record community programmes that are underway and funds available. Many opportunities to work collaboratively were revealed. Some projects will be formalised this year and lead into MOU agreements next year, subject to funding.

### **2.2 Containment Boneseed**

Work on this species during the last two years has resulted in the control area boundaries moving inland from coastal settlements into the surrounding escarpments and along the foreshore. The control boundaries are now almost entirely at the outer infestation limits.

These areas have much lower plant densities, but require control to eliminate re-infestation opportunity. The escarpment areas are challenging and require both helicopter and abseil specialist work. Future biodiversity opportunities are being investigated to provide indigenous cover to some of the affected areas.

### 2.3 Lake Wairarapa Wetland

Biosecurity staff are planning a rural survey around the lake perimeters looking for RPMS species. This information will be valuable for informing the lake governance board on future pest plant control requirements. Two key species of interest are Alder and Hornwort infestations. These species will be mapped to give extended catchment pest control overviews. Discussions have been initiated with DoC regarding a collaborative approach to controlling Hornwort.

## 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	90,804	0	26,161	0	116,965
J G McCaslin Ltd	23,262	0	0	0	23,262
Professional Guiding	72,353	0	14,132	0	86,485
M & M Contractors	7,823	0	0	0	7,823
T Oakly	0	0	0	210,670	210,670
Still to be let	9,868	0	0	0	9,868
<b>Totals</b>	<b>204,110</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40,293</b>	<b>210,670</b>	<b>455,073</b>

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

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GW BioWorks	5,051	0	418	0	5,469
J G McCaslin Ltd	4,717	0	0	0	4,717
Professional Guiding	12,388	0	0	0	12,388
M & M Contractors	0	0	0	0	0
T Oakly	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22,156</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22,574</b>

Approximately 11% of the possum control programme has been completed and assessed by either a performance monitor or audit. Only 1% of the survey programme has been completed and assessed by audit.

An estimate of contractor possum control progress as at 30 October 2008 has been made following a review of their monthly reports. Contractors estimate they have completed approximately 45,184 ha (22%). This progress includes partial progress of several activities. It should be noted that most contractors spent the early part of the new financial year completing 2007/08 contracts.

### 3.2 Preferred Supply Option

A preferred supply contract covering 10,607ha 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 (99 monitors) has closed and successful tenderers notified.

The remaining trend monitors will be released by sole negotiation to two local contractors. This process has been approved by the AHB. This decision reflects the lack of interest and/or skills by external monitoring contractors in the Wellington region

### 3.4 Contract Termination – Stratford Pest Control

During the 2007/08 year, four strata were let to Stratford Pest Control under AHB’s proposal to increase contractor capacity within the Wellington region. This trial was a failure as Stratford failed two monitors and made no attempt to complete the reworks within the approved timeframes.

From May to September the VM made several attempts to get work plans and proposed time frames 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, after consultation with the AHB.

### 3.5 Tendering progress

In the AHB tender round two, six projects (nine stratum over 24,019 ha) were released. Tenders for this parcel closed on 17 October and successful contractors selected 30 October. Contract documents have been sent to successful contractors for signing.

M & M Contractors from Te Puke were awarded the Holdsworth Carterton projects. They are new to the region and have been undertaking possum control contracts for approximately 12 months. Prior to that they completed AHB monitoring contracts.

One project (Akatarawa HR 1 – 4,049ha) from tender round two received no tenders.

A further two strata (5,819ha) will be let in a preferred supply contract. These projects were previously let to Stratford Pest Control.

### 3.6 Pig Survey Progress

The following table details pig survey progress to date for the 2008/09 year.

Project	Area (ha)	Required Samples	Samples received to date
Akatarawa	20538	30	21
Bideford	39023	40	6
Castle Hill	4529	30	14
East Alfredton	4900	20	8
Homewood Riversdale	25789	120	14
Kapiti	30,966	50	5
Mataikona	6,779	40	31
Moonshine	6,035	20	19
Otaki Crown	3,551	15	4
Pakowai	6,909	60	50
Stronvar	25,976	85	21
Tinui	35,675	120	88
<b>Totals</b>	<b>210,670</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>281</b>

### 3.7 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.

Greater Wellington has received AHB approval to undertake additional control during November.

## Flood Protection (Graeme Campbell)

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### 1. Manager's comments

The key matters of note over the last month have been:

- The lodging of the Waiwhetu cleanup and channel widening consent.
- Progressing with the SAP asset management and LTCCP budgeting work.
- The second meeting of Mangaroa residents regarding the interpretation of the flood and erosion hazard information for the Mangaroa River.
- Confirming with Fish and Game New Zealand the process for working through the issues around the amount of machine work being undertaken in the Wairarapa rivers.
- The undertaking of emergency repairs in the Waiohine, Waingawa, Waipoua and Upper Ruamahanga Rivers follow a five year flood on 7 October 2008.

The third, fourth and fifth items above are likely to put pressure on our staff resources if they are all to be progressed in parallel with the existing works programme. At this stage the work requirements are manageable but they do have the potential to need a greater input. The work with Fish and Game New Zealand will be able to be progressed but, if an outcome of that is that new resource consents are required to continue with our river work, additional inputs may be required. The Mangaroa work committed to at the second meeting will be able to be progressed quickly but, if there is a demand for further investigations from Upper Hutt City Council, we will have to reassess the position. We will keep the Committee informed as these matters progress.

### 2. Western Floodplain Management Plans [Daya Atapattu]

#### 2.1 Ava to Ewen project

The Strand Park stopbank reconstruction works are progressing well. The current contract work area from Market Grove to the Hutt Valley High School boundary is now fenced off and the stopbank footpath closed. Alternative access is provided along the riverbank walkway. The contractor has now removed the derelict toilet block, backfilled the excavation and installed about 50 m of new 750 mm pipes in upsizing the St Albans Grove stormwater pipe. The contractor has also started forming the stopbank from the Ewen Bridge end and foundation excavation for the retaining walls at Market Grove has commenced.

#### 2.2 Boulcott/Hutt stopbank project

We are now refining the feasibility design for the designation/consent applications and preparing the agreements with the two golf clubs and Hutt City. The stopbank design along the preferred alignment will be refined to provide more accurate information on the extent, height, finished shape and the landscaping works associated with the proposed works.

Consultation with the golf clubs on the design refinement commenced with meetings on 17 October 2008. Hydraulic modelling to confirm the design stopbank crest levels for the preferred alignment is underway. We are also preparing 3D simulations of the Boulcott clubrooms on the current site and on the former Rentokil site to investigate effects on the floodway.

### **2.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank**

Our application to remove five trees to enable site filling to complete the Whirinaki Crescent stopbank is still on hold until the Wellington Golf Club and developer of the Wine Glass subdivision agree on a proposal to reduce the number of trees requiring removal from five to two. If an alternative alignment cannot be agreed, we will proceed with our current application and go to a resource consent hearing.

### **2.4 Maoribank investigations**

We are currently preparing the concept designs and cost estimates for three options to lower the Maoribank erosion risk to an acceptable level. The concept designs and cost estimates are for edge protections, works at the outcrop and for possible channel widening below the bend. A workshop with the specialist consultants will be held in mid November 2008 to review and confirm the remedial options.

### **2.5 Kapiti floodplain management**

#### **2.5.1 Waikanae River**

Officers have received a letter from the Otaihanga Boating Club seeking financial assistance for raising their club rooms to develop the building into a community, educational and recreational facility. The existing floor level of the clubrooms lies approximately 1.5 metres below the 1 in 100 year flood level. Consideration of the request is covered under Report No. 08.730 in the Agenda.

Tenders have been invited for the supply and delivery of Grade A rock for the proposed rip rap edge protection on the left bank of the Waikanae River near to the Otaihanga Boating Club. It is proposed that the rock be stored on Department of Conservation (DoC) land west of 11-15 Makora Road prior to commencement of the works in February 2009.

A project plan is being prepared for the 10 year review of the Waikanae River Floodplain Management Plan.

#### **2.5.2 Friends of the Waikanae River (FWR)**

A public walkover of the Waikanae River was completed on 9 October 2008. This is a requirement of our consent for operations work in the river. 18 people attended the walkover along the south bank of the river from SH1 to the Otaihanga domain. Representatives from DoC, KCDC, FWR, GWRC and other members of the public attended. A list of action points was noted. A large number of these related to the removal of exotic species along the lower "Topliff" reach of the river. Overall all those that attended showed appreciation for all the work carried out by GWRC, FWR and KCDC.

The rehabilitation of the Dricon site is continuing with site preparation being implemented by GWRC staff. The area has been sprayed and a further spray will take place in late summer. Other sites on the river corridor for restoration were identified, and these will be considered as possible additions to the existing planting plan. FWR's next executive meeting is set for February 2009.

### 2.5.3 Otaki River

A walkover of the Otaki River was completed on 25 September as required by our consent for operations work in the river. A bus was used to transport the 45 people to points of interest along the north bank of the river from the gorge to the river mouth. Representatives from DoC, KCDC, FWR, Fish and Game New Zealand, Daily Mail, GWRC and other members of the public attended. Of particular interest was the completed Chrystalls stopbank, Chrystalls walkway, the two footbridges and the substantial native plantings.

On 30 September a presentation was given by Flood Protection staff to 20 students at the Te Wananga-o-Raukawa Maori university about catchment management and the role of flood protection in Otaki. The structure and purpose of flood protection activities in Otaki was explained as well as how we work with other GWRC departments, KCDC, landowners and iwi/hapu to achieve our goals. There was a lively and constructive discussion on the work GWRC does in the area.

### 2.5.4 Friends of the Otaki River (FOR)

FOTOR are currently applying to DoC for funding for the restoration of the Otaki River Estuary. The deadline for this application is 5 November 2008. The FOTOR AGM was held on 8 October, with guest speaker John Sawyer from DoC making a presentation about restoration work in wetland areas.

A 600 m<sup>2</sup> area at Chrystalls Bend was earmarked for the Honda TreeFund money received in October. The costings for this site in terms of preparation, restoration and maintenance were determined in conjunction with GWRC Biosecurity staff and FOTOR.

### 2.5.5 Chrystalls Extended Stopbank

Contractors have sprayed and mulched the 4000 native plants that have been planted between the stopbank and the river by Friends of the Otaki River.

### 2.5.6 South Waitohu stopbank

Comments on the draft resource consent application closed on 29 October 2008. We have received a number of submissions from directly affected landowners and key stakeholders, and are currently working through the issues raised with them. At this stage we will not be in a position to lodge the resource consent application until Christmas.

Estimated project costs for the stopbank are also over the current budget. However, from past experiences on similar projects, and given the current market, we expect tenders to be

lower than the estimate. Tenders will be advertised once we have some certainty on the resource consent.

### **3. Western Operations – Jeff Evans**

#### **3.1 Hutt River**

Willow and native planting programmes on the Hutt River are now complete. Survey maintenance and sight line cutting is progressing with staff still well ahead of the surveyors. Maintenance work continues on repairing fences and access tracks, and staff are assessing requirements for purchase of rock rip rap for the 2008/09 works programme.

#### **3.2 Hutt River ranging services**

Work continues with ranging and enforcement where required on the river berms. Misuse of vehicles has been an issue over the last period and a further approach has been made to the Police for some assistance in this area. A number of community planting and maintenance days have been held over the last period and a programme of maintenance works for the Hutt River trail has now been developed.

#### **3.3 Otaki River**

Willow and native planting is complete on the Otaki River. Bed recontouring works will soon be under taken at the Lutz-Wallace debris fences to stop the river outflanking them. Willow rejuvenation work has also been undertaken in a number of areas to help increase the vigour of the willow lines. Staff are also currently sourcing prices for rock rip rap for programmed maintenance works.

#### **3.4 Waikanae River**

Planting work is complete for the season and berm development work is under way below Dricon.

#### **3.5 Watercourses**

Wind-blown tree removal has been the main job over the last period. The inclement windy and wet weather has kept staff busy removing fallen trees from streams and minor watercourses in the region. Maintenance stream runs are programmed to start over the next few weeks. A mouth cut has been undertaken in the Waimeha Stream.

### **4. Wairarapa Operations [Mike Longworth]**

#### **4.1 Wairarapa River Schemes**

##### **General**

The work programmes in the Wairarapa Rivers for this financial year 2008/09 are progressing with planting completed and tree lopping under way. The main construction work will get under way once the summer starts and river levels are lower.

In the upper valley a flood on the 7 October caused high river flows in the order of a five year return period at both Wardells bridge on the Ruamahanga River and in the Waipoua River. Flood damage from this event was reasonably extensive in the Waipoua River and to a lesser extent in the other northern rivers. Staff are compiling the extent and value of the damage, with a possible request for flood damage funding to follow.

#### **4.2 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme**

The capital development 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. The Scheme Advisory Committee was presented with the findings to date at a meeting on 14 October.

##### Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan

Work has commenced on the floodplain management plan for the Waiohine River floodplain. A project team has been formed to supervise the development of a project plan and programme for Phase 1 of the floodplain management planning work. James Flanagan is the project manager.

##### Technical advice

Staff have responded to seven 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 GWRC.

#### **4.5 Drainage Schemes**

The wet winter has caused higher than normal power usage and the Pouawha pumped drainage scheme had to have the switch board rebuilt. The unplanned electrical maintenance and high power costs have meant that the over all budgets for the drainage schemes are over expended for this time of the year but expenditure will be closely monitored with the aim of bringing the expenditure back on budget by the year end.

## 5. Investigations and Assets [John Eyles]

### 5.1 Waiwhetu cleanup project

A significant project milestone was achieved with the lodging of resource consent applications with GWRC and Hutt City Council in October. Consent is sought to clean up the contaminated sediments from the lower reaches of the Waiwhetu Stream. At the same time, flood improvement works to widen and deepen the stream from Bell Road to the mouth will be undertaken. The consents were publically notified on 25 October in *The Dominion Post* and *The Hutt News*, with submissions closing on 25 November. We hope that many submissions of support are received and that a hearing will not be required.

Detailed design costings for the cleanup and flood protection parts of the project have been completed. An environmental enhancement concept plan to improve the environs of the lower Waiwhetu has been prepared. The next steps in the project involve shortlisting suitably experienced contractors, preparing contract documents, tendering and signing a contract agreement. Construction is scheduled to begin in March 2009, however the unknowns in the consenting and tendering processes may impact on the proposed start date.

A Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Subcommittee meeting was held on 10 November. The recommendation for that meeting will be put to the Catchment Management Committee for consideration before a final recommendation to Council is made.

### 5.2 Asset management

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

## 6. Strategy and Technical Support [Sharyn Westlake]

The following table summarises the number of formal, written requests for advice responded to over the period from 27 September – 31 October 2008. These include information requests from the public, local authorities and also Flood Protection comment on resource consent applications to GWRC.

	21 August – 31 October 2008	YTD
Requests brought forward	7	2
Additional requests received	32	124
Responses provided	37	124
Outstanding requests	2	2

Over this reporting period the Strategy and Technical Support team have provided comment to the Ministry for the Environment on the draft National Policy Statement for Flood Risk Management.

A second public meeting to discuss the Mangaroa River flood and erosion hazard study was held on 3 November. This meeting was a follow-up to the one held on 23 September, to provide detail about technical aspects of the study, including hydrology, hydraulic modelling, erosion hazard derivation and property values. The 3 November meeting was chaired by Mayor Wayne Guppy and attended by the Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) Chief Executive Officer, Max Pedersen, officers from UHCC, the Flood Protection Department, Laura Watts (Hydrologist), Peter O'Brien (Property Consultant) and about 60 members of the public (a decrease in numbers from the previous meetings' 120 attendees). Once again, 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 LIMs. Outcomes from the meeting were as follows:

- Regional Council officers to undertake site inspections with residents who request follow-up information
- Residents with issues regarding building, resource consents, or LIMs to address these to UHCC Chief Executive Officer, Max Pedersen
- Mayor Guppy to advocate on behalf of residents to GWRC in terms of what happens next.

## Land Management (Dave Cameron)

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### 1. Manager's comments

#### 1.1 Ballance Farm Environment Awards

This is the eighth year that Greater Wellington has supported the Ballance Farm Environment Awards. In the early years there was little difficulty in attracting good numbers i.e more than 15. Latterly the numbers have dwindled to the point where the credibility of the Awards could be questioned. This year only six entrants have entered by the closing date.

This predicament has been looming for the last three years. Interestingly the Lifestyle Award has a good number of entrants; however this Award is unique to Greater Wellington and cannot be considered along with the mainstream categories.

A meeting has been arranged with management of the BFEA Trust to discuss the issue. Greater Wellington contributes \$25,000 per year to the running of these awards as well as considerable staff time. The structure of the awards management in this region needs to be reviewed as does the budget allocation. This is particularly so with additional pressure on budgets over the next few years.

The Awards have been a great opportunity to showcase the best in environmental and land management. It would be a shame to lose them but there may be an opportunity to re-package them in a more user-friendly way.

#### 1.2 Afforestation Grant Scheme

The Government's Afforestation Grant Scheme has completed its first year of planting. Two pools of funds are available, the Public pool and the Regional Council pool. A total of 214 hectares have been planted this year, 124 hectares from the Public pool and 90 hectares from the Regional Council pool.

Two areas in the Wairarapa have been planted, 90 hectares at Blairlogie from the Regional Council pool and 40 hectares at Wainuioru from the Public pool. Greater Wellington is the only Regional Council to take advantage of the Regional Council pool. This is expected to change for 2009 when other Councils will submit applications.

A further 323 hectares has funding approved for next year from the Public pool.

#### 1.3 Poplar and Willow Research Collective

This Collective has been operative in a very low key manner for the last fifteen years. It has survived on funding from a small consortium of seven Regional Councils (including Greater

Wellington) who have each contributed \$7,500 per annum, and additional contribution from HortResearch. The total budget was about \$60,000 per annum.

An application for substantial funding was placed with the MAF Sustainable Land Management Fund (Hill Country Erosion). The application was successful in securing \$735,000 (incl. GST) over the next four years. This will be reliant on all regional councils contributing cash to the fund. A total cash contribution of \$125,000 is sought.

The annual contribution from Greater Wellington is likely to rise to \$25,000 and will be shared between Flood Protection, Akura Conservation Centre and Land Management.

This increase in funding will enable new clones of poplars and willows to be bred, existing unreleased clones to be evaluated and new germplasm sought for future breeding. The breeding programme is an essential insurance policy both to improve the field performance of poplars and willows, but also to mitigate against the threat of wind-borne disease and pest incursions e.g. poplar rust and willow sawfly.

## 2. Farm Plans (Don Bell)

### 2.1 Delegated approvals - New Plans, Reviews and Annual programmes

Approvals to-date	New 10-year Plans, Reviews	Annual Plan Targets	Total Programme Estimates	
New Sustainability Plans	0	3	\$0	
New Conservation Plans	0	2	\$0	
Ten Year Reviews	2	20	\$84,760	
Annual Programmes	99	130	\$412,197	
Programme delivery	Annual Programmes Undertaken	Annual Plan Target	Expenditure to date	Annual Plan Budget
Annual Programmes • Sustainability plans • Conservation plans • Shelter plans	135	150	\$279,400	\$550,000
Isolated works	2	5	\$2,000	\$10,000

### 2.2 Planning Comment

In the period 3 October to 7 November, two hill country erosion control Annual Programmes were approved totalling \$6,987 (\$2,375 Regional grant).

Land Management staff have been tidying up loose ends from the winter works and weed-spray programmes. The very wet winter has reduced the longevity of sprayed spots in some planted areas and a follow-up has been necessary. At this time of the year also, a response is

often needed against specific weeds such as blackberry, wilding willow and bindweed (amongst others) that threaten young plantings.

Staff attended the NZ Association of Resource Management annual conference in Nelson which had the theme “ICM – are we wiser than we were?” Tony Faulkner was elected to the NZARM Committee and will undertake the role of editor for their “Broadsheet” newsletter.

A mapping schedule for new 10-year plans and reviews has been prepared and our consultants will start working through this as from mid-November. Land-use-capability (LUC) maps are the foundation of our hill country erosion control plans.

Our involvement in a Meat & Wool NZ mentor group, which is overseeing the development of a Land Environment Plan for their industry, is nearing an end. A final draft package is under preparation which includes three increasingly advanced levels of plans, a toolkit and guidelines.

### **3. Akura Conservation Centre (Stan Braaksma)**

#### **3.1 Nursery Operations**

- The row spraying is 60% completed and both nurseries have received a full mulching and mowing. Nursery poplar and willow growth has been good on the back of good spring rainfalls with cooler than normal soil temperatures. The intermittent north-westerly gales have caused some topple damage especially to the younger Tangoio willow blocks at Akura.
- 600 new Fraser poplar cuttings have been planted with the irrigation system ready to go on new and one year growth areas.
- The majority of the shrub willow blocks have been fully harvested this year for use by Flood Protection. These blocks were overgrown and have taken considerable tidying.
- The annual fertiliser order with Ballance has been organised and will be applied this month. The annual soil testing shows the nurseries nutrient readings are at optimal levels and only need maintenance levels of the key growth elements.
- Mangapakeha nursery is recovering from the extremely wet winter soil conditions. Temporary fencing and floodgates have been installed after being wiped out in the July floods. There is still a problem of sheep and cattle access to the nursery. Improvement to some sections of the fence are required, as is a meeting with all neighbours to impress on them the costs and production losses associated with stock damage.
- Tenders are currently being sought for stump and high pruning, with high pruning to commence in December. Stump prune is usually carried out in February – March and will involve the harvesting of 350 kgs of willow foliage per week supplied for research purposes to Massey University. This research will be part of an evaluation on the climate change gases expelled using alternative feed sources in sheep.

- A 10 year budget has been produced for nurseries adding in spare capacity for more stoolbeds and the addition of a full irrigation system at Akura. A sustainable production base of 28,000 3m poles/ year should be attainable.

### **3.2 Trading**

- Staff are currently evaluating Akura's trading for the winter. Most stock issues have been processed. In terms of seedling numbers sold, this has been a solid year and an improvement on 2007. Traded species include, P.radiata 180,000, exotic timber trees 22,000, and native species 48,500.
- 250,000 pine seedlings have been ordered from Cambridge and Arborgen Nurseries for 2009. Other orders could still arrive as landowners seek to take advantage of the various incentive programmes around carbon sequestration.
- Much of the eco-sourced seed collected has now germinated at Morgans Road Nursery in Blenheim and a 2009 eco-sourced seedling order has been lodged. Wairarapa Star's Trust have been contracted to do the native cuttings and forest floor seedlings propagation (4,600). Of the 49 native species sold at Akura, 28 will be fully eco-sourced for the winter 2009. Of the 43,000 ordered 65% will be sourced locally. Seed collection for the 2010 season is to be organised once seed stocks and germination performance have been measured.
- There has been a good 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 shortly, as currently there is no discounting for recycling, or a levy applied for new plastic product. Our commitment is to encourage the collection of plastic off farmland.

### **3.3 Staffing**

- The current staffing of Paul Henderson and Raewyn Hullena at the Akura Conservation Centre has coped very well this winter season. Matthew Henderson has been employed as a student for small jobs around the Centre.
- Considerable time and supervision has been spent with the Waru pole cutting gang in nursery operations. This crew has performed in terms of both quantity and quality throughout this last year. It is hoped that they show continued interest in future nursery contract work.

### **3.4 Budget**

The Akura Business Unit operating surplus at the end of October is showing a significant surplus in Nurseries, relative to the overall budget, and a small surplus in trading. The trading situation reflects a large amount of unsold stock, notably, sleeves, railway irons and netting. A stocktake is being carried out to quantify the value of stock and how it compares with the opening stock values. A clearer picture will emerge in the six month review.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Budget 2007/08 Operating Surplus</b>	<b>– Operating Surplus to October 2008</b>
Nurseries	9,000	(18,900)
Trading	(44,000)	(19,200)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(35,000)</b>	<b>(38,100)</b>

#### **4. Biodiversity (Michelle Bird and Jacki Byrd)**

##### Western Zone

- Planting has been completed in the Western zone for this year; some release spraying will be carried over the next three weeks.
- The review of the Streams Alive programme is nearing completion. Recommendations are included in report (08.836) attached to this order paper.

##### Eastern Zone

- Appointments with clients in Mangaroa, Wainuiomata and Karori catchments to check this year's work and plan next year's work
- Tidy up Upper Hutt nursery after planting season, and a visit to a property in Ohariu Valley with wetlands, stream sides and forestry needs
- Winter debrief meetings with Michelle Bird and Land Management Team
- Assist with Streams Alive review report
- Ballance Farm Environment Awards applications
- Meet with Masters student interested in using Streams Alive sites in her research
- Attend Freshwater Ecosystems Action Plant Meeting

##### **Debrief meeting for the Ohariu Rural Living Day**

About 200 – 250 people attended with most people visiting around lunchtime. The inclement weather made it difficult by being cold and windy although not raining.

Electric fishing by Mike Joy and Summer Warr worked well, and it was well attended once fish-life started being found. The stream area was freezing cold, so people didn't want to hang around for long. Organic home gardening stall with the chooks was also a highlight.

People were really interested in the topics being presented, and were keen to engage and interact with stall-holders. This was especially so with the demonstration about growing native plants from bush leaf litter which worked very well.

People were interested in the carbon-credit stand because it was so practical and it was a definite plus having plants for sale. The presence of local businesses was very positive and worked well, e.g. Earthworks.

**5. Operations (Kevin Burdan)**

- 250m of flood fence, along with a series of retards have been completed in the first stage of a five year river stabilisation plan for the Rough Hill Reserve. This area has been planted in willow poles.

**Contract Pole and Seedlings Planting – Year to Date**

<b>Activity Contractor</b>	<b>Completed this period</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>Annual Plan Target</b>	<b>Year to date ha</b>	<b>\$</b>
Pole Planting	250	970	11,000	9,645	37,989
Seedling planting			150ha	115.5ha	55,553
Release Spraying	21,176	6,171	170,000	116,176	28,114
Total		7,141			122,055

- Properties involved with contract pole planting this winter numbered fifty four. Contract pole planting normally accounts for 65% of the programme. The remaining pole planting is carried out by landowners.
- Properties involved in contract seedling planting and release spraying this winter numbered twenty four
- Contract crews assisted twenty four properties with their planting of shelter belts and wetlands

## **Silviculture**

The 2008/09 silviculture programme has kicked off with two crews being engaged on private forestry work. Although farmer response to entering a silviculture programme has been cautious, there are a large number of stands ready to proceed with work now that a good spring has eventuated.

- Silviculture has been carried out on two properties
- 11.2ha of silviculture has been completed in the Metro forests, and 2ha of thinning in the Reserve forests.

## **Integrated Catchment Management (Ian Gunn)**

I have recently returned from an extended holiday in Europe. As a consequence of this and the members of the TCM Establishment Committee being focussed on LTCCP matters, there has been limited progress on the TCM project.

### **Wairarapa Moana**

This project is growing in momentum with the completion of a “500 year visioning exercise” involving members of the Establishment Board and their technical staff. There was an excellent attendance and good agreement on the issues ahead of the project. The information gathered from the day is currently being collated. The three themes selected on the day are;

- Identity – telling stories
- Environmental management within the whole Wairarapa Moana catchment
- Sustainability

Tuna (eels) continue to have a high profile due to the death of eels during a drain cleaning operation last summer. The long finned tuna is a threatened species and there is interest in protecting the species within the Wairarapa Moana. The challenge is to co-ordinate all the various interests.

### **Emergency Management**

Operation Phoenix will occur in the second week of November. Staff volunteers within the Masterton office completed a two day exercise at the end of October testing how they would cope filling the role of the alternate operational centre for Greater Wellington. The exercise involved the Masterton senior management team and required them to consider their individual response plans for an emergency.

Operation Phoenix is the response to a large earthquake hitting Wellington with associated movement on the Wellington fault. The Masterton exercise enabled staff to come to grips with the systems needed to respond to such an emergency, the pressures and the numbers of trained staff needed to be effective. The pool of volunteers will need to grow.