

Catchment Management Group

Departmental Managers' update for period ending 9 April 2010

Biosecurity (Davor Bejakovich, Manager)

1. Pest Animals: (Ray Clarey)

1.1 Future of Pest Management Project

GW Biosecurity has concluded involvement in the development work streams of the MAF BNZ Future of Pest Management Project. The development stages of the project are largely over, with a draft national plan of action to be released in late May. This action plan is for the implementation of the recommendations of the Future of Pest Management team. GW will have a further opportunity to comment on the national plan of action during the public submissions, which close in June 2010. The legislative recommendations of the project will be implemented alongside those of the recent review of the Biosecurity Act.

1.2 Proposed Amendments to the Biosecurity Act 1993

GW has submitted to MAF on the proposed Amendments to the Biosecurity Act 1993.

GW sought the following actions through the amendment process:

- Ensure the Crown meets their good neighbour obligations under Pest Management Strategies, and to facilitate this process have Crown and Regional Council representatives develop guidelines for Crown engagement.
- Provide a clearer mandate for Regional Councils and their role in pest management at a regional and national level.
- MAF take a leadership role at a national level in developing pest management strategies, with ongoing engagement with Regional Councils.
- Support increased consistency for national and regional pest management programmes, subject to the conditions and level of engagement with the affected parties.
- Support the establishment of a 'Government designated party' of stakeholders for decision-making on new or spreading incursions. Colloquially known as the 'gate keeper' role.
- Support ability of strategies to focus on site-led and pathway management, subject to a Cost Benefit Analysis and Exacerbator/Benefactor model.
- Support the amendment of the Act to enable the:
 - provisions of pest management strategies unaffected by appeal to the Environment Court to be approved and implemented
 - partial review of pest management strategies
 - move the requirement for strategy review from a 5 to a 10 year period.

Any legislative changes to the Biosecurity Act will require Cabinet approval in August/September, with the Bill to be introduced to Parliament in September.

1.3 Key Native Ecosystem Programme – Western Zone Progress

The cyclic servicing of Key Native Ecosystem areas continues. All works are running to schedule. Contractor ‘registrations of interest’ will be sought during April for the 2010/11 year. It appears that there will only be a small pool to choose from. This position leaves GW vulnerable if one contractor in particular was to down size or decide to exit the pest management industry.

The Long Gully Bush Reserve project has been slow to get off the ground. This is mainly due to longer consultation with adjoining landowners and the Medical Officer of Health than originally planned for. The gorse in this block has really exploded now that goat numbers have been lowered and this increase in dense ground cover could be a real issue for servicing in coming years. Mustelid and possum traps continue to be checked at monthly intervals.

New bait is being trialled in a few of the KNEs. The bait is called Pestoff 50D. It is a cereal pellet, dyed green containing the anticoagulant Diphacinone. The bait is registered for rat control and contains no lure. It could be useful to replace Brodifacoum and Pindone for rat control if possums are at very low levels and if kill traps can be put in place to control the possums. This bait will not be effective on possums as they will need to consume more than 3kg to receive a lethal dose, hence the need to use possum kill traps during multi-species control. With the increasing scrutiny on Brodifacoum it is good to see some alternatives being made available.

1.4 GW Website – Internet and Intranet Update

The existing material on GW’s website and on the Pest Animals intranet page is being reviewed and updated. Most of the content on the internet link (including photos and reference to information brochures) has been completed. Intranet updates are at a draft stage and will proceed very soon.

1.5 Rabbits

Rabbit Calicivirus Disease (RCD) blood sampling has begun in the Western Zone. Rabbits are shot at night with a blood sample taken immediately. The samples are sent to AgResearch in Palmerston North for analysis to see if they contain any immunity to the virus. This information is collected every year from sites around the region to give a picture of what the virus is doing and to identify potential trouble spots for the coming spring.

Rabbit blood samples to date have been collected from Kapiti Golf Course, Newlands, Seaview, Miramar, Karori Cemetery, Happy Valley and Newtown.

Kapiti Coast District Council has requested rabbit control at Ames Street Reserve in Paekakariki. Pest Animal staff will apply Pindone carrot to this area

in April. This area has always been a 'hot spot' for rabbits and is recognised as one of the most rabbit prone areas in the region.

1.6 Hutt Water Catchment/Kaitoke West/Akatarawa Aerial 1080

Warning signs for this operation have finally been able to be removed nearly seven months after the operation. The possum carcasses being monitored for residual traces of 1080 have returned two clear tests indicating the toxin is no longer present in the carcasses and no longer a danger for scavenging dogs. A press release occurred but was not well picked up by the media.

Signs were placed in and adjacent to tramping huts and tracks around the Hutt Water Catchment. Due to this remote access it has taken staff several days to facilitate the retrieval.

1.7 Urban feral geese control

In early March GW Biosecurity staff undertook feral goose control in Upper Hutt and on the Kapiti Coast, controlling these problem birds in urban areas. Feral geese can cause human nuisance problems because of their aggression and fouling of lawns and properties. Feral geese originate from birds released or escaped from captivity, and readily adapt to living in parks, reserves and urban streams. Feral geese are not managed by Fish and Game New Zealand, and local authority animal control officers are not equipped to capture or destroy the birds. With the growing urbanisation of the population, people are less able or willing to destroy unwanted domestic animals, often leading to their abandonment in public areas.

In rural situations feral geese can be shot or poisoned, but the large number and residential locations of these problem birds prevented the use of these control methods. Pest Animals staff experimented with nets and hand capture of the birds, removing the Kapiti birds and halving the Upper Hutt population. The remaining population of birds will be controlled by shooting if they continue to harass the public.

1.8 Pukaha/Mt Bruce Predator Control

The Biosecurity Department has been managing a predator control programme within a 1,052 hectare buffer zone contiguous with the Mt Bruce Reserve since September 2002. DOC is responsible for control measures within the 942 hectares of the Reserve and Horizons Regional Council provides a predator buffer on the northern perimeter of the Reserve. The aim of the buffers is to reduce the populations of predators such as possums, cats, ferrets, stoats, weasels, hedgehogs and rats to very low levels in and around the Reserve to allow the endangered bird species of kaka, kiwi and kokako to thrive. All other flora and fauna benefit as well.

The 2009-2010 budget for the GW buffer is \$25,000 and the forecast to 30 June is for the project to be on or slightly under budget. The programme has undergone several changes over the past nine months to increase efficiency. Much of the hardware (traps, trap covers, bait stations) had to be replaced as it

had deteriorated in this high rainfall and often damp and heavy soil area. The positioning of service sites has been reviewed and other trials with baits and hardware are being undertaken in a constant effort to achieve high standards at best cost. It is intended that this programme will provide the template for the forthcoming regional possum and predator programme to follow the Animal Health Board 'roll-back' commencing on the regional boundary in the Wairarapa during the 2010-2011 financial year..

Up to 30 brown kiwi from Little Barrier Island are to be released within the Mt Bruce Reserve this May. It is therefore crucial that the predator control programme is maintained to the highest order.

1.9 Rabbit control in dune situations

Controlling rabbits prior to planting is important for any re-vegetation project and none more so than in dune restoration. Rabbits can cause serious damage to new plantings in a very short time. Dunes are generally very accessible to the public and dogs. Therefore control programmes need to have a high degree of risk management and be carefully planned and carried out. The most commonly used rabbit control in high public use areas is the use of Pindone bait, either diced carrot or manufactured cereal pellet baits. The bait is normally left to 'weather out' and gradually detoxify. This prolongs the danger area and leaves baits that may no longer be palatable to rabbits.

Environment Bay of Plenty (EPOB) has been trialling the use of squares of shade cloth secured by pins to the ground to scatter the baits onto. Rabbits prefer bait to be scattered rather than presented in clumps. The shade cloth has a drawstring around the edge to allow the cloth to be gathered in and the bait collected for repositioning or for safe removal. This method allows for prefeeding and the removal of the excess prefeed before the toxic application. It also allows the monitoring of bait 'take' plus gives an indication of the number of rabbits feeding at each site by the number of faecal pellets present. Another benefit is that bait can be removed for weekends and reinstated during week days when there is liable to be less visitation by the public.

EBOP report that the use of the mats has been successful and that it has resolved several operational rabbit control issues for them. The mats do not comply with the technical criteria for a 'bait station' as defined by the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act but they are legal to use by anyone holding a Controlled Substance Licence for Pindone or by persons under the supervision of anyone who holds a Controlled Substance Licence. This method will be trialled by Greater Wellington and is sure to be a method of choice for controlling rabbits in dunes and similar environs that demand more risk management.

1.10 A new Pest Control Education Initiative

Federated Farmers and Forest & Bird have recently established a joint initiative to help educate the public about the importance of controlling introduced mammalian pests in New Zealand. The initiative, which is supported by a wide range of conservation and farming organisations, is organised by the Pest

Control Education Trust. The Trust is focussing initially on public education about the use of 1080 in New Zealand and its important role in the country's overall pest control strategy. This first initiative, the website www.1080facts.co.nz, went live on 8 April 2010. Supporters of the project include Federated Farmers of New Zealand, Forest & Bird New Zealand, the Animal Health Board, the Department of Conservation, Dairy NZ, Solid Energy, the Isaac Wildlife Foundation, Meat & Wool New Zealand, PGG Wrightson, Deer Industry New Zealand, and Bush and Beyond.

1.11 Further Research on Argentine Ants

During 2009, nine regional councils, including Greater Wellington, agreed to contribute \$2,000 each towards ongoing research into new methods of baiting Argentine ants. There are three known sites of Argentine ants within the Wellington region which do not appear to be increasing in size. In fact the long established Kelburn site is considered to be shrinking. Some of the funding was earmarked for investigation into the potential of cool season baiting and to eliminating ant colonies from pot plants. Landcare research has published a report on the cool season baiting research. Laboratory and field trials are also being conducted to test the long-term effectiveness of a new product (Biff Ant - a synthetic pyrethroid) designed for use in urban areas and to test the effectiveness of another product for mop up operations after a knockdown with conventional baiting.

2. Pest Plants (Richard Grimmett)

2.1 Pest Plants Control Activity

Total Control pest plant site inspections for the 2009-2010 year have nearly been completed. Generally, the infestation level at existing sites has been found to be minimal in comparison with previous years. Nine Total Control species delimiting surveys have been completed over the year, some of those in difficult terrain along the Western Hills. Eight Surveillance species delimiting surveys are still to be completed. To date this financial year only three new Total Control pest plant infestations have been found.

Biosecurity staff have continued to assist Hutt City Council staff to gain access to private properties to conduct suppression plant species inspections and control work. Most of those occupiers who did not respond to the initial information letters have now been visited. Permission for access has now been secured for those properties where it is necessary to carry out control work.

2.2 Community Max

The Community Max field workers have settled into good work patterns and completed scheduled training HS&E site safety, First Aid and Growsafe Introduction level units. Output from the teams exceeds expectations.

The Western Zone crew worked on the following projects over this period:

- Battle Hill Farm Park, Pauatahanui (GW). Weed control programme as a part of the forest restoration. Project completed.
- Waikanae River, Waikanae (GW). Riparian forest restoration. Project ongoing.
- Mt Kau Kau, Wellington (WCC). Darwin's barberry and wilding pine control in regenerating native bush. Project ongoing.
- Blue Mountains, Whiteman's Valley (HCC). Darwin's barberry control in regenerating native bush. Focus changed to control Climbing asparagus.
- Belmont Regional Park, Belmont (GW). Weed control in regenerating native bush. Project completed.
- Otaki River, Otaki (GW). Vine control in riparian margins. Project ongoing.
- Tarakena Bay, Wellington (WCC). Coastal escarpment weed sweep. Project ongoing.
- Riparian Strip, Mangaroa Valley (GW). Weed control prior to riparian planting. Project ongoing.
- Hutt River (GW). Controlling Old man's beard for Flood Protection Dept. Project ongoing.
- Streams Alive programme release spray for Land Management (GW).

The Masterton crew:

- Worked on Hut warden duties in Tararuas for DoC
- Constructed a new section of track for DoC Tararua on the entrance from Mikimiki Road.
- Completed work at Riverdale Beach dune restoration for Land Management (GW).
- Completed work on Wairarapa south coast dune restoration for Land Management (GW).

2.3 Biosecurity/Biodiversity Database Project Update

On 18 February, Horizons Regional Council hosted a database meeting in Palmerston North. Representatives from Greater Wellington, Tasman District Council, Environment Southland, Horizons Regional Council, Environment Waikato, Hawkes Bay Regional Council, Environment Bay of Plenty and Auckland Regional Council were present. Environment Bay of Plenty and Auckland Regional Council demonstrated their current database systems to the group. Following a discussion, it was collectively agreed that by combining ARC Ecobase and Biomap databases with EBoP Biodiversity and Biosecurity databases, a system would be built that would service the needs of all regional councils and unitary authorities. Since several councils were already willing to support the development of such a system, it would therefore become a nationally significant project. This would mean that it would be eligible for central government funding from Envirolink and TFBIS (Terrestrial and Freshwater Biodiversity Information System programme). The first stage of a funding application would require support from the Integrated Regional Information System (IRIS) joint regional council information services project. IRIS is designed to serve the major Information, Communication and Technology needs of Environment Waikato, Northland Regional Council, Horizons Regional Council, West Coast Regional Council, Environment

Southland and the Taranaki Regional Council. The IRIS project is due to start scoping possible Biodiversity/Biosecurity solutions this year and the opportunity exists to avoid reinventing the wheel by supporting the EBoP/ARC system development. Since the meeting in February, IRIS has agreed to support the funding application which has begun with a TFBIS-funded scoping report. It is hoped that this report will be completed in time for the next TFBIS main funding round later this year. The opportunity now exists for Greater Wellington (along with all of the above mentioned regional councils) to have access to an integrated database system that would capture biodata from across GW (i.e. Catchment Management Group, Environment Management Group, and Utilities and Services Group).

2.4 Communication

A&P Show, Masterton

Members of the Biosecurity Department attended the annual A&P show at Solway showgrounds in Masterton. Numbers through the exhibit were steady both days with more enthusiasm shown on the Saturday. The location of the stall at this event may have something to do with it not receiving more interest (positioned away from other trade exhibits). The Communications Department is seeking to book the Horizons "green rig" for the next A&P show in Carterton. This will bring an added interest element in which to incorporate our material.

Articles

Articles on Rewanui reserve, Riversdale dunes and Asiatic knotweed were released to various media sources this period. The Rewanui article was recycled from one produced for the Wairarapa Lifestyle magazine and released to local papers. An article was produced for Wairarapa Lifestyle magazine on Riversdale dunes. This is yet to be published due to limited space in the publication at time of production. An article was also produced for Asiatic knotweed and sent to media sources around the region.

2.5 Bird Monitoring

Some important changes have been made to the Biosecurity Department's annual bird monitor. Monitoring will now be conducted in spring rather than autumn. This will align our monitoring with that of Parks (GW) and Wellington City Council (WCC). By doing this data will be combined data with that of Parks and WCC, increasing its statistical power, capturing birds that are more vocal in spring than autumn (e.g. shinning cuckoo and kingfisher) and reducing interference from cicadas and juvenile birds not using familiar adult calls. Biosecurity and WCC are now using the same contractor for the monitoring improving the consistency of the data and reducing costs. The Biosecurity Department will now be doing all the data capture, analysis and reporting for the monitor, including the Upper Hutt City and WCC sites. This will improve cost efficiency, only one report will be produced, and more importantly, allow the

same analysis to be completed on the entire data set improving the regional picture.

The driver for this change was the formation of the Wellington Regional Biodiversity Monitoring Practitioners Network. This group is a forum for people belonging to any organisation, involved in biodiversity monitoring. The aim is to coordinate monitoring activities, combine resources and data to improve efficiency and statistical power, get better coverage over the region, identify geographical gaps in the regional picture and standardise our monitoring approaches. The group began with the bird monitor and did a “stock take” of what projects are currently being done. The group agreed on standardised monitoring protocols, including DOC five minute bird monitoring protocol and slow walk transects, and determined monitoring best practice. Some programmes needed adjusting to align regionally but it was seen that the benefits of regional coordination far outweighed the costs of changing established programmes. One monitor is now completed under the new regime and money has already been saved on data analysis and reporting. The next step for the group will be to standardise data capture and analysis.

3. Bovine Tb Vector Management (Graeme Butcher)

3.1 2009/10 Vector Control Programme

Table 1: Summary of the projects let for the 2009/10 year.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GW BioWorks	67,646	35,583	0	103,229
Professional Guiding Services	97,577	23,843	0	121,420
Central Districts Pest Control	18,462	0	0	18,462
J McCaslin	11,565	0	0	11,565
T Oakly	0	0	249,039	249,039
Totals	195,250	59,426	249,039	503,715

Table 2: The following table details areas of the 2009/10 control programme which have been completed as at the end of March 2010.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GW BioWorks	28,382	10,944	0	39,326
Professional Guiding Services	67,228	17,760	0	84,988
Central Districts Pest Control	4,700	0	0	4,700
J McCaslin	5,842	0	0	5,842
T Oakly	0	0	80,478	80,478
Totals	106,152	28,704	80,478	215,334

Contractors have completed 26 possum control projects and have commenced control activities within a further 15 projects. Fifty-four percent of the possum control programme has been completed and assessed by performance monitor or audit.

Contractors estimate that they have completed a further 18,520 ha of possum control but these areas are not yet ready for monitoring. Contractors estimate they have actually completed approximately 64% of the possum control programme.

3.2 2009/10 Monitoring

To date 33 performance monitors have been completed:

- Professional Guiding Services have completed 18 of 30 projects
- BioWorks have completed 13 of 29 projects.
- CDPC has completed 1 of 4 projects.
- J McCaslin has completed 1 of 2 projects.

Sixty eight trend monitors have been completed to date. Trend RTC results are as follows:

- 0.0% to 2.9% 29 projects (94,304 ha)
- 3.0% to 4.9% 25 projects (61,547 ha)
- 5.0% plus 14 projects (48,109 ha)

3.3 2009/10 Possum and Ferret surveys

The following table details possum and ferret surveys for the 2009/10 year. Twelve surveys (28,703 ha) have been completed.

Project	Strata	Area (ha)	Progress (% completed)	Required Estimated Samples		Samples received to date		Suspicious Tb samples
				<i>Possums</i>	<i>Ferrets</i>	<i>Possums</i>	<i>Ferrets</i>	
Bideford	HMR 3	4824	100	N/A	5	N/A	3	0
Bideford	HR 1	2641	100	N/A	5	N/A	5	0
Bideford	MR 1	3494	100	N/A	5	N/A	5	0
Bideford	MR 7	3173	100	N/A	5	N/A	5	0
Castlehill	HR 1	2017	100	45	N/A	76	N/A	0
Masterton Flats	HR 1	1482	100	40	3	3	1	0
Masterton Flats	MR 1	3546	45	60	4	18	0	0
Mt Bruce Waipoua	HMR 4	418	100	25	N/A	14	N/A	0
Mt Bruce Waipoua	HMR 5	642	100	25	N/A	30	N/A	0
Mt Bruce Waipoua	HR 1	3083	100	185	5	25	2	0
Mt Bruce Waipoua	HR 3	1799	100	100	3	46	5	0
Mt Bruce Waipoua	HR 4	1816		50	3			
Mt Bruce Waipoua	MR 1	4266	90	100	5	95	3	0
Mt Bruce Waipoua	MR 2	3301	100	150	5	19	1	0
Otaki Buffer	HMR 1	3023	10	150	5	5	0	0
Otaki Buffer	HMR 2	1587	90	80	N/A	87	N/A	0
Otaki Buffer	HR 1	2404		130	5			
Pakowhai	HR 1	1829	100	100	N/A	28	N/A	0
Whangaehu	HR 1	4583	10	250	5	7	1	0
Whangaehu	HR 3	2375		50	3			
Whangaehu	MR 3	7123	40	40	5		1	0
Totals		59426		1580	71	453	32	0

3.4 2009/10 Pig survey

The following table details pig survey progress to date for the 2009/10 year.

Project	Area (ha)	Progress % completed	Estimated Samples	Samples received to date	Suspicious Tb samples	Positive Tb samples
Akatarawa	20,538	93	30	43	5	4
Bideford	39,023	63	40	27	1	2
Castle Hill	4,500	80	30	29	0	0
East Alfredton	4,900	25	20	5	0	0
Featherston	5,325	100	30	13	0	0
Homewood Riversdale	25,789	100	120	86	0	0
Kapiti	22,486	30	50	9	0	0
Mataikona	6,779	100	40	50	0	1
Moonshine	6,250	81	20	12	0	0
Otaki Crown	3,552	67	15	17	0	0
Pakowai	6,910	100	60	61	0	0
Stronvar	25,976	66	85	52	0	0
Te Wharau	13,995	64	100	65	1	0
Tinui	35,675	100	120	154	0	0
Wellington	29,640	66	50	27	0	0
Totals			810	650	7	7

3.5 2009/10 Feral Deer Survey

A feral deer survey is currently underway within the Tararua Forest Park over approximately 88,500 hectares. This survey is being undertaken in conjunction with the normal activities of the contracted helicopter company.

To date 77 samples have been autopsied, none have yet been positively identified with bovine tuberculosis.

Hunting within this area ceases immediately before and during the “roar” (March / April) to assist public and operator safety at that time of the year.

3.6 2009/10 Feral Cattle Control

This project is ongoing in the South East Wairarapa operational areas. To date 5 feral cattle have been destroyed, 3 by landowners and 2 by AHB contractors.

3.7 2009/10 Tender Rounds

The only 2009/10 projects not contracted are the Moonshine HR 2 (930 ha) and HR 5 (1,108 ha) possum control projects.

These projects will now be let in the 2010/11 year and have been released in conjunction with the AHB tender round one projects.

3.8 2009/10 AHB Vector Management Services

Greater Wellington has a two year contract to provide Vector Management services to the AHB. This contract requires 1.5 staff members and includes 2,640 hours for the 2009/10 year.

To date (after 38 weeks) 1929 hours have been estimated for use. However, the actual hours to deliver the programme to date are 2089 (8.3% over estimate).

3.9 2009/10 Vector Control Under spend

During planning for the 2009/10 year, based on AHB vector management planning meetings, the Biosecurity Bovine Tb team submitted a programme to AHB to the value of \$4.2M. Based on the proposed programme GW and AHB negotiated a regional share for the programme to the value of \$520K. This was included in the 2009/10 Annual Plan.

Previous reports to the Committee have highlighted that a number of operations proposed by GW for vector control have not been approved by AHB. This included a range of control, survey and monitoring projects with a value of \$632,700. According to the AHB, a \$4.0M programme will be implemented within the Wellington Region for the 2009/10 year.

However GW calculations indicate that the value of the regional Bovine Tb programme for 2009/10 is currently \$3.75M. If no further projects are let in the 2009/10 year the programme will be significantly less than the original value used to negotiate the GW regional share. Discussions have commenced with the AHB regarding determining the final regional share payments.

3.10 2009/10 Infected herds

		I Herds @ June 2008	I Herds @ end of January 2010 (one clear test in brackets)	Target I Herds @ June 2010
VFA	Cattle	0	0	8
	Deer	0	0	
VRA	Cattle	5	5 (1)	
	Deer	0	0	

3.11 2010/11 Programme

The AHB tender round one closed 7 April 2010. Contracts are to be awarded in May ready for contractors to commence work 1 June 2010. This parcel includes 52,000 ha of work from within the Wellington region.

Contract schedules for tender round two (44,900 ha) have been prepared, these will be released in accordance with AHB timeframes.

3.12 2010/11 Holdsworth Woodside Crown

The Holdsworth Woodside Crown operation (7,300ha) is proposed to be treated with aerial 1080 pellets within the 2010/11 year. This project was last treated in October 2003.

It has been proposed to undertake this project in conjunction with the Department of Conservation's Project Kaka (22,000ha) around August 2010. AHB and DOC have met and tentatively agreed to work together on these operations.

A project brief has been prepared which includes a Steering Group to oversee the project, made up of senior AHB, DOC and GW staff. A project team has been identified, made up of AHB and DOC staff, whose role is to ensure the project is delivered. Graeme Butcher was appointed as Project Manager.

Benefits of a combined operation include:

- Avoids duplication in obtaining statutory approvals
- Opportunity for one message by all agencies
- Use of complementary resources
- Economies of scale
- Reduces confusion to the general public

3.13 2010/11 Preferred Supplier – Aerial Control Operations

The AHB is undertaking a "Registration of Interest" process to implement aerial 1080 control throughout their various areas within New Zealand.

Suitable contractors will be selected from those who have submitted an interest. They will be provided a draft three year aerial programme and requested to supply cost estimates for the control work. Following this process an aerial control contractor will be awarded any aerial control works within the region for the next three years.

It is likely that there will be one or perhaps two preferred supply contractors to undertake aerial 1080 control work within the Wellington Region for the next three years.

Flood Protection (Graeme Campbell)

1. Manager's comments

The progress on our major projects has been excellent during the period. Of particular note was:

- (1) The lodging of the Boulcott Notice of Requirement (NOR) and the subsequent public notification which has now set in place a statutory timeframe for the application to proceed to.
- (2) The physical progress on the Waiwhetu Project has been excellent with the additional bypass pumping and additional trucking resources helping to keep construction on track for completion by the end of April 2010.
- (3) Progressing the variation to the Wairarapa River Consents. We are now close to the point of being able to proceed with applying for the variations with the sign off of all of the affected parties.

Further details of progress is provided below.

2. Western Floodplain Management Plans [Daya Atapattu]

2.1 Ava to Ewen project

Ava to Ewen project including the installation of lighting from Wakefield Street to Ava Bridge is now complete. The contractor's maintenance works will continue to June 2010.

2.2 Boulcott/Hutt stopbank project

The Boulcott/Hutt project has reached a significant milestone with the lodging of the NOR/Consent applications with HCC and GW Environmental Regulation on 11 March 2010. The applications have been advertised and public submissions close on 5 May 2010. A hearing could be expected in June and a decision by July 2010.

Merger discussions between the two clubs are progressing. A course layout plan, developed by the merger Board, was included in the NOR/Consent applications. The new course layout plan excludes an area in the Boulcott course between the new stopbank and the Hathaway Avenue properties. The merger Board has indicated that this protected area would be developed for residential purposes, which could be a separate process driven by the merged club.

The stopbank construction from Connolly Street to the 17th hole of the Hutt course is due to commence in October 2010. A shortlist of contractors for

construction is being prepared and tender documents will be issued in August 2010.

2.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank

A planting day is now scheduled for 19 June 2010 and maintenance works to establish a good grass cover will continue to June 2010.

2.4 Maoribank and Ebdentown works

The Maoribank urgent works are now scheduled to commence in mid April 2010. The works involve placing large rocks in the erosion gut and placing toe rock to strengthen about 20 metres of the existing Gabion protection on the left bank. This work will be completed before the commencement of the fish spawning season at the end of May. The option investigation for the design of the Ebdentown rock line is progressing.

2.5 Hutt River Trail

On 25 March 2010, Robin Maud of the combined Hutt Valley Rotary Clubs spoke to the Hutt River Advisory Subcommittee on options for connecting the Hutt River Trail through the Manor Park golf course. The Rotary Clubs and GW and HCC officers have been investigating a number of options to connect the trail through the golf course and their current preference is for a route beside the river. Robin and GW officers have recently walked this route and are now assessing works involved in establishing the track with minimum impact on the golf club.

2.6 Waimarie Croquet Club

The proposed City Centre stopbank upgrades are scheduled to commence in 2015. As there is no space in the river corridor to accommodate the Waimarie Croquet Club once the stopbank upgrades are completed, the Croquet Club with GW and HCC officers investigated a number of sites to relocate the club. The Club's preference was the Walter Nash Park in Taita. The Croquet Club is currently reviewing a \$470,000 relocation estimate prepared by a consultant. In the next few weeks GW and HCC officers will commence consulting with the club to discuss the new layout, a relocation programme and cost sharing options.

2.7 Kapiti floodplain management

2.7.1 Waikanae Floodplain Management Plan

There were no major capital improvement works undertaken during the period.

2.7.2 Otaki Floodplain Management Plan

1,400 tonnes of the required 1,900 tonnes of rock have so far been delivered for the three rock groynes on the right bank of the Otaki River just upstream of the railway bridge. Quotes have been received from three experienced contractors for the construction of the groynes and work is programmed to commence in late April.

Construction of a walkway between the carpark behind the FP depot and the Chrystalls walkway entrance has commenced. The walkway passes beneath the SH1 and rail bridges and crosses the haul road at three locations. A planting plan is being prepared for the unkept areas adjacent to the footway and staff will work with the Friends of the Otaki River in implementing this.

2.7.3 Friends of the Waikanae River (FWR)

The group is focusing on maintaining its restoration work this year. A major new planting project is to be started at the Oxbow opposite Otaihanga Domain in winter time. The Friends have been nominated to receive the Honda Treefund funding for restoration work on the Waikanae River corridor this year. This will take place at the partially restored Dricon site below State Highway 1 and will include the creation of heritage trails.

2.7.4 Friends of the Otaki River (FOTOR)

The Friends have completed their fourth milestone for Sustainable Management Funding from the Ministry for the Environment on 30 March. Work is continuing at the Otaki Estuary in preparation for restoration planting over winter. The Friends have also been nominated to receive the Honda Treefund funding for restoration work on the Otaki River corridor (specifically at Chrystalls Bend) this year.

3. Western Operations – Jeff Evans

3.1 Hutt River

Fence line clearing and maintenance is underway on all the river boundaries from the estuary bridge to Gemstone Drive in Upper Hutt. Flood gate repairs are progressing well and all planned maintenance works should be completed by next month. A number of large gum trees have been removed from the stopbank at Fraser Park. This is part of the ongoing tree removal programme on stopbanks. Maintenance rock deliveries are still in progress at various river sites in both Upper and Lower Hutt.

3.2 Hutt River ranging services

The summer programme events have run well. Just completed are the Have a go Fly Fishing events on the Hutt and Otaki Rivers and the Bike Trail was also held with 1,400 participants. Unfortunately the event was shortened due to the tsunami warning triggered by the Chilean earthquake the night before.

Seasonal maintenance continues on the trail, with track work at Whakatiki and vegetation clearing at Belmont. Rotary had an unveiling of the new river trail furniture and Council officers from Lower Hutt City, Upper Hutt City and Greater Wellington, attended.

3.3 Waikanae

Seasonal maintenance continued on the river. Community Max staff have been clearing noxious weeds from the SH1 bridge downstream, and this has helped open the area up and give better views of the river. Survey site lines have been tidied up and the gravel survey has now been completed.

3.4 Otaki River

All the major dry gravel beaches on the Otaki River have been sprayed to stop vegetation build up. Tree clearing from stopbanks below the SH1 Bridge is still underway and two new rock groynes have been built at Tracie's bend to help stop further erosion on the debris fences.

3.5 Western Watercourses

Clearing runs are underway in the Waitohu Stream, Hulls Creek, Porirua Stream, Kenepuru Stream, Korokoro Stream and the Pinehaven Stream.

4. Wairarapa Operations [Mike Longworth]

4.1 Wairarapa River Schemes

General

The work programmes in the Wairarapa rivers for 2009/10 are progressing with spraying under way as well as rock protection work construction. The new work programmes for 2010/11 have now largely been developed for discussion at the annual scheme meetings in April.

Gravel

The gravel extraction returns for last year were 25% less than the previous year. The extraction returns this year would indicate that the overall extraction for this year is likely to be lower than last year, particularly as there are large stock piles in various contractors' yards.

Development Work Programme for the LWVDS

The land purchase for the gravel deposition area at the Tauanui delta has been completed and the first stage of the stopbank constructed. The stopbank will contain the gravel deposition from the Tauanui delta and the material to build the stopbank is being excavated from the Ruamahanga River channel where it was beginning to obstruct the channel.

4.2 Investigations and Technical Advice

Waingawa River Scheme Review

The next task involves determining the environmental impact of the scheme work on the river. Once this work is completed a number of river management

options will be assessed as to their suitability and affordability for discussion with the community.

River Management Consents

The existing global consents for carrying out the river management work have proved to be inadequate for the scope of work that is planned in the upper valley rivers. This position has gradually occurred as the various river scheme budgets have increased following scheme reviews to meet the adjacent land owner's expectations. Geoff Dick has been engaged to help with the process of varying the conditions of the existing consents. A successful work shop was held in early December 2009 with all the stakeholders to work through issues associated with the consents. Following the workshop a number of the workshop participants have been working with Geoff to prepare suitable conditions for a variation to the consents. This process is nearing a conclusion which should satisfy all parties with an interest in the consents. One significant change will be an increased focus on environmental impacts. Cultural health monitoring will play an important role in assessing impacts.

Tawaha Catchment Diversion

The issue of the Tawaha drainage into the Whaka drain is being revisited again following a request by John Barton. An initial report was submitted to the Committee last year. Further investigation and consultation with the LWVDS advisory committee is underway. A report to the Catchment Management Committee will be presented once investigations are completed.

Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan

Waiohine River FMP is progressing with the goal of completing the first phase of the process by the end of this financial year (end of June). The stopbanks have been surveyed to provide more accurate information for the hydraulic modelling and also to provide details required for a geotechnical investigation. This geotechnical investigation will allow the performance and risk of failure of the existing stopbanks to be assessed. Also progressing parallel with the geotechnical investigation is the initial flood damage assessment giving an indication of the probable cost of flooding to the community. All the existing information will be summarised in a report, which will be used for consultation in the following phase.

4.3 Drainage Schemes

A series of unplanned electrical and mechanical maintenance problems at three of the pump stations have meant that the overall budgets for the drainage schemes have been over expended. A report outlining the maintenance requirements into the future and the rate income to meet these costs was presented to meetings held with the five pump scheme committees in December 2009. The scheme committees agreed to significant rate increases in 2010/11 to fund the future maintenance requirements and build adequate reserves to cope with unplanned events.

5. Investigations and Assets [John Eyles]

5.1 Waiwhetu cleanup project

Good weather in March has allowed excellent progress to be made in the removal of contaminated ooze and flood protection works. The excavation and removal of contaminated ooze has been completed to the Seaview Road Bridge. Excavation in the urupa saltmarsh area is continuing.

Additional bypass pumping resources have been applied to increase the number of cells that can be dewatered as well as additional trucking resources. This has allowed work on the critical path, such as the duplication of the Seaview treatment plant rising main and other sewer infrastructure work to proceed faster. The current programme to complete the clean up is about 6 weeks behind, due to bad weather from October 2009, additional contaminated volumes and unforeseen services work. The clean up should be completed by the end of April 2010.

The discovery protocol has been activated twice in the last period due to the accidental discovery of a bone (identified as an animal bone) and a log with indentations (indentations identified as resulting from piling operations). Two Tangi have been recently held at the urupa during the works, bringing the total to six being held since the start of works. The cultural monitors employed by the Owhiti Trustees have been instrumental in the cultural supervision of the works in this highly sensitive part of the stream.

5.2 Pinehaven flood hazard assessment

Stage one of the project, to deliver flood hazard maps for the Pinehaven Stream, is complete. A draft report has been delivered and officers from both councils met in March to discuss the next stages. Another meeting is scheduled for early April. A project scope for the next stage (options identification) will be developed by June.

5.3 Asset management

As at March 2010, 175 notifications have been lodged within SAP for work, 674 works orders have been created to a total value of \$2,616,659 with total planned costs for the year at \$4,973,083.

Staff are continuing to optimise business and operational processes within SAP to identify better ways of working with SAP as a Department.

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 19 February – 30 March 2010. These include information requests from the public, local authorities, and also Flood Protection comment on resource consent applications to GW.

	19 February – 30-March 2010	YTD
Requests brought forward	7	6
Additional requests received	69	281
Responses provided	75	285
Outstanding requests	1	2

A considerable volume of these requests for information resulted from the raised awareness of flood hazard from the information sheets sent out in January regarding flood and erosion hazard for the Wainuiomata River, Hutt River and Waiwhetu/Awamutu Streams.

HCC extended an invitation to GW to present flood hazard information to HCC officers as part of their launch for their new hazard database, which is now live and will be used to provide information for PIMs, LIMs and Consents. Sharyn Westlake has given two presentations to about 60 Hutt City Council (HCC) officers on the process used by Greater Wellington in deriving the flood and erosion hazard for the Hutt and Wainuiomata Rivers and Waiwhetu/Awamutu Streams.

Over this period, the Strategy and Technical Support team have been working with Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) officers, responding to queries and requests for information for the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan District Plan Change (UHCC PC15). Staff will also be involved with a pre-consultation meeting for this plan change, which is likely to be held on 15 April 2010. Staff are also working with UHCC officers in setting up a working group meeting for the Mangaroa River Floodplain Management Plan, which is likely to be held on 13 April 2010.

Additionally we have assisted Greater Wellington Environmental Policy in the submissions on:

- Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) Plan Change 81 - Otaki Mixed Use
- KCDC District Plan Review – Scoping Discussion
- Appeal for Hutt City Council Plan Change 12
- HCC Draft Vision Seaview Gracefield 2030
- HCC Proposed Plan Change 14: Central Commercial Activity Area

Land Management (Dave Cameron)

1. Manager's comments

1.1 Afforestation Grant Scheme

The Afforestation Grant Scheme has suffered another cut in funding. MAF have recently notified a reduction of another \$8M effective from July 2011. A year ago the Scheme funding was slashed by \$12M. In 2007, \$50M was set aside for new afforestation projects. This figure now stands at \$30M. The Regional Council Pool and the Public Tender Pool split this funding 50/50.

Funding for the Regional Council Pool is summarised in the following table:

Funding	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Budget	\$3M	\$5M	\$5M	\$5M	\$5M	\$2M
March 2009	\$3M	\$3.5M	\$3.5M	\$3.5M	\$3.5M	\$2M
March 2010	\$3M	\$3.5M	\$3.5M	\$2.5M	\$2.5M	0

In the last review of MAF budgets, cuts in funding have been made to the last three years of the Scheme as commitments have already been made to applicants for 2010/11.

The cuts are a further blow to a Scheme that has been very successful. Since its inception in 2008 a total of 8,100 hectares of erosion prone land has been planted. The original target was 25,000 hectares and with the recent cuts this is likely to reach just 15,000 hectares. Considerable time and effort has gone into the administration of the Scheme on behalf of MAF and it is disappointing that this is to be curtailed when landowner interest is very high.

1.2 Forest Harvesting

The last two months have seen a considerable increase in forest harvesting throughout the region, particularly in the Wairarapa. This has been on the back of significant lifts in log prices as a result of increased demand from China. While this increased activity has been good for landowners and harvest managers it has created a few problems with Regional Soil Plan notifications. Forest managers are required to notify Greater Wellington of harvesting start times and whether the woodlot is to be replanted following harvest.

If the woodlot is not to be replanted then resource consent is required. The consent will include an erosion management plan for the site to minimise the risk of erosion. A number of sites have been visited to ensure best management practices are being carried out and to obtain written confirmation of the replanting programme. Co-operation to date has been very good despite the frantic race to harvest as much wood as possible while the price spike remains.

1.3 Coastal Dune Revegetation Programmes

The dune revegetation programme at Riversdale beach was boosted last year with funding from the DoC Community Fund. \$23,000 is to be spent over a two year period primarily aimed at restoring the native grasses to sections of the foredunes. This level of funding has initiated a rethink of future funding and management of the project.

Since 1994 the programme has been very well supported by the local community. The main players were Joe and Trish Taylor. Joe passed away in 2008 and while Trish is still actively involved, there has been minimal support from the wider community. This situation potentially jeopardises ongoing Take Care funding from Greater Wellington.

It has been agreed that Biosecurity, Land Management and Parks and Recreation (MDC) will co fund the project for the next five years. The project will be guided by a newly drafted Management Plan and staff will take a lead role in implementation of the Plan. Local contact will be maintained with the Riversdale Ratepayers Association and every effort will be made to find local residents who are willing to assist and ultimately take greater responsibility for the restoration work.

1.4 Issues for the next period

- WRECI Sustainability Plan preparation
- Reporting to MAF on achievement of WRECI milestones
- Advertising campaign prepared for Akura Conservation Centre
- Catchment Scheme Advisory Committee meetings to be held
- Preparation of annual works programmes for 130 Farm Plans
- Discussions with Masterton District Council on Homebush nursery options

2. Farm Plans (Don Bell)

2.1 Delegated approvals - New Plans, Reviews and Annual programmes

Plan and Annual Programme Preparation 20010/11	Approved to Date	Annual Plan Targets	Budget Estimates
WRECI Plans	-	10	\$80,000
New Sustainability Plans	-	3	\$15,000
New Conservation Plans	3	2	\$4,000
Ten Year Reviews	14	20	\$60,000

Programme delivery 2009/10	Annual Programmes Undertaken	Annual Plan Target	Expenditure to date	Annual Plan Budget
Annual Programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability plans • Conservation plans • Shelter plans 	145	130	\$401,100	\$565,000
Isolated works	5	10	\$2,700	\$10,000

2.2 Highlights

Plan preparation and programming

Over the last month the main activities have involved the preparation of Farm Plan reviews and annual programmes and planning for Scheme meetings.

A willow and blackberry spraying programme in the Papawai Stream has been completed over the true-left reach from the marae, downstream to JR's culvert (approximately 900 metres).

Staff are currently preparing works programmes intended for the Community Max team under the direction of Kevin Stevens (Biosecurity). The works will centre on the community and Care Group programmes which Land Management supports in a number of coastal and stream sites.

Promotion & education

A planting day is planned for 10th April on Tilson's Creek, a tributary of Papawai Stream, involving thirty scholarship recipients and trainees associated with the Papawai – Kaikokirikiri Trust

Don Bell attended a meeting of the Wairarapa Dairy Action Team which included representatives from Federated Farmers, Fonterra and DairyNZ. A feature of the meeting was discussion on the development of an Environment Farm Plan for dairy farmers being undertaken by Mike Bramley of DairyNZ.

Paul Millen, Project Manager for NZ Drylands Forest Initiative visited Wairarapa in March in conjunction with completing Stage II of a major SFF application. He participated in a seminar organised by Don Bell through Sustainable Wairarapa Inc. on trials of naturally durable eucalypt species aimed at offering an alternative to CCA-treated timber. Paul was taken to potential sites for establishing demonstration plots and breeding populations associated with a major national programme extension by NZDFI budgeted at \$1.13M. Five regional councils will be approached to contribute towards this programme which has potential spin-offs in relation to contaminant mitigation, erosion control, climate change and carbon sequestration.

3. Akura Conservation Centre (Stan Braaksma)

3.1 Nursery Operations

Rainfall for March has totalled 52 mm with the monitored site at Wairarapa College showing soil moistures hovering between 25 – 35%. 27% is used as minimum watering point or the stoolbeds will start to show leaf senescence. Soil temperatures are still ranging between 14 – 18 degrees at present. Most poplars and willows are still displaying new juvenile leaf growth although where rust infestation has been heavy regrowth has been very slow. The first week of April with cooler night temperatures has set the autumn colouring and leaf drop is commencing.

Rust spraying has continued throughout March on a 3 weekly basis but dictated by available spraying conditions. Through January and February staff have been disappointed with the levels of fungicide control and are currently reviewing all aspects of spraying from spray intervals to equipment used. Each operation involves 3-4 days to spray both nurseries fully and next year there will be a need to synchronise spraying with irrigator applications. The soil moisture conditions over March have been marginal, often dropping below the 27% moisture content. On a positive note the cooler nights mean the rust spores have declined.

The irrigator is currently set on one 200 metre run/day (0.8 ha) but is being run down the side of production blocks. The removal of a production row will occur this winter to allow for inter row irrigation next season. The other irrigator has been running in the smaller back area at Akura not covered by the new T31 Bauer.

Tenders for Akura winter work are currently being advertised, with last year's experienced cutting crew interested in continuing. All material to be planted this year will be supplied from our own Nurseries and there will be no need to purchase 3m poles from external growers as has been the case over the past five years.

Paul Henderson is busy preparing for the Nursery Managers workshop to be run on 27/28th April. The Nursery must be presentable and the annual production counts will be completed to advertise the surplus production.

The newly electrified lane fence is operating well and there has been no further dairy stock ingress into Akura. Staff are still committed to doing their share in reconstructing the eastern boundary fence.

3.2 Trading

Eco sourced native seed collections are proceeding well under the new contract with 32 species collected so far and a further 12 species to go. This year will be our first for *Hoheria sexstylosa* collection, the local Wairarapa Lacebark. However, it has been tricky finding viable seed.

A visit to Norfolk Road Nursery is scheduled to assess and count native root trainers ready for sale through Akura. Morgan’s Road Nursery in Blenheim is also to be visited in May to assess plant quality and confirm orders of eco sourced and other native plants along with the contract grown exotic root trainer stock.

Cambridge Nursery will again supply our exotic open grown requirements and the trees will be inspected before the winter. 150,000 Pinus radiata have been ordered along with rooted poplar and willow grown on contract for the first time this year. They still have considerable speculative Pinus radiata seedlings available. Further cartons are being manufactured and delivered for pine seedling transport.

Land Management staff are currently securing seedling orders for this winter, and as with last year the Government sponsored Afforestation Grant Scheme will provide some healthy orders. Unknown at this stage is the level of replanting required in recently harvested blocks.

3.3 Staffing

Raewyn Hullena has expressed interest in continuing as the Nursery Assistant position at Akura for this coming season.

3.4 Budget

The Akura Business Unit has an operating surplus at the end of March 2010 of \$27,700 against a budgeted annual surplus of \$28,600. The end of year forecast has been revised as part of the Six Month review to show a surplus of \$2,100.

The Nursery unit is exhibiting a surplus of \$33,800 after nine months. The forecast position at year end will be a loss of \$17,300 (c.f budgeted loss of \$11,500). This forecast adjustment was noted in last months report.

The March result for trading is shows a surplus of \$61,500 which is marginally ahead of budget. The forecasted end of year result is a surplus of \$19,400 (c.f budgeted surplus \$42,900). This shift of some \$20,000 is a result of reduced gate sales and was reported in February.

Activity	Operating Surplus – Annual Budget 2009/10	Operating Surplus - Actual March 2010
Nurseries	(14,300)	(33,800)
Trading	42,900	61,500
Total	28,600	27,700

4. Biodiversity (Jacki Byrd)

4.1 Ongoing works

Streams Alive site assessment and property plans for five new sites have been completed and sent to landowners for their feedback and signature. The plans include site maps, photos of the planting site, a list of plants for the site as well as information on the environmental weeds on the property and how to control them. The plan is a Memorandum of Understanding between the landowner and Greater Wellington, setting out what each party will do in the three year period.

A draft allocation of plants to each property has been completed for this winter's planting season. This provides an indication of how many plants and hence spray spots needed on each property.

Registration of Interest have been called for spray and planting work around Otaki this season.

Environmental weed control was carried out for five days while the late summer weather remained.

Site visits with landowners in the Waitohu catchment have been carried out to assess new planting sites for this winter.

A trial site in the Mangaroa Valley has been selected to test the success of getting manuka to establish itself by laying manuka branches onto sprayed and scuffed spots. The aim of this trial is to get more plants established in the riparian margin for less cost. 100 spots have been sprayed and manuka slash will be laid on the spots in the next week or so. All costs will be calculated and compared to traditional planting methods.

4.2 Community Max

Unfortunately, the Kapiti Coast District Council application for a Community Max team to work on the Mangapouri Stream in Otaki was unsuccessful. However, Streams Alive is using the Community Max team based in Upper Hutt for some work, including work in Otaki. One day was spent with a Community Max team removing overly large flax plants from a stream bank in Otaki for an elderly resident, and preparing another stream bank for spraying. Another two days was spent cutting old man's beard and painting the stumps and cutting broom on streams banks.

In all cases the team worked very well, and staff were impressed with their willingness to learn and to follow instructions.

4.3 Wellington Regional Biodiversity Monitoring Network

Matt Barber of the Auckland Regional Council gave a presentation on the first year of terrestrial biodiversity monitoring in the Auckland region. A tiered approach is used to provide monitoring data at a regional scale in tier 1 for state of

the environment monitoring, down to site specific monitoring of key sites at tier 4. A 4x4 km grid system is used to provide stratified representation across the region. The grid is based on the LUCAS carbon monitoring plots set up by the Ministry for the Environment and uses the vegetation data from this programme and others such as National Vegetation Survey database where appropriate. A proposal to introduce a similar model for the Wellington region is being discussed.

4.4 Expenditure to date

	Budget 2009/10	Expenditure to January 2010	% of Budget
Riparian Management	\$196,200	\$168,200	85.7%
Streams Alive	\$100,000	\$86,155	86.1%

5. Operations (Kevin Burdan)

5.1 Silviculture

Activity	Completed	\$	Annual Plan Target (hectares)	Year to date	\$
Thinning	2.5 ha	746	100 ha	70.2 ha	29,504
Pruning	14.5 ha	11,412	100 ha	48.6 ha	36,150
Total	17 ha	21,056	200 ha	118.8 ha	65,654

- Silviculture was carried out on three properties during the last period bringing the total number of properties where work has been undertaken to eleven.
- The summer works programme in four catchment schemes has been completed.
- A new Supervisor has been appointed and will greatly assist in completing the remainder of the summer works programme and gearing up for the winter planting period.

5.2 Soil Conservation Reserves

- The Rough Hill Conservation Reserve flood gates have been repaired.
- Gorse and blackberry have been sprayed as part of the noxious weed control programme and the back boundary electric fence has been upgraded on Stoney Creek Conservation Reserve.
- 7.6 hectares of medium prune has been completed at Hiwinui Conservation Reserve.

BioWorks (Richard Grimmett)

The business unit completed and forwarded the Southern North Island Aerial Operations Expression of Interest to the AHB during March. Tender Round 1 for 2010/11 was received on 22 February and proposals were delivered on 7th April. The Preferred Supplier initial offer has been assessed and questions submitted to the AHB. The AHB indicated mid March as the date they would confirm the draft programme being authorised. These deadlines have passed without delivery. BioWorks is retaining a proactive role to gain confirmation of the offered programme, plus receiving clarification of specifications before resources will be allocated to complete tender proposals.

The crews are focused on surveys at present with mid April completion deadlines. All employees will be fully committed until the end of June. To date all contracts have been completed without failure.

Contract Operations Progress				
AHB	In Progress Completed Ha	Await Monitor	Completed for Payment	Overall %
2008/09 Reworks 2 Strata 1846 Ha			2 Strata 1846 Ha	100%
2008/09 Aerial carry over 2 Strata 5952 Ha			2 Strata 5952 Ha	100%
2009/10 13 Projects 47 Strata 134,149Ha	14 Strata 16,003 Ha 12.42 %	0 Strata 0 Ha 0 %	22 Strata 55,153 Ha 42.83 %	55.25%
Re-Works	0	0	0	0%
Biosecurity Mt Bruce Pukaha 50 man days			37 man days	74%

Integrated Catchment (Ian Gunn)

Natural Resources Management Plan

Preparations for the engagement process scheduled for June-August continue. Approximately 20 meetings are proposed. Each meeting will have a principal host and a number of hosts who will invite interested parties to attend. Following the engagement meetings working groups will be created to further develop approaches that may be utilised in the plan.

Values Monitoring

During the consultation for the variation to river management resource consents in the Wairarapa another dimension to consider has emerged. This is the values associated with the waterways. For example, maintaining the number of pools in a river system is important because of the opportunities for cultural use, recreational use, and habitat for fish. There may be an opportunity to focus on values such as the number of pools and their condition in the waterway rather than lengths of river bed which can be modified. Our river management would then be focussed on both the condition of the waterway and the threats of erosion, course change and/or flooding. Parties such as the Iwi, Fish and Game, and DOC are interested in developing such an approach.

Wairarapa Moana

DOC staff are leading the development of the grazing policy. The Fonterra Accord will be a fundamental building block for the grazing policy. The project will be publically launched in mid June.

Emergency Management

Most of you will be aware of the tsunami associated with the Chilean earthquake. The national media played an active role in the event. The national warning systems worked. The Emergency Centre was activated. There were widespread evacuations along the Wairarapa coast. Small rises in sea level occurred along the coast with unusual tidal flows. For example very strong tidal flows were recorded in Porirua Harbour.

The Ministry of Emergency Management and Civil Defence has purchased a new emergency management web based system called e-sponder. The standardised operating system will be launched in mid 2010. It appears to be a powerful tool and will result for the first time in consistent approaches to the collection and dissemination of information. It has a number of functions.

Forestry (Barry Leonard)

Review of operations for the period ended 31 March 2010

General Manager (Murray Kennedy) comments

Revenue of \$425,700 from the metro forests after expenses for the month of March means it is one of the best months for some years. Equally as pleasing is the prospect of the enhanced prices being maintained for a while. With nearly 55,000 tonnes harvested in the first nine months, it is likely the metro forests will yield the target 70,000 tonnes for the year.

1. Plantation forests (Wellington)

1.1 Log Harvest Contract

Prices continued to rise through February and March, with the exchange rate easing each month and the shipping rate increasing \$US1 in February, and falling \$US0.50 in March.

Table 1 - At Wharf Gate prices per JAS:

	P	PP	AO	A	K	KI	KX	Shipping \$US
July 2009			73.84	67.65	61.46	55.26	42.88	38.00
August			82.32	76.27	71.73	65.67	52.05	38.00
September			82.96	77.12	72.75	66.91	56.70	43.00
October			82.98	77.41	73.22	67.65	57.89	40.70
November			83.40	77.90	73.78	68.29	58.67	43.30
December (Korea)			91.78 85.35	86.16 83.94	81.94 81.13	76.32 72.70	66.49 54.44	46.00
January 2010			91.66	86.09	81.91	76.34	66.58	45.50
February	144.86	123.48	114.92	109.22	104.95	92.12	89.26	47.00
March	151.99	130.52	121.93	116.20	111.91	99.02	96.16	46.50

Domestic prices have now fallen further behind the equivalent export grades and are becoming a cause for concern. These prices will be renegotiated at the end of March and I would anticipate some significant rises to at least gain parity with the export prices.

We still have difficulty supplying sufficient S grade sawlogs for Davis and Eurocell. Rayonier has negotiated an "A" grade cut for Eurocell that will serve to increase their volumes.

Log 6, the Tuckey ground based crew, has completed the harvest of the wind-thrown area in Ragwort Hill and moved to Raupo Saddle. This area has about 4.5 hectares of mixed eucalypts. The road through this area has to be upgraded for logging trucks and this required the removal of a number of these eucalypts.

While seeking a market for these trees, and given the buoyant prices at present, we were pleased to hear that we could include “10 percent other species” within the current export market with China. After confirming that this “10 percent other species” could include hardwoods, it was decided to remove the whole block. There was some initial concern when some of the logs began splitting of their own accord while sitting on the skid and drying out. Fortunately the numbers remained relatively low and these were further minimised by altering the cutting plan to longer lengths, which were much more stable. The second Tuckey crew working with the TMY70 hauler completed their setting at Maori Redoubt and moved back to Boiler Gully. This setting will enable further wind-throw to be harvested as soon as possible. This crew is scheduled to move the Centre South in Puketiro after Boiler Gully. Provided we are able to maintain the access, Log 36 will remain at Centre South for the winter.

Log 5, the second ground based crew, has been harvesting both sides of the main road at Puketiro and setting up skids for when the hauler arrives later.

During February Log 36, the hauler crew, harvested 1,962 tonnes for \$84,576 from Maori Redoubt. Log 6, as a ground based crew, harvested 3,113 tonnes for \$126,125. This was wind-throw from Ragwort Hill. Log 5 harvested 2,380 tonnes for \$81,296 from Centre South/Drapers. The respective average returns per stand were Ragwort Hill \$40.15, Maori Redoubt \$42.48 and Centre South/Drapers \$34.16 per tonne.

In total, February returned \$292,667 from 7,469 tonnes.

March continued the increasing prices and, combined with a full month, good returns were achieved.

Log 36 was based at Maori Redoubt and Boiler Gully with the hauler, Log 6 at Ragwort Hill and in the eucalypt stand at Raupo Saddle and Log 5 in Centre North and Centre South at Puketiro. The respective outturns were.

	Tonnes	\$
Maori Redoubt	1,296	64,444
Boiler Gully	1,953	101,774
Ragwort Hill	1,411	71,618
Raupo Saddle	1,427	50,666
Centre South	857	36,431
Centre North	2,108	100,761

Total production for March was 9,053 tonnes for \$425,700, at an average of \$47.04 per tonne.

We were very fortunate to be able to harvest the eucalypts at Raupo Saddle and export them at “radiata” prices. In the past, as these logs were unsuitable for sawing, they have been sold as firewood at a far reduced return.

Year to date we have harvested a total of 54,885 tonnes for \$1,574,080, at an average of \$28.70.

Silviculture Contract

In February 11.75 hectares of silviculture was completed at a cost of \$7665. During March a further 23 hectares were completed at a cost of \$13,550. To date 49 percent of the 2009/10 Silviculture Contract has been completed.

1.3 Plantation forestry operations

The weather improved in January and the higher temperatures minimised the effects of the rain we did have.

With Log 5 returning, tonnages were improved which enhanced the benefits from improving prices.

The Valley View roads still required regular maintenance and this was carried out without disruption to logging trucks. A short length of new track was constructed into Maori Redoubt and the road through Grattons upgraded and hydra-mown to allow the harvest of the wind-throw at Ragwort Hill.

We have traditionally had about one truck in 20 stall at about the 8.7 km in Valley View on the hill out of the Farm Forestry block and the bottom of Maori Redoubt. This has appeared to be driver miscalculation but it still caused disrupt while the truck was towed. We were fortunate to acquire about 20 plus loads of asphalt millings, so we have “paved” the worst part of the hill in the hope it will overcome this problem. So far so good.

Staff members have continued to supervise the Silvicultural Contractors and monitor the quality control plots.

1.4 Forest access

The lack of access into Maungakotukutuku remains. The proposal to log the neighbour’s forest through Maungakotukutuku has been delayed and no progress has been made. All main roads are in good order.

1.5 Market trends

Demand seems to be unending and prices continue to rise each month, with predictions of this trend holding for some time. This increased demand is showing with more frequent congestion at the Port of Wellington delaying trucks.

Domestic markets continue to improve, with increasing orders from Kiwi Masterton and Davis at Featherston. Eurocell has now reopened and is taking all available sawlog after Davis’ orders have been filled. Two issues have arisen. Firstly, we are having a problem filling our traditional orders from Davis and Kiwi, so there is little product left for Eurocell. Secondly, we have now reached the stage where the “At Wharf Gate” prices exceed the domestic prices for a higher grade log.

The New Zealand dollar dropped a little in January and appeared to trending in the right direction. Unfortunately just recently it has started to firm again.

Shipping rates were in the mid-40s but rose to over US\$50 in March. These are still expected to ease over the year.

2014 Forest Harvest and Marketing Contracts

These Contracts were awarded to Rayonier NZ Ltd for the metro forests and John Turkington Ltd for the reserve forests. That will result in no change of Contractor in Metro but a change over on 1 April for reserve forests. We have received signed Contracts from both parties.

2. Reserve forests

2.1 Tauanui logging

The insatiable export logging market continues to drive prices higher than they have been for some considerable time. A limited quota is being supplied to local sawmills to ensure that they remain viable as alternatives if the export market folds or drops off significantly as it has done in the past. Against historic trends, the export markets have not succumbed to seasonal fluctuations.

Even the most seasoned harvesting and marketing agents are surprised at the continued export market demand to China that has been recognised for its variability in the past.

For February, 1,024 tonnes were produced for a net return of \$37.09 per tonne.

In March 828 tonnes were produced for a net return of \$38.52 per tonne.

Production volume was significantly reduced in March when the Contractor's main extraction machine was voluntarily shut down after an OSH inspection required modification to meet safety certification for side intrusion protection. The excavator was certified for roll over protection and falling object protection but the removal of a side door after it had been bent while in use meant that it was no longer safe to use as a primary extraction unit off formed tracks.

A replacement door was quickly located but required further modification to meet current certification standards. As a result, 10 production days were lost.

The Harvesting and Marketing Contract with Bawden Associates has now terminated, with five loads of logs being carried over (to be treated as April production).

We are awaiting a harvest plan from a logging contractor to be completed by the newly engaged Harvesting and Marketing Agent.

2.2 Hiwinui silviculture

Medium pruning was completed on 11.2 hectares of second rotation in Hiwinui. Steady progress will continue on stands that have had first lift pruning and are on less exposed sites.

High pruning will be carried out on these selected sites, followed by one or

more thinnings to match the high prune stocking.

2.3 Tauanui rainfall

With only 20 mm of rainfall for February and 67.5 mm for March, conditions are considerably drier than in early January.

As a result, the fire danger is now at medium levels.

2.4 Road maintenance

Minor road grading has been carried out in Tauanui.

2.5 Lock vandalism and unauthorised access

There has been a spate of lock thefts at Hiwinui and one at Stoney Creek.

A disturbing development has been the replacement of our locks with foreign locks, thus excluding legitimate access to the forest. This has been reported to the Police, as it may be indicative of illicit activities within Hiwinui.

In the Stoney Creek case, a neighbour has initiated Police action after a vehicle was seen acting suspiciously in the area several times and then caught within Stoney Creek after the lock on a boundary gate had been removed.

Quotes are being requested for a locking system similar to that used by JNL that is more tamper resistant.