

Report 15.438  
Date 11 September 2015  
File CCAB-10-39

Committee Environment Committee  
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## **General Managers' report to the Environment Committee meeting 22 September 2015**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Environment Committee of Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibility.

### **2. Catchment Management**

#### **2.1 Biodiversity**

The Executive Leadership Team has approved a project relating to managing volunteers in the region. The first part of the project, led by the Biodiversity department, will look at all aspects of our relationship with volunteers undertaking work on behalf of, or with the support of, GWRC. The second and more complex part of the project will involve other agencies and review the regional picture.

A process for ensuring alignment between the Wetland Restoration programme and the provisions of the proposed Natural Resources Plan is being undertaken by staff from the Biodiversity, Land Management and Environmental Policy departments. This is also considering how the stock exclusion and riparian enhancement provisions will be delivered coherently by the organisation.

#### **2.2 Key Native Ecosystems**

Managers from Biodiversity and Land Management departments met managers and councillors from Masterton District Council (MDC) to discuss how we can work more effectively at KNE sites on their land. The outcomes of these discussions will be formalised in an MOU between the two organisations.

The annual ungulate hunting programme has begun with work in the Wainuiomata Mainland Island, Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Area, Pakuratahi and Akatarawa Forest KNEs.

### **2.3 Total Control species**

Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) have confirmed the continuation of the national Check Clean Dry – Freshwater Pest advocacy programme. An application for MPI to assist with funding the GWRC programme will be made.

### **2.4 Suppression species**

Biosecurity staff met with Wellington City Council (WCC) to consider possum control in the rural land south of Zealandia. This area sees a range of rare native birds that originate from the sanctuary. This project will be known as the Rural HALO and will eventually link with the expanding Regional Possum and Predator Control Programme.

WCC have requested a three year MOU to continue possum control in their parks and reserves. Hutt City Council and Kapiti Coast District Council have also requested continuing control in their areas.

### **2.5 Regional Possum Predator Control Programme**

The Regional Possum and Predator Control Programme for the 2015/16 year will cover approximately 73,000 hectares.

- Wairarapa - 40,500 hectares
- Wellington/Kapiti – 32,500 hectares.

Initial control is proposed for the Makara – Te Kopahou area to the west of Wellington city. Discussions have been held with Wellington City Council regarding these projects.

### **2.6 Tb Free NZ Contracts**

BioWorks has obtained the following contracts with TBFree NZ:

- Mangaroa Kaitoke HR1 – 1,770 ha
- Whangaehu HR1 – 4,585 ha
- Whangaehu HR2 – 3,945ha
- Whangaehu HR4 & MR2 – 2,946 ha
- Aerial 1080 operations –
- Aohanga station aerial  
1080 application to occur on the 8<sup>th</sup> September
- Eastern Tararua aerial covers 11,089 hectares  
Applications (DOC, MOH and GW resource consent) have been submitted.

## **3. Flood Protection**

Major achievements since last report have been:

- Release of the City Centre options for consultation
- Clean up from the May and June flood events
- Progressing the Te Kauru FMP investigations
- Completing the winter planting work on programme

### **3.1 Floodplain Management Implementation**

#### **a) Hutt River - City Centre Upgrade Project**

Community consultation on two integrated design options for the proposed upgrades from Kennedy Good to Ewan Bridges commenced on 3 August and is progressing. Both options are designed to provide the recommended level of flood protection to the next 100 years meeting the potential challenges to the design standard resulting from the predicted climate change scenarios. Both options include a replacement Melling Bridge and opportunities for creating a riverside promenade.

Community consultation has included:

- Contacting 79 land owners whose land will be potentially required for the proposed works.
- Media releases through local and national newspapers;
- Letters to 500 adjacent land owners giving details of the project and how to provide feedback;
- Distribution of over 2,000 copies of the project brochure;
- A display of consultation materials for one week at Westfield (Queensgate), Lower Hutt. More than 1000 people visited this display;
- Three open days held at 131 High Street, Lower Hutt to provide opportunities for interested people to meet with officers and project consultants;
- Presentations to various community groups;
- Delivery of 35,000 'postcards' throughout Lower Hutt advising people on how they can provide feedback on the options.

The community feedback period closes on 14 September and the Hutt Valley Flood Management Subcommittee will consider feedback on 15 October. A report to Council for a GWRC decision on a preferred option is programmed for the 9 December 2015 meeting.

#### **b) Jim Cooke Park stopbank Upgrade**

Officers are currently progressing with the preparation of the NOR/Consent applications for the project on the basis of the preferred stopbank alignment. The NOR/Consent application will be ready by the end of September 2015. Negotiation of land entry agreements with KCDC and a private land owner is also progressing with the aim of completing them by November 2015.

#### **c) Lower Wairarapa Development Scheme Improvement Works**

Landowner entry permits for the Whakawhiriwhiri Stream upgrade project have been finalised except for two landowners. Construction work in the reach upstream of Pahautea Road will commence towards end of September subject to weather conditions.

## 3.2 FMP Investigation

### a) Pinehaven FMP

Public drop-in and information days were held in Pinehaven on 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> September to present the new flood mapping information and the overall FMP including the public submission process. UHCC took the opportunity to engage with the community on plan changes and its Urban Growth Strategy – all of which is related to the FMP or are significant for the Pinehaven Stream catchment. Following this round of consultation and formal submissions, results will be reported to HVFMS along with a recommendation on hearing the submissions.

### b) Te Kauru – Upper Ruamahanga FMP

A scope for further hydrology work on the Waipoua River has been agreed with MDC and proposals have been sought from three consultants.

Options development continues, with a current focus on the Masterton Urban reach leading up to a number of community engagement events in October. MDC staff and councillors continue to have concerns about the hydrology for the Waipoua River, as well as the impacts of any structural options that increase the vulnerability of Queen Elizabeth Park to flooding. GWRC officers are seeking to arrange a workshop with MDC Councillors to directly address these issues, as well as a meeting with MDC officers to confirm the nature and vulnerability of assets in QE Park that could be at risk.

Engagement with the rural community and asset owners on the rural options continues.

### c) Waiohine FMP

After presentations on the preferred option to Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils (CDC and SWDC), SWDC gave their support, while CDC held off supporting any option. Both Councils made it clear that funding for the works should come from scheme based targeted rates focused on those who would benefit.

## 3.3 Operations and Delivery

### a) River and Drainage Maintenance

#### *Wairarapa River Schemes*

A meeting of the ten river scheme chairpersons was held on 4 September 2015. The Chairs continue to express their satisfaction with the work that is being undertaken and the performance of the schemes.

Significant changes have been made to the gravel extraction allocations in the Upper Ruamahanga catchments. Staff are working closely with aggregate firms to implement changes including reductions in extraction volumes in degrading river reaches and a more site-specific allocation system. This will result in better alignment between extraction operations with other river management activities.

## **Western River Schemes**

A significant flood event occurred in the western area on 19 & 20 June. In the Hutt River further erosion occurred at a number of sites. Options for the best way to repair these areas, consistent with the draft code of practice, are being considered.

An 8-year return period flood event occurred in the Otaki River and caused significant damage to a number of rock lines and groynes. All our locally available rock stockpiles have been utilised for repairs and a further 1000 tonnes of rock will need to be purchased to complete the required works.

The Waikanae River experienced a 12-year return period flood. Much of the repair work to walking tracks and berm areas following the May event had just been completed and this work needed to be repeated again. Once again complaints about the condition of the tracks were received before river levels had even receded.

A 15-year return period occurred in the Waitohu Stream in the same event causing erosion, flooding and property damage. Large quantities of gravel were transported causing alignment issues. Significant machine work has been undertaken to repair problem areas.

There have been a large number of requests for erosion advice following the recent flood events.

## **Western Watercourses**

Work has started on lowering the Porirua Stream river bed through the Porirua CBA following the deposition that occurred during the May flood event. Approximately 3,500 cubic meters of gravel will be extracted from the area above Station Road Bridge down to the Kenepuru Stream outlet. Staff successfully negotiated with a contractor to extract the material and use it for road maintenance, thereby saving in excess of \$200,000 in tip fees.



Porirua Stream Gravel Extraction



Porirua Stream Wall Place Cut Rock Repairs

## **4. Land Management**

### **4.1 National Environmental Standard – Plantation Forestry**

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is seeking views on the proposed subject matter of a National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry (NES-PF). This is a proposal to change how plantation forestry activities are managed under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). If implemented, an NES-PF would replace councils' existing district and regional plan rules for managing plantation forestry. It would provide a nationally consistent approach that is responsive to local environments.

Formal consultation closed on 11 August 2015.

The objectives of the proposal are to:

- remove unwarranted variation between local councils' planning controls for plantation forestry;
- improve certainty of RMA processes and outcomes for plantation forestry stakeholders, while maintaining consistency with the purpose of the RMA;
- improve certainty about environmental outcomes from plantation forestry activities for forestry stakeholders, including communities, nationally;
- contribute to the cost-effectiveness of the resource management system by providing appropriate and fit-for-purpose planning rules to manage the effects of plantation forestry.

Although a primary objective of the NES-PF is greater national consistency, local authorities sometimes need to be able to manage activities because of unique environmental, social or cultural factors. The proposed NES-PF identifies matters where councils would have the ability to be more stringent than the proposed NES-PF.

Subject to conditions, councils could set more stringent rules in plans or more stringent conditions in resource consents in relation to:

- the coastal marine area (to align with the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement);
- geothermal and karst protection areas;
- areas of known cultural or heritage value;
- significant natural areas and outstanding natural features and landscapes;
- shallow aquifers (as groundwater systems may be complex in local areas);
- meeting the objectives of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

### **4.2 Akura Conservation Centre**

As with the previous two seasons there have been increasing sales of native plants from the Centre. It is estimated that sales this year will exceed 85,000. The majority of sales are through the various Farm Plan programmes, with



strong support from gate sales and Biodiversity wetland programmes. Strong sales figures for exotic seedlings and poplar and willow poles are also expected, with current tallies reaching 108,000 and 28,000 respectively.

### 4.3 Winter Planting programme

The pole planting programme has been affected by low soil moisture conditions through the early part of the winter. As a consequence a number of cancellations were received in July as landowners were concerned that establishment rates would be reduced with ongoing dry conditions into the spring. Soil moisture levels, particularly at Castlepoint and in south Wairarapa are still well below historical levels for this time of year.

### 4.4 Harbours Management

#### 4.4.1 Navigation aids

The “spare” Barrett Reef buoy had the old corroded “ballast-tube” cut-off and a new steel section welded-on during August. The replacement of the Barrett Reef buoy presently on-station depends on the condition of the mooring chains, as determined by diving inspection, but the “spare” buoy is kept in a “near-to-go” condition.



Barrett Reef buoy

The Rear Leading light had a new wind generator fitted earlier in the year, but several storage batteries have failed, and twelve new batteries were ordered and received, to be installed when weather and other work permits. The diesel generator (used for recharging batteries during periods of prolonged bad weather in winter, in conjunction with a wind-generator) has experienced several mechanical problems, and the generator is now effectively in need of replacement. However, the decision was made not to renew the generator, but to obtain and fit a second wind-generator, which will be of sufficient capacity to boost the battery charge instead of the generator. Thus, with solar and wind, is now totally carbon zero.

The second wind-generator has been received, but now that the darker winter period is already past, will be retained in store and fitted before the next winter. (The two wind-generators operating together should have sufficient capacity to keep the storage batteries charged during winter weather).

Workboat *Seacare* was returned to the water after lengthening and fitting of new outboard motors in July 2015, and completed under budget. The increased length has vastly improved the performance of the workboat, which is mainly used for maintenance work on navigation lights, but also for patrol work at special events, etc. The old boat trailer for this craft was now too short, so was sold. Following *Seacares*'s return to service, documentation and audits were completed to register the vessel in Maritime New Zealand's Maritime Operator Safety System (MOSS) (as were our other two small workboats). Our Maritime Transport Operator Certificate was issued on 13th August, valid until 2025.



Workboat *Seacare* after lengthening



#### 4.4.2 Beacon Hill

Some Councillor's visited Beacon Hill on 2nd June 2015.

The replacement radar scanner and motor were installed up the radar mast at Beacon Hill during August 2015, and made operational. It operated satisfactorily during two subsequent periods of 60-knot southerlies.

The computer on which the Navi-Harbour system is installed failed in July, but was quickly re-instated and made operational.

The garage door closing-mechanism needed some repair work at the end of June.

#### 4.4.3 Marine Oil Spill Response

Grant Nalder revalidated his Regional On Scene Commander (ROSC) qualification at the end of June 2015. Mike Pryce elected not to revalidate his ROSC qualification, which expired on 30 June 2015.

Due to CentrePort planning to demolish the shed where oil pollution response equipment (and other items) are stored in early 2016, alternative storage has needed to be obtained, located outside the port, and transfer of equipment into the new store is planned to be completed during November 2015, prior to the busier recreational boating summer season. There is a substantial quantity of equipment to be moved.

#### 4.4.4 Health and safety

There has been one incident – a contractor not following H&S requirements.

All departmental portable fire extinguishers (Beacon Hill and vehicles) checked and recharged as appropriate in July.

Vehicle "Safety kits" were received and located in all department vehicles in July 2015.

Annual routine electrical sockets and connections compliance certification obtained in August 2015.

Three Wairarapa staff were approved as competent crew for Lake Wairarapa water sampling.

#### 4.4.5 Other events

The annual Navigation Safety Special Interest Group (NSSIG) meeting was held in Wellington on 22 & 23 July 2015, chaired/convened by Mike Pryce.

Straits Shipping's old ferry *Santa Regina* was laid up in Wellington on 17th June when their new ferry *Strait Feronia* entered service. *Santa Regina* sailed from Wellington for the last time on 31st August for Auckland for dry docking, prior to sale for further service in Indonesia.



*Strait Feronia* arriving at Wellington

Interislander's old ferry *Arahura* completed service and was laid up in Wellington on 31st July 2015. The vessel has been sold for breaking-up (recycling) in India, and is expected to sail from Wellington towards the end of September 2015, about the same time as her replacement ferry *Kaiarahi* arrives in Wellington.



*Kaiarahi* after sea trials in Singapore

The harbourmaster attended the Merchant Navy Day commemoration ceremonies in Wellington on 3 September.

#### 4.4.6 Recreational

In mid-July a Harbour Ranger attended the PCC chaired Porirua Harbour users group, this is a group made up of the various clubs that operate on the two arms of Porirua Harbour.

A variety of clubs were communicated with regarding their programs and plans for the coming summer season, this ties in with our events calendar and is to ensure that there aren't incompatible clashes between various groups wanting to use specific parts of the harbour at the same time. This communication is part of our on-going associations with the wide variety of harbour users.

In mid-July one of the Harbour Ranger spoke to the Wellington Sea Scouts water activities committee about safety on the water, including our bylaws and how they related to their water based activities.

The Harbour Rangers responded to various calls regarding problems with moored boats or hazards in the harbour over this period.



Yacht ashore Evans Bay

## **5. The decision-making process and significance**

No decision is being sought in this report.

### **5.1 Engagement**

Engagement on this matter is not necessary.

## **6. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report*

Report approved by:

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