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Committee Environment Committee
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General Managers' report to the Environment Committee meeting 21 June 2016

1. Purpose

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

2. Environment Committee meeting 10 May 2016 – public participation

Mark Neeson spoke about signage and access to and within Belmont Regional Park. New information boards including maps, distances and track elevations, and contact details have been designed and installed at all entrances to Belmont Regional Park. Stock-resistant track markers have also been put in across the park. Park ranger and farmer contact protocols have been updated to ensure that any livestock wellbeing issues are attended to as promptly as possible.

Alan Smith (on behalf of Sylvia Allan) spoke about the Kaiwharawhara reclamation. Mr Smith's concerns were taken on board by officers and will be reflected during ongoing discussions with CentrePort, Interislander and NZTA as part of the Port Access Business Case process.

3. Catchment Management

3.1 Biosecurity

3.1.1 General Biosecurity

(a) Regional Pest Management Plan Review

Biosecurity hosted a national workshop in May on a collaborative approach to cost benefit analysis for our key pest species. Representatives from a number of research institutes and regional councils worked to develop a project brief for the development of a cost benefit analysis tool. This will help to ensure national consistency in the approach to cost benefit analysis for common species such as possums, old man's beard and rabbits.

3.1.2 Pest Animals

(a) Rabbits

Annual rabbit surveys have begun with staff inspecting rabbit prone properties across the region. The day surveys and night counts indicated rabbits are at low to moderate levels, despite a favourable breeding season. On the Wairarapa night count route more feral deer were sighted than rabbits.

Rabbit calicivirus disease (RCD) blood sampling of rabbits is underway throughout the region. The RCD virus is active in the Wairarapa with affected rabbits recently reported at Matarawa.

(b) Rural HALO Goodnature trap trial

Biosecurity staff are undertaking a Goodnature trap trial to investigate the potential of using gas-traps as an initial control tool. Trapping has begun following several weeks of pre-feeding with the unarmed traps in place. Staff have reported good numbers of possums killed, often with multiple possums in one night. Trail cameras are in place to monitor the traps and have photographed possums, goats and pigs passing the trap sites.



Goodnature A12 and A24 trap site in Rural halo area

(c) Wasps

Wasps continue to be an issue this season, with unseasonably warm weather delaying the annual winter nest die-off. Biosecurity staff are investigating a new bait called Vesplex, a fipronil toxin for wasps. Staff will register for its use and be able to provide advice to the public for next season.

Biosecurity staff attended a strategic workshop coordinated by the Wasp Tactical Group. This group are investigating tools for wasp management and new opportunities for wasp research, including biocontrol.

(d) Feral cat camera trial

A cat camera monitoring line has been installed in the Otari Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) to investigate how far cats are venturing into the forest from the urban fringe. Cats have been photographed within 100m of houses and as far as 600m into the reserve. The cameras have also captured dogs off-leash, rats, several stoats and a curious kaka investigating the trail camera. The monitoring will run for three weeks and may be replicated in other areas.

3.1.3 Pest Plants

(a) Surveillance and Total Control

All known Total Control species sites across the region have been inspected with any plants found controlled.

Bathurst bur has flourished over the dry warm summer with plants continuing to germinate until the first winter frosts cooled the ground. Delimiting surveys conducted in Greytown, Featherston and Riversdale located a number of new blue passionflower and mothplant sites for which control work will be ongoing. The Manchurian wild rice on the Kapiti coast was aerially sprayed again, with the infestation now successfully reduced to a few scattered plants. The latter work is funded by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

(b) Site-Led species

The range of Site-Led pest species have flourished in the hot summer. A number of complaints have been received from the public regarding Old Man's Beard, which is currently in full seed. The infestations beside State Highway 2 between Silverstream and Upper Hutt have been of particular interest due to their high visibility. A programme to control this infestation is being negotiated between the land owner, a contractor and the Upper Hutt chapter of Forest and Bird.

(c) Velvetleaf

The nationwide Velvetleaf inspections have concluded across New Zealand, with the majority of infestations discovered in the lower south island. The GWRC Farming Reference Group has been briefed on the Velvetleaf situation and Biosecurity staff remain in contact with the two affected Wairarapa property owners.

A GWRC staff member will attend MPI technical training on the species to ensure we are prepared if Velvetleaf becomes a greater issue in the region.

3.1.4 Biocontrol

Monitoring and transfer operations are complete for the year with most biocontrol agents now entering into their winter dormancy period. A good number of new biocontrol sites have been established over the region with the transfer of various agents, particularly the Green Thistle Beetle. Biosecurity is contributing to the investigation of a new biocontrol agent for Old Man's Beard, which will be researched in 2017.

3.1.5 BioWorks

(a) TB Free New Zealand Control Programme

BioWorks continues to plan for a possum control operation in the southern Rimutaka range. This project covers approximately 22,000 hectare extending southward from Wainuiomata and Eastbourne. The project will include aerial 1080 and ground based control.

Over 100 landowners have been contacted and there are mixed feelings regarding the operation. There is one group of local people who are activity campaigning to stop any aerial control work.

1,770 hectares of ground control within the Mangaroa-Kaitoke project has commenced and is on track to be completed by mid-June.

Four Whangaehu survey projects covering 11,500 hectares north of Masterton have been completed.

(b) Regional Possum Predator Control Programme (RPPCP)

The RPPCP will cover approximately 70,000 hectares during the 2015/16 year, divided into 18 projects. Approximately 80% of the programme is now complete including 13 individual projects completed. Control has commenced on a further three projects and the remaining two projects will commence early to mid-June.

Monitoring contracts for the RPPCP have been let. Five post operation monitoring results have been received for the year with the results ranging between 0.0% to 4.0% residual trap catch (RTC). Our intention is to have all sites maintained below 5% RTC.

3.2 Land Management

3.2.1 Porirua Harbour Sediment Management Programme

The transition from using a consultant to work managed by the Land Management department is now complete. Work programmes are being put in place for sediment control on private land. Discussions have taken place with the Parks department around the development of sediment control plans on GWRC owned land as well as working with Porirua City Council on land under their jurisdiction.

A start has been made on planting a 20 hectare forest on the Paekakariki Hill Road, funded by the Afforestation Grant Scheme (AGS). The AGS is currently in its second term and is focussed on establishing new forests to:

- Improve land-use productivity and boost regional economic development
- Reduce soil erosion – forest cover is the best form of erosion control
- Store carbon and improve water quality.

Regional Councils play a major role in facilitating the applications on behalf of landowners.

3.2.2 Farm Environment Programme

The Farm Environment Plan (FEP) program is looking to move to a contestable system for administering grants for on farm work. This system will allow the targeting of work to occur in priority catchments within the region. The previous quarter has seen the continuation of the engagement of farmers

around Wairarapa Moana into the programme and the planning of winter planting.



3.2.3 Wellington Region Erosion Control Initiative (WRECI) Hill Country Programme

The annual programming of winter work on erodible hill country is well underway. The programme is on track to deliver a further 6,000 poles and 50 hectares of retirement by the end of June. This target looked at risk in early May with severe soil moisture deficits, however, steady rain has since alleviated farmer concern around planting. In the last three weeks the Wairarapa hill country has received 75 – 100mm.



A meeting has been arranged with MPI staff to view the upcoming programme for 2016/17. Milestones for 2015/16 are well on track and in most cases

additional planting will take place within existing budgets. The targets for 2016/17 are similar for this year, including 32,000 poplar and willow poles and 80 hectares of reversion/retirement.

3.2.4 Forestry

Heavy rain fell over the Akatarawa forests during late May, with a daily total of 80mm falling on 29 May. This has caused a number of slips on forestry roads within the Park. The slip debris on the Rallywoods Road was cleared promptly as this is a major route for forestry trucks on weekdays. The subsidence to the Hukinga Road is less disruptive to logging activities but will require a significant rebuild to provide the necessary platform for logging trucks in the future.



Slip on the Rallywoods Road



Subsidence on the Hukinga Road

3.2.5 Akura Conservation Centre

Valuations for the Mangapakeha Nursery sale have now been provided and costs for preparing the land for sale are also in. It now has to be decided which is the preferred option for sale. Present thoughts are to test the market with an 'as is' sale rather than clear the site of the poplar and willow stumps and establish the land in pasture.

June is panning out to be a very busy one for the nursery as there are over 6,000 3m poles planned for planting programmes. Two helicopter flights have been scheduled to lift poles into some of the more inaccessible planting sites. The nursery contractors have been cutting 3m poles for the last two weeks and the pole bays are filling up fast as the first helicopter delivery flight approaches on the 15th June.

Akura has opened its gates to the general public and the native and exotic seedling stalls are full. Sales to the public have started positively with an increase in sales volume for this time of the year.

3.3 Flood Protection

3.3.1 Floodplain Management Plan Implementation

(a) Jim Cooke Park

Staff have responded to a number of requests for additional information regarding the consent application for the Jim Cooke Park project. We expect to notify this consent before the end of June.

(b) Hutt River Environmental Strategy

A user intercept survey of the Hutt River corridor was carried out. 960 people were surveyed between the Hutt River mouth and Harcourt Park from March through to early April 2016. This has been summarised in a report and the results will be used in upcoming community and stakeholder engagement to inform Phase 2.

3.3.2 Hutt River City Centre Upgrade Project

(a) Programme

The work streams for the preliminary design phases are currently proceeding to programme.

We have delayed the appointment of design services by two weeks to allow for further negotiation with some service providers regarding the scope of these services. This will have no impact on the overall programme.

(b) Budget

The total project budget overview is summarised in the table below. This information relates to all phases of the project and will be updated to reflect any cost estimate updates that occur at key decision points for the project.

	Spent \$m	Estimate to complete \$m	Forecast \$m	Budget \$m	Comment
Flood Protection Works (GWRC)	\$3.6	\$74.4	\$78	\$78	Property purchase underway, \$3.0m committed, Total project estimate will be refined through the preliminary design process
Melling Bridge (NZTA/HCC)	Nil	\$30	\$30	TBC	Indicative business case in development which will refine costs.
Making Places and Local Infrastructure (HCC)	Nil	\$35.5	\$35.5	\$11 (Making Places) HCC LTP	Further information included in HCC Making Places report. Total cost estimate being refined by this phase
Total	\$3.6	\$139.4	\$143		

(c) Property Purchase

117 properties or part properties have currently been identified as required for completion of the flood protection aspects of the City Centre Upgrade Project.

The status of acquisition of these properties is summarised in the table below:

Required	Purchased	Awaiting settlement	In Valuation	In Negotiation
117	2	0	2	3

(d) Procurement of design services

The preliminary design team will include specialists from a number of disciplines in the areas of flood protection, transport, urban, structural and geotechnical design.

The Working Group has received proposals for eight consultancy packages. Officers have evaluated the proposals and are negotiating with the suppliers to finalise the scope of services and fees for each individual contract. We have delayed appointment of these services by two weeks to allow for negotiations to be completed.

The Working Group has also made good progress on discussions for cost apportionment of these services between HCC, GWRC and NZTA.

We expect to reach cost sharing agreement and appoint consultants by mid-June 2016.

3.3.3 Operations Delivery

The annual works programmes are nearly complete and will be achieved within the overall maintenance budget. Additional expenditure in the Otaki River and Porirua Stream arising from flood damage last year has been off-set by savings in other areas.

Significant river works this period have included channel maintenance in the upper Waingawa scheme, aimed at protecting the Masterton District Council (MDC) water supply pipeline, completion of the machine channel maintenance work in the Northern schemes, and stopbank wave damage repairs in the Lower Ruamahanga system. Stream clearing runs are underway in the Waiwhetu Stream, Pinehaven Stream, Hulls Creek and Waimeha Stream in preparation for the winter period. Pest plant clearing and site preparation is underway in preparation for planting activities this year.

Improvement works in the Hutt River at Belmont have now been completed with a new rock line and groyne being constructed. Improvements to rock groynes at Traceys in the Otaki River have been deferred due to high river levels and resource consent condition time constraints.

The Barrage Gates (Ruamahanga River) electronics upgrade were completed in May. This required the remote control capabilities of the gates to be disabled for a number of weeks with no complications arising. However, completing the project did mean the maintenance painting of the gates had to be deferred until 2016/17. A significant structural upgrade on the Tawaha floodgate on Backwater Road has also been completed.

Improvements have been made to the method used to advise the public of weed spray operations in the Manaia drainage scheme following public complaints. Signage was placed in the area to be sprayed two weeks prior to the work. Iwi were also advised because we know this is a popular water cress collection site and were complementary of the extra effort made to notify the public of the activity.

All ten Wairarapa river schemes had held annual meetings in May. Each scheme advisory committee confirmed their satisfaction with scheme maintenance. A key point of discussion at all meetings related to the proposal to change river scheme governance structure across the Wairarapa Rivers. It is anticipated that this will be an important topic at the upcoming River Scheme Chair's meeting in early September.

The public continue to make good use of the Hutt River berms in spite of the recent wet weather. Maintenance on the Hutt River trail has continued with overgrown vegetation cleared from a number of areas and resurfacing of some lengths of the trail completed in preparation for the approaching winter weather.

Native planting on the river berms in both the Hutt and Kapiti areas will be the big focus during the next period.

Improvements in the accuracy and content of both SAP Plant Maintenance and GIS databases have been completed. Use of a new mobile application for asset condition rating has been very successful this year. Field staff have been very willing to use the new technology and we have noticed a significant improvement in data quality. Approximately 90% of the field inspections have been completed and we have commenced analysis of the information.

Preparation of a asset management plan for the barrage gates has commenced. The scope of work for the first phase of the work is being finalised with expert consultant help.

The four western resource consents, Hutt, Otaki, Waikanae and Wainuiomata have now been updated and resubmitted to the Environmental Regulation (EREG) Department for notification. An updated Code of Practice and Monitoring Plan will also form part of the documents being notified and these are nearing completion and will be submitted to EREG shortly. Work has commenced on the further information required for the upper Wairarapa Valley consent.

3.3.3 Investigations, Strategy and Planning

- A report has been provided to Hut Valley Flood Management Subcommittee (HVFMS) recommending endorsement of the Pinehaven FMP and reporting on additional mapping in be included in the plan following consultation with the Pinehaven Community.
- Public consultation has commenced on the draft Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan. There will be a public submissions process followed by a hearing. Submissions close on 15th July. For more information visit: <http://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/waiohine>
- A further workshop and site visit has been held with the Te Kāuru Upper Ruamāhanga FMP Subcommittee to develop river management approaches and options. Work is still progressing on the Masterton urban reach hydrology and flood mapping.
- Officers have provided input to UHCC Plan Changes 42 (Pinehaven) and 43 (Mangaroa).
- We will be providing feedback though the Environment Group on a draft of the Ministry for the Environment's updated guidance on *Coastal Hazards and Climate Change* – a benchmark piece of guidance for hazard management in New Zealand.
- A project to designate strategic flood protection infrastructure assets across the Hutt, Porirua, Waikanae and Otaki Rivers is underway.

3.4 Biodiversity

3.4.1 General

The output report from a GWRC wide project team was presented to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) in late April. The Natural Resources Plan (NRP) Implementation (wetlands, stock access) project was led by the Biodiversity department and involved developing a framework for integrated delivery of two non-regulatory methods in the *Proposed Natural Resources Plan* (PNRP). The report, *Supporting landowners to protect wetlands and waterways*, was well-received by ELT and all recommendations were adopted.

Following on from the above, the Mahi Waiora project will implement the communications and staff training components of delivering PNRP Method 12 (sustainable land use) and Method 20 (wetlands). From July 1, Biodiversity staff will work across the Environmental Management and Catchment Management Groups to support staff in a new ('one voice') way of working. This will involve a significant shift in work practices, characterised by a common approach to landowner support to be taken by staff in regulatory and non-regulatory roles,

A further GWRC wide project, also managed by Biodiversity staff, has been concluded. Stage 1 of the Coordinating Volunteer Effort project included staff from several departments and reviewed GWRC's approach to engaging with volunteers. The project report recommends taking a more strategic approach to engaging with volunteers and also developing more consistent systems for how departments work with volunteers. The recommendations focus particularly on ensuring GWRC meets its obligations under the new Health and Safety in Employment Act 2015. ELT approved the recommendations in full in May and the project will now move into an implementation phase. The potential for a region-wide volunteer strategy with other organisations is also being scoped.

Staff have compiled information on how the department interacts with volunteers across all programmes, including how health and safety matters are managed. This will contribute to a 'stocktake' being carried out by Community Engagement staff as part of implementing the recommendations of the Coordinating Volunteer Effort project (see below).



Photos from Restoration Day 2016, held in Carterton in May for 150 participants

3.4.2 Biodiversity Management

(a) Key Native Ecosystems (KNE)

Staff are in the final stages of preparation for planting at various KNE sites across the region. This work includes confirming plant deliveries from nurseries, arranging planting contracts and ensuring site preparation spraying is completed.

The Belmont-Korokoro KNE site boundary has been extended, with 13 private landowners agreeing to their land being included in the managed area. These properties all contain regenerating native bush that is contiguous with Belmont Regional Park. Most of these properties have possum bait stations already in place, and ecological weed control may also be carried out on some.

Planned pest plant control work is progressing well in KNE sites, despite recent unfavourable weather. The majority of the work planned for this financial year has now been completed and the rest will be completed by 30 June as planned.

The aerial *Egeria* weed control operation at the Parangarahu Lakes Area KNE site has been completed, with only one of three operational areas requiring work this year. The work went exceptionally well with no incidents to report.

An aerial survey of Wilding Pines is being planned for June at the Akatarawa Forest KNE site, to determine their spread from established plantings. It was decided that an aerial approach is preferable to surveying on foot, given the nature of the topography and vegetative cover.

Rat numbers have started to increase in the East Harbour Northern Forest and Wainuiomata Mainland Island KNE sites. The large amounts of hinau, *Coprosma grandifolia* and miro fruit on the ground in Wainuiomata, and the beech seeding in East Harbour will be driving this population rise. Biosecurity

staff are advising on the appropriate baits and their availability in order to halt the increase of rat numbers going into winter.

Contract hunters using indicator dogs have been hunting in the East Harbour Northern Forest KNE site and removed nine deer. This has been a very successful control operation despite dry conditions underfoot, which make stalking difficult.

(b) Wetland Programme

Staff responded to a request from the Parks department to assess the boundary and vegetation of the Whakatikei Headwater Swamp.

Progress is being made on the development of internal processes to assist Biodiversity and Land Management staff with streamlined delivery of the Wetland and Riparian programmes, the latter of which is in development by Land Management.

Two landowners with significant wetlands on their properties have signed up to the Wetland Programme. The sites are the Kaiwhata Oxbow in eastern Wairarapa and Te Wananga o Raukawa wetland in Otaki. Staff are developing Restoration Management Plans for these two wetlands.

(c) Fish Passage Restoration

Staff from the Biodiversity, Parks and Flood Protection departments met to discuss the fish passage remediation options at Battle Hill that were proposed by a Flood Protection intern last month. The agreed options are in the process of being reviewed by Environmental Science staff before resource consent requirements can be assessed.

Advice on fish passage was provided to the Parks department who are in the process of investigating options for replacing of a culvert in the Whakatikei River at Akatarawa Forest Park.

3.4.3 Biodiversity Advice and Advocacy

(a) Biodiversity Advice

Over this six-week reporting period, Biodiversity staff responded to 14 requests for advice as well as eight more general enquires from the public. Of the advice requests, six were from external groups and individuals and eight from other GWRC departments. Ten requests were for technical advice and information, three were for policy and planning advice, and one request was for consenting advice.

Biodiversity staff have planned a joint project with Flood Protection staff involving the development of good practice guidance on the use of plantings for river edge protection in GWRC flood management operations. The project will review existing knowledge of native and exotic planting for river edge protection and identify circumstances in which they would be most appropriately employed in the region. The project will also identify any

knowledge gaps and determine whether GWRC should consider addressing these through targeted research.

Staff responded to a request from Environmental Regulation department by providing clarification on the biodiversity offsetting schedule in the PNRP.

(b) Collaborative Restoration: Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project

A schedule of upcoming community planting and beach clean-up events has been compiled and made available to project partner organisations. Four events are supported by staff but will be hosted by the Friends of Onoke Spit, Ducks Unlimited and the South Wairarapa Biodiversity Group respectively. A further event, to be hosted by the Featherston Youth Programme, is yet to be confirmed.

Staff participated in a community planting event at Onoke Spit, which was jointly hosted by the Friends of Onoke Spit and the Department of Conservation. The Biodiversity department also contributed 100 saltmarsh ribbonwood plants for the project. This planting work extends restoration into a new area closer to the edge of Lake Onoke, while the focus to date has mainly been on the dunes.

An ecological consultant has been engaged to prepare a restoration plan for Lake Domain Reserve. The output will provide a strategy for coordinating restoration activities and opportunities for community involvement. The plan will also prioritise sites at the Domain with a view to maximising the biodiversity gains of restoration work.

Content has been prepared for a Wairarapa Moana visitor information publication.

Biosecurity staff are continuing with trapping at Boggy Pond, Mathews Lagoon, Wairio Wetland and Pounui Lagoon.

4. Collaborative Restoration: Porirua Harbour and Catchment Project

Planning has commenced for planting days at Bothamley Park and Battle Hill in June. Pupils from several schools will be involved with planting native stream-side plants. They will learn why riparian plants are important for stream health and native ecosystems, and how their actions are helping to keep sediment out of Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour.

4.1 Biodiversity Advocacy

Restoration Day 2016 was held in Carterton in May and was very well received by 150 participants from around the region. Biodiversity staff coordinated the event, working in collaboration with several partner organisations: Department of Conservation, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington City Council, Porirua City Council, Hutt City Council, Kapiti Coast District Council, Zealandia and WWF. The theme of the conference this year was 'resilient restoration', and it involved talks and workshops on a wide range of restoration

topics including fauna and flora assessment techniques, innovative wetland restoration, freshwater critters and habitats, and organising community groups. The event also featured a popular key note address from Massey University Senior Ecology Lecturer, Dr Mike Joy.

Very good feedback was received from participants. Many said they were ‘inspired’ and, in particular, appreciated the diversity of workshops available and the opportunity to learn new skills and benefit from the expert knowledge of Restoration Day partners.



Workshop activities at Restoration Day 2016

Clockwise from top left: GWRC Freshwater Ecologist, Alton Perrie leading the freshwater critters discussion, learning about five-minute bird counts, using a water clarity tube, discussion at the Fensham Reserve.

5. Environment Management

5.1 Harbours

5.1.1 Marine Oil Spill Response

A Tier 2 marine oil spill exercise was held at Queens Wharf on 17 May.



A floating harbour containment boom and floating skimmers.

5.1.2 Navigation Aids

On 7 June 12 new storage batteries were transported by workboat Seacare to the Rear Lead light for installation, taking advantage of calm weather conditions.



5.1.3 Recreational

On the evening/morning of 12/13 May, the 15-metre fibreglass catamaran yacht *Encantado* broke loose from its swing moorings in Evan Bay during a severe northerly storm, and went aground on the beach adjacent to the northern end of Wellington airport runway. The vessel became a total wreck, and the mast needed to be ‘dropped’ to avoid obstructing the Wellington airport runway. The vessel had insurance and the owner/insurance assessor pulled the craft ashore on the evening of 13 May, and removed it from the beach area on 14 May. Salvage work required use of heavy machinery along the foreshore, and restoration work was required afterwards. A large quantity of fibreglass debris was removed (by the owner/insurer) from the shoreline.



Wreck of yacht *Encantado*



After the long, hot summer, cooler bad weather prevailed at the end of May, and the two swim-rafts which had been anchored off Oriental Bay beach all summer were removed from their location and lifted out of the sea onto Aotea Quay for the winter.



A mere 6-months growth of seaweed on an Oriental Bay swim raft!

5.2 Administration

In the last six weeks, five candidates for Pilotage Exemption Certificates were examined (and passed). These assessments are carried out under delegated authority from the Director of Maritime New Zealand. These were all for Masters of Cook Strait ferries, and are necessary to ensure that the commercial operators have sufficient qualified Masters to operate their ferries into and out of Wellington Harbour, replacing staff who have retired or otherwise left.

5.3 Parks

Flood damage repairs and tree hazard management work in Korokoro Valley are complete and the track from Cornish Street was opened in time for Anzac weekend. The flood damage mitigation work at Battle Hill is complete. A section of the Bush Reserve track was re-routed to allow the removal of two flood-prone bridges. Similarly, at Queen Elizabeth Park, a section of the Wainui Stream track was modified to allow the removal of another flood damaged bridge. Work on the Whareroa Stream bridge is well underway, with the installation of rip-rap to protect a scoured abutment. This work will conclude an extensive programme of repairs and reconstruction that has significantly improved the flood resilience of key infrastructure within each of these parks.

The farming opportunity for the eastern side of Belmont Regional Park was tendered out, with the new licence holder to commence from 1 July 2016. Based in the Wairarapa, Toviewadream Farming Ltd (TFL) is owned by Dion

Kilmister and Ali Scott. Dion's brother Kerry and his partner Lorena Crombie will be the stock managers, and will live in the farm manager's house at Hill Road. While the current sheep and beef breeding operation will remain, we have been able to agree access improvements during lambing/calving with TFL. Fencing is underway on Old Coach Road between the Hill Road farm hub and the Belmont Road exit., so this laneway will now be open to visitors year round.

Following the release of the Motorised Recreation Map 20 update in the Parks Network Plan for public consultation, public meetings have been held at the Upper Hutt Depot and Orange Hut in May.

GWRC applied for and was successful in obtaining New Zealand Community Trust (NZCT) funding to complete work on the Rimutaka Rail Trail that included a major upgrade of the Summit Tunnel to Siberia section on Department of Conservation land.

The construction of the visitor hub buildings and the Western Depot office at Queen Elizabeth Park has been tendered. The final stage of consenting approval (Archaeological Authority) will be concluded by the end of this month and building is expected to commence from early July.

A new cattlestop (relocated from Whitireia Park) at Baring Head installed in May completes the KNE fencing and land retirement at the block. Planting into the newly fenced areas will commence this winter.

The scheduled track improvement programme continues; Tanes Track is mostly complete; Bus Barn track work is complete, with metalling to occur in the new financial year.

Services and infrastructure work were completed at Kaitoke Regional Park campground to address the growing visitor use. Additional womens' toilets were added to both the small and large facility buildings. A second water tank and new pipeline have also been added to the large building to increase capacity. A new campground shelter has been built at the Upper Terrace, providing a gas BBQ, water and kitchen facilities to the growing number of campers in this area of the park.



6. Strategy

6.1 Climate Change

6.1.1 Electric Vehicle Symposium – 27 June

GWRC and WCC are co-hosting an electric vehicle symposium ‘The Future is Electric’ on 27 June at the Rydges Hotel in Wellington city. The Symposium’s objectives are:

- Learn from overseas experience about how to facilitate the adoption of electric vehicle technology in New Zealand, with a focus on the Wellington region;
- Promote the opportunities that Electric Vehicles present to Wellingtonians;
- Identify the challenges and opportunities of electrifying private, commercial and public transport;
- Highlight policy changes (at both local and central government levels) that are required to drive the uptake of electric vehicles throughout the Wellington region;
- Inform the development of a regional strategy that articulates how necessary policy, infrastructure and other changes will be addressed going forward;
- Information sharing and networking.

The event will bring international experts from Canada, California, the UK and Norway (Norway via video presentation) together with a wide range of New Zealand speakers to discuss accelerating electric vehicle uptake in New Zealand.

Presentations and panel discussions will focus on the challenges and opportunities of electric buses, cars, trucks and e-bikes, the economic, social and environmental benefits of electric vehicles, and the policy, infrastructure, skills and services changes needed to stimulate rapid uptake.

Sponsorship has been secured from EECA, Carbridge, Wellington Electricity, NZTA and the Ministry of Transport.

A copy of the program and speaker biographies can be viewed on the event website www.thefutureiselectric.co.nz.

At the time of writing (9 June) registrations were at 131. The venue’s capacity is 160. Promotion of the event continues.

6.1.2 Regional Electric Vehicle Working Group

GWRC convenes the Wellington Region Electric Vehicle Working Group (Working Group), comprising officers from councils in the greater Wellington Region.

The Working Group operates as a coordinating mechanism for the promotion of electronic vehicles (EV) generally, and in relation to the development of charging infrastructure across the region. Meetings began in February and are held every 1-2 months. Industry stakeholders are invited to share information and discuss relevant matters.

Matters discussed at the May meeting included:

- The recent EV Programme announcement by Transport Minister Simon Bridges.
- A potential low cost, low effort initiative to installing public charging stations.
- An offer to provide information to MBIE about council fleet sizes and the opportunity to transition these to electric, and to support Inland Revenue (IRD) with feedback on their review of Fringe Benefit Tax and depreciation on electric vehicles. This relates to fresh initiatives MBIE and IRD are to commence.
- A goal for the Wellington region to have 100 car charging locations through both public and private sector efforts. Goal setting will enable a strategic approach to be undertaken amongst stakeholders to support early electric vehicle growth, and would enable gaps to be identified and addressed.

The region's first car charger on public land was recently installed in the area serving the Dowse Art Gallery, Hutt City Council, Library, i-Site, and swimming pool (Stephens Grove).

6.1.3 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory

The Community GHG Inventory for Wellington City and the Greater Wellington Region 2000-2015 was updated and released in late April.

The inventory presents an annual accounting of GHG emissions for the Wellington Region as a whole and with a breakdown for Wellington City from financial years 2000/01 through 2014/15.

The inventory shows that overall gross emissions for the Wellington region have declined about 4 percent from 2000/01 to 2014/15. The results demonstrate that the region has become more energy efficient over time and is less emissions intensive on both a per capita and per unit of gross regional product (GRP) basis.

During the 2000/01 to 2014/15 study period, the population increased by 13 percent and gross regional product increased by 28 percent. Regional average gross emissions in 2014/15 were approximately 7.2 tCO₂e per person, a reduction from 8.4 tCO₂e per person in 2000/01. This indicates a continued decoupling of economic activity and greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

However, when the effects of forestry activities are included in the calculations, the net emissions situation shows an increase of 39% between 2000/01 and 2014/15. Net emissions in 2014/15 were approximately 4.2 tCO₂e/person up from 3.4 in 2000/01.

The rise in net emissions was a result of increased forest harvest activities within the region towards the end of the reporting period. This is a trend occurring at the national level and is forecast to continue for a number of years as vast amounts of plantation forests mature and reach harvesting age.

The inventory is available on the GWRC website.

6.1.4 Other

A Nissan Leaf and a Mitsubishi Outlander have been purchased and are currently being branded with GWRC signage. Staff are assessing the charging station configuration for outside Shed 39, including the possibility of guest vehicles needing to be accommodated as well as GWRC vehicles.

A proposed process for considering climate change in all council reports and proposals has been developed and is currently being tested. It is anticipated that this will be in place for the next financial year.

Workshops have been held to progress the development of a 2050 pathway calculator for the region. The calculator will allow users to explore how energy and transport choices will shape the region's carbon emissions footprint, and help address climate change. The calculator will enable users to understand what changes can be made between the present time and 2050 to enable the region to transition to a low carbon economy.

The calculator developed for the Wellington City Council provides a useful working example of the functionality of the calculator tool and can be viewed at <http://climatecalculator.org.nz/> The regional version will contain additional levers covering sectors such as forestry and agriculture.

7. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

7.1 Engagement

Engagement on this matter is not necessary.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

Report approved by:

Nigel Corry
General Manager,
Environment Management

Report approved by:

Wayne O'Donnell
General Manager,
Catchment Management

Report approved by:

Luke Troy
General Manager,
Strategy