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Report to the Landcare Committee
from Graeme Campbell, Project Manager, Flood Protection Group

Waikanae River Gravel Extraction Review

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on progress with the review of the Waikanae River gravel extraction policy.

2. Background

The results of the latest Waikanae River gravel survey, reported to the Landcare Committee in July 2000 (Report 00.475), indicated a substantial accumulation of gravel in the lower reaches. The report proposed a review of the current gravel extraction policy, which only allows for the extraction of 3000m³/year. This report updates the Committee on progress with that review. The full outcomes of the review are to be reported to the Committee in February 2001.

3. What Has Been Done

3.1 Site Inspection

A walkover survey of the reach of the river from the Mouth to Jim Cooke Park has been undertaken. This survey, by Flood Protection staff, determined:

- That it would be possible to extract up to 40,000m³ of gravel between the Otaihanga and Greenaway Road over the next five years. The 40,000m³ equates to the amount of gravel that has built up in this reach over the last ten years. By removing this quantity of gravel, we will have achieved the Waikanae Floodplain Management Plan objective of maintaining bed levels at the status quo.
- Approximately 10,000m³ of gravel would come from the tidal reaches in the vicinity of Otaihanga domain and the balance from gravel beaches between El Rancho and Greenaway Road (see **Attachment 1**).

- The access to the river would be through Otaihangā Domain on the south bank and through El Rancho and Greenaway Road on the north bank. Access may be able to be obtained to the south bank of the river via the old haul road into the Douglas metal pit which was used for extraction in the 1960s. This route is in private ownership and extractors would need to negotiate any entry with the owners.

3.2 Informal Discussions with Potential Extractors

Three local contractors have been contacted about options for the extraction of gravel from the river. All contractors considered it a viable proposition although the timing of the work would be of importance. The optimum, for all parties, would be if the extraction could be timed with a major construction project, as the preference was to undertake the extraction as quickly as possible rather than over an extended period of time. Quality tests would also have to be undertaken to determine the uses to which the gravel could be put.

3.3 Meeting with Local Residents

A meeting was held with local residents at the Otaihangā Boating Club, primarily to discuss the issue of gravel build up in the lower reaches of the Waikanae River. About 40 people attended what was a lively meeting. The Council advised residents what the results of the latest river survey were and what was to be done about it. Certainly the feeling from the majority of those at the meeting was that the Council should be extracting more gravel from the riverbed as soon as is practically possible. The residents felt the extraction would enhance their ability to use the river for recreation and improve flood protection.

3.4 Hydraulic Modelling

The affect of the gravel build up has been modelled on the MIKE 11 computer model. The results show that the 100 year flood levels have increased by only 70mm as a result of the aggradation. This is due in part to the fact that tide levels and storm surge dominate flow conditions from the Otaihangā Domain down to the sea. Smaller events do break out of the channel more frequently but these events do not cause significant damage.

3.5 Consultation with Iwi

A meeting has been held with Kapakapanui, representing Te Ati Awa ki Whakarongotai, about the gravel survey results and the Council's review of the current extraction policy. The representatives expressed an understanding of the issues and a desire to work with the Council.

4. What Still Needs to be Done

The next stage of the review will have five main threads:

4.1 Consultation with Iwi

Further consultation with Te Ati Awa ki Whakarongotai. The aim will be to achieve a 'partnership' arrangement. This is considered of primary importance to the outcome of the review.

4.2 Consultation with Affected Parties

Discussions are to be held with DOC, Fish and Game Council, Waikanae Estuary Guardians and Kapiti Environmental Action about their views on the extraction of gravel. This is primarily to ascertain what their respective positions are in relation to the proposal and what conditions they may seek when resource consents are applied for.

4.3 Quality Testing

Quality tests on the gravel from the lower reaches of the river will be undertaken to determine the likely uses for the gravel.

4.4 Expressions of Interest

The commercial viability of extraction gravel will be further tested with the advertising of expressions of interest from Contractors for the extraction of 40,000m³ of gravel. This will allow officers to select the most viable extraction proposal and assess what the financial implications are likely to be.

4.5 Environmental Impacts

A preliminary assessment of the environmental impacts of the extraction of gravel will be undertaken. This will include work on how the extraction can be undertaken so as to minimise any negative affects as well as what can be done to mitigate the affects.

5. Programme

It is proposed to have all of the analysis and consultation done by mid December 2000, and then finalise the review in January 2001. The recent floods and the resulting work will, however, have an influence on the timetable as staff resources are currently stretched with staff on leave and a number of vacancies yet to be filled. The Committee will be advised if there is any change to the programme.

6. Communication

No further communication opportunities are envisaged until after the review has been presented to the Landcare Committee.

7. Recommendation

That the Landcare Committee receive the report and note the contents.

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission:

GRAEME CAMPBELL
Project Manager

GEOFF DICK
Manager, Flood Protection (Operations)

SUSAN EDWARDS
Acting Divisional Manager, Landcare

Attachment 1 : Waikanae River Gravel Extraction Review Site Plan