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Report 01.73

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Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Wayne O'Donnell, Manager, Biosecurity

Hornwort Control Proposal – Lake Wairarapa Wetlands

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on progressing the herbicide trial to control the aquatic pest plant Hornwort in the Bartons Lagoon area, Lake Wairarapa.

2. Background

Reports 00.187 (March 2000) and 00.642 (August 2000) presented overviews of the Hornwort problem in the wetlands on the northern and eastern margins of Lake Wairarapa.

It was agreed at the August meeting that Council should financially support a control trial to determine whether the herbicide Endothall would be successful. The herbicide is only available under an experimental users permit issued to NIWA. This permit expires in 2001 necessitating some urgency to complete the trial. NIWA are hopeful of gaining full registration for Endothall. However, this process could take up to two years. Data collected from the proposed Lake Wairarapa trial will assist NIWA to fill some of the 'information gaps' relating to the effects of Endothall in New Zealand conditions.

3. Resource Consent Progress

An application for consent to proceed with the herbicide application was submitted in October 2000. All known interested parties and or users of the Lake Reserve area were contacted prior to submitting the application. There was significant support from the parties contacted.

The application was notified in November with submissions closing in late December 2000. Two submissions were received opposing the application. However, both submitters indicated that they would be prepared to withdraw their opposition if specific conditions were included in the consent.

One submitter has raised concerns regarding the possible bio-accumulation of the herbicide within eels. The submitter has suggested that export trade deals could be seriously undermined if this was to occur.

Discussions have subsequently occurred with NIWA and MAFFish. There was general agreement that this information would be required as part of the full registration application. However, this trial was a very minor application with minimal affects likely on instream life. North American data supports this. It has been suggested that a period prohibiting eeling in the trial area would be appropriate. Discussions are being held with the submitter to reach agreement on this point.

The second submitter raised concerns about signage, public access to the site during the trial, and appropriate monitoring protocols. Modifications to the trial proposal have been made to accommodate these concerns.

4. Modified Timetable

A review of the trial timetable has been undertaken following receipt of the two opposing submissions to the application. The late January date was cancelled and a new date set for late March. If we are unable to gain a resource consent prior to this period then it is possible that the proposal may have to be abandoned. Constraints include the need to apply the herbicide during specific climatic conditions, and the limited period available before the experimental use permit expires.

5. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission by:

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Colin Wright
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