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Committee Hutt River Advisory
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Hutt River maintenance programme 2003/04

1. Purpose

To advise the Hutt River Advisory Committee of key elements of this year's (2003/04) Hutt River maintenance programme, the flood event of 3 October 2003 and upcoming priorities for the Hutt River Ranger.

2. Hutt River maintenance programme 2003/04

Planned Hutt River maintenance works for 2003/04 include:

Job description	Date work planned
Completing the Estuary Bridge walkway and paths	July to August
Rock lining extensions at Port Road, Croft Grove, Belmont and Maoribank	November to April
Bed re-contouring at Belmont, Trentham Park and Gibbons Street	December to February
Ongoing tree removal from stopbanks	January to May
Gravel extraction, Kennedy-Good Bridge to Melling	Ongoing
Willow and native planting	July to August
Hutt River survey sight-line clearing	November to February
Stage two of the Whakatikei shingle plant development	March to April
Hutt mouth environmental planting and development programme	March to May
Hutt River Trail maintenance and development	Ongoing

The 2003/04 financial year will once again be a busy one for Operations staff.

There is a new section of rock lining to be commenced at Port Road, and rock line extensions to be completed at Croft Grove, Belmont and Maoribank. We will also undertake a comprehensive check, and top-up as necessary, of all existing rock edge protection structures. We plan to purchase 1,980 tonnes of rock for general maintenance, plus what is required for Port Road.

We have now largely completed our annual willow maintenance programme. About 3,200 poles and wands were planted to thicken and repair existing willow stands.

Bed re-contouring and beach ripping will be carried out at Belmont, Trentham Memorial Park and at Gibbons Street in Upper Hutt. At Gibbons Street we plan to significantly reshape one of the larger 'beaches' that are of concern to some Upper Hutt residents.

One of our bigger jobs this year will be the five yearly Hutt River survey sight-line clearing works. This is expected to take five field staff members up to eight weeks to complete.

We will continue with the ongoing tree removal programme on stopbanks both in Upper and Lower Hutt. This is consistent with our management policy of removing all trees from stopbank faces. The work requires a large amount of consultation with adjoining landowners, but is still progressing well.

This year sees a continued commitment to enhancement of the river environment. So far we have planted about 2,500 native plants, mostly in copses along the river berms. Stage two of a three stage clean-up of the old Whakatikei shingle plant is also programmed. The work will include further earthworks and planting.

A planting plan is being developed for the Hutt River mouth, after which a five-step programme of tidy-up works will be put forward for discussion with officers from the Hutt City Council and Winstone Aggregates Ltd. When completed we plan to present the tidy up programme to the Petone Community Board.

The Estuary Bridge walkway is now complete. We have had some very positive media releases and public feedback. We will also continue with the maintenance of the Hutt River Trail and, where possible, further develop and extend it.

3. Flood event of 3 October 2003

On Friday, 3 October 2003 an active front preceded by strong northerly winds brought widespread rain to the Hutt and other western region catchments. In the 16 hours from 8.00am to midnight on 3 October 2003, 100–150mm of rain fell in the higher gauges of the Hutt catchment. A concentrated rain band extended across the region from Paekakariki to Mangaroa. The Hutt River peaked at about 11.00pm with the peak flow having an estimated return period of four years. Estimated return periods of the Mangaroa and Whakatikei River flood peaks are 11 years and 60 years respectively.

The Hutt River flood protection system performed well with very little damage to the system. The work that has been put in place over the last five years has proved its worth. Our general impression is that the required repairs can be accommodated within the existing Hutt maintenance budget. The river berm access tracks and the Hutt River Trail are the key areas requiring work. Note at the time of preparing this report detailed inspections of some rock protection works are still to be completed, as we need low river levels to complete these.

4. Hutt River Ranger

The Hutt River Ranger service has now been in place for one year.

A key focus for the River Ranger, Thane Walls, in the first year has been to develop and build on the already well established relationships with the Upper Hutt and Hutt City Councils, the Police, Department of Conservation, Fish & Game New Zealand, Ministry of Fisheries, and the general public. Improving the river environment for the variety of recreational users, and fauna and flora, can only be achieved in co-operation with all of the above agencies. Our view is that this relationship building exercise has been very successful.

Regular patrols of the river berms have also been given a high priority over the first 12 months. In particular we have actively discouraged both trail and quad bike riding along the river. Rubbish dumping and 'hoons' in cars have also been discouraged, and over the last 12 months there has been a noticeable decrease in offending. We have also produced an information sheet for four-wheel drive users in the Hutt River discouraging four-wheel drive use in the river channel.

The River Ranger has presented numerous talks to school groups, Angling Clubs, and recreational users, explaining the history of the river, its environment, uses and non-uses. A poster has also been developed about the Hutt River and how best to enjoy it.

4.1 Where to now

Over the next 12 months we will continue to work on the successes of last year. More school and community involvement in environmental schemes, a continued patrolling presence, and berm developments to rationalise vehicle access. Controlling berm access with bollards, or similar, helps to reduce unacceptable activities such as waste dumping and vehicle vandalism, and is in keeping with the Environmental Strategy for the river. We will also continue to keep on promoting the use of the river and trail, and the Hutt River in general, as a unique and wonderful natural asset in the region.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *receive the report.*
2. *note the contents of the report.*

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