



Report **03.651**
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Committee **Rural Services and Wairarapa**
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Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of current activities and provide information of interest since the previous meeting held on 30 September 2003.

2. Divisional Matters

2.1 Last Meeting

Although hard to believe, this meeting is the last scheduled meeting of the Committee in 2003. Accordingly, on behalf of the staff of the Division, I would like to wish you well for the coming Christmas and holiday season. No doubt 2004 will bring new challenges.

2.2 Business Unit – Bovine Tb Vector Control

Good progress has been made in changing the Bovine Works Unit into a stand-alone business unit.

This move has been made in response to the Animal Health Board's resolution that all vector control activity should be undertaken in a contestable environment from July 2003. This matter was discussed at the November 2002 Committee meeting and the Committee supported a change to a business unit structure.

Separate financial accounts have been set up and a manager has been appointed for the Unit. He is Scott Forbes who currently manages a business unit for Alstom at the Hutt Railway Workshops. Scott will commence in the New Year, although he has already visited some operations and met key staff.

Scott will report to the Divisional Manager to give separation from the Biosecurity Department, who award contracts as the vector management agency, as required by the Animal Health Board.

The Unit has already won several contracts this financial year and aim to continue their very successful performance over past years by completing high quality work at reasonable cost.

2.3 Irrigation Study

Stage 3 of the Wairarapa Irrigation Study has begun with a series of public meetings to explain the proposals and the studies completed so far. Overall, there is a steady interest in the proposals and recent late frosts have very much increased the enthusiasm from grape growers to include provision for frost protection in the design parameters.

The next steps involve examining possible financial structures and providing detailed information to individual landowners.

Fish & Game have publicly criticised this Council's involvement in the study as indicating that the Council will be biased should it need to consider resource consent applications in the future. The Council has been involved because it sees the water harvesting concept used in the scheme proposals as a more sustainable use of water than direct abstractions from rivers and streams. In addition, the proposals are based on complying with the Regional Freshwater Plan, which was developed through a public process, and if necessary commissioners can always be used to consider consent applications if and when these occur.

3. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

Bovine Tb:

3.1 2002/03 Programme

Almost all control work carried over from the 2002/03 year has been completed. A total of 37,753 hectares were required to be carried over.

The following areas are not yet completed:

- Te Wharau 2,325 ha (J McCaslin)
- Mangaroa-Kaitoke 1,756 ha (Trappersnz Ltd)

The Te Wharau block is expected to be completed November 2003. Access has been a problem due to lambing. The Mangaroa-Kaitoke contract is subject to an ongoing dispute with the contractors.

The following operational monitors for the 2002/03 programme have been completed:

	Strata	RTC %	Operator
Holdsworth-Carterton	MR 3 a/b	0.1	GW Bovine Unit/Vermeer
Woodside	MR 2	0.6	GW Bovine Unit

3.2 2003/04 Programme

The approved programme for the 2003/04 year includes the following:

	AHB Approved Hectares	GW Revised Hectares
Possum control	321,668	329,607
Ferret control	31,770	31,770
	353,438	361,377

Now that 2002/03 performance and trend monitoring results have been collated, the revised programme will need to be amended.

The area to be controlled will reduce because some trend monitoring results indicate that control is not necessary. AHB agreement will be required for these proposed changes. Refer (3) below.

(1) Issued Contracts

The following area has been contracted for the 2003/04 year to date:

	Possum (ha)	Ferret (ha)	Survey (ha)
Totals:	198,227	18,859	5,946

(2) Tenders

The following possum control operational areas have been tendered. These tenders close early November.

	Possum (ha)
Bideford	7,961
East Alfredton	2,407
Kahutara-Pirinoa	8,787
Mt Bruce	3,479
Pakowai	5,047
Ruamahanga River	3,991
Waiorongomai	4,538
Whangaehu-Mauriceville	8,526
Total:	44,736

(3) Proposed Programme Changes

The following areas are considered to not require vector control in 2003/04. Most have either low pre RTC levels or Tb infection status that has changed to medium risk. A small number, however, are awaiting monitors before a final decision can be made.

	Possum (ha)
Mangaroa-Kaitoke	2,325
Mt Bruce-Waipoua	3,584
Ponatahi-Longbush	6,029
Taueru-Maungaraki	1,473
Taueru-Maungaraki Ext	4,216
Te Wharau	7,077
Tinui	6,736
Waiorongomai	5,068
Whangaehu-Mauriceville	1,521
Woodside	1,046
Total:	39,075

3.3 Operation Progress – Monitoring Results

(1) 2003/04 Programme

The following operational monitors for the 2003/04 programme have been completed:

	Strata	RTC %	
Otaki Buffer	MR 2	6.7	(Trend)
Otaki Crown	MR 1	7.1	(Trend)
SE Wairarapa Stage 1	MR 3	3.6	(Trend)
Te Wharau	HR 1	0.7	GW Bovine Unit
Kahutara-Pirinoa	MR 1	0.0	GW Bovine Unit
Stronvar	MR 3	2.4	J McCaslin

3.4 Aerial Control

The GW Bovine Unit is currently planning aerial 1080 pellet control within the following operational areas:

	Hectares
Kahutara-Pirinoa	1,000
Homewood-Riversdale	6,300
SE Wairarapa – Stage 2	7,000

3.5 Juken Nissho Ltd – Use of Aerial 1080 Application Methods

The Council has recently received advice from JNL that they no longer support the use of aerial 1080 application methods on their land. JNL considers that other ground-based methods should be used. Their preference is for strategically placed baitstations.

Committee members will be aware that a number of SE Wairarapa landowners also opposed aerial 1080 applications in 2001. An agreement was reached with them that they would pay for any additional costs incurred by using their preferred ground control methods. This approach should also be applied to JNL to ensure that Council policy is consistently implemented and so that JNL are not being subsidised by other ratepayers.

Pest Animals:

3.6 Communications

A meeting was held at Mount Bruce on 16 October in relation to the proposed use of 1080 for possum and rat control by DoC within the Reserve. An update was also provided about the proposed release of kiwis and the fact that they will more than likely extend their range onto the adjacent farmland.

A presentation was made to the Miramar Probus Club on 8 October. The theme was largely about the Miramar Possum Control Operation but included other pest animal management issues.

A presentation on both pest animals and plants issues was made to the Rimutaka Forest Restoration Trust at their Annual General Meeting on 9 October. The Trust intend to release kiwi into the Rimutaka Forest Park near the DoC Catchpool Field Centre following a prolonged predator control operation carried out by volunteers.

3.7 Pet Shop Inspections

An authorised Biosecurity staff member conducted the inspections pursuant to Sections 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act 1993. The officer visited 26 pet shops and veterinary clinics throughout the region. Most vet clinics in the metropolitan areas also trade in pets and pet supplies, as do some in the Wairarapa.

All establishments except one were well presented and professionally run. The officer found managers and staff alike most courteous and more than helpful. He was able to undertake thorough inspections to see what fish, birds or mammals were for sale. Nothing illegal or untoward was disclosed. The officer concluded that all the people he had spoken to have a responsible attitude towards the illegal sale, distribution and breeding of pest animals. An information brochure was left at each of the premises which denotes;

- why it is illegal to sell pest animals

- what pest animals are banned from sale
- which pest animals are not recommended for sale
- the possible penalties for illegal trading
- how the traders can help with minimising the risk of unwanted organisms invading ecosystems

3.8 Key Native Ecosystem Management Areas

At least fourteen KNE sites had maintenance works undertaken during September/October. Two new (initial) operations have commenced recently. One is the Wilf Mexted Bush Reserve (23ha) at Greenacres which will involve a Tawa residents volunteer group. The other is the Mt Victoria/Haitaitai Park operation (338ha) in a highly populated area of Wellington City. This operation is the first of three that will eventually link possum control from the central city to the south coast and adjoin the Miramar operation to the east and the Brooklyn Hills/Macalister Park operation to the west. Every effort is being made to get as much done as possible before the December/January school holidays.

Pest Plants:

3.9 Eradication species

- New sites

A new site of Smilax was located near Martinborough. This is the latest in a number of sites that have been located in recent times. The site has been included as an addition to the current clearance contract.

- Control work

Eight sites of Sweet Pea shrub have been controlled in the Island Bay area by the staff at Upper Hutt. A further six sites are targeted for control before Christmas.

The African Feathergrass sites at Miramar were controlled by a contractor during the autumn period. Inspections in September revealed that the majority of plants have been destroyed but some of the more mature plants have remained active. These will be followed up over the summer.

3.10 Containment Species

- Surveys

Much of the survey work during this period has focused on Evergreen Buckthorn. A survey of 50 hectares of land at Kenepuru Hospital has been completed. The entire area is covered with Buckthorn but less than half of the area has what could be considered heavy infestations. Further work has also begun in Porirua to determine the full extent of the infestations in this area.

Survey work has also begun on private property surrounding Trelisick Park. It appears that there could be a considerable number of infestations.

An aerial survey was undertaken on 6 October to determine the spread of Boneseed and Darwin's Barberry. The survey stretched from the GW boundary at Otaki to Sinclair Head at Wellington. Apart from infestations at Makara Beach and Sinclair Head the coastal escarpments between these two are free of Boneseed. Staff will meet with Wellington City Council to consider a future control plan for Boneseed on the south coast.

- Compliance

Ninety occupiers with infestations of Evergreen Buckthorn are to be issued with compliance letters over the next month. All these sites relate to infestations in the Kapiti area.

- Boneseed

Boneseed was cleared from more than ninety properties in the Kapiti area over the September-October period. Work was also undertaken on the Pukerua and Raumati escarpments and at the Otaki River mouth.

3.11 Publicity

- Pamphlets

Posters and AO sized billboards of the Eradication species have been developed and titled "Plants gone bad - the regions 13 most wanted". The billboards have been put up at several TLA landfill sites throughout the region.

During this period, new brochures for Creepers and Climbers, Boneseed, Darwin's Barberry and Bad Berries have been developed. The latter brochure was developed in conjunction with five TLAs and DoC.

A range of Weed Control fact sheets for non-strategy plants such as Wandering Jew, Cape Ivy and others have been produced. It was felt that as enquires relating to the control of these species are fielded on a regular basis by staff it would be useful to have facts sheets available.

- Home & Garden Show

This show was held at Westpac Stadium over three days from 26th –28th September. It was estimated that around 12,000 people attended. This number is down on the previous year where it was estimated around 18,000 people attended. Staff fielded many queries on pest plant and animal issues. The Council should consider utilising this show to display a range of material on current activities and issues. It is a unique opportunity to converse with a large number of local people over a short timespan.

- Weedbusters

The national launch of the new DoC Weedbusters programmes was held in Wellington on October 14 with people attending from Southland,

Auckland, and other areas. Biosecurity contributed material for a display. Weedbusters is an Australian 'invention' which has huge public and government support. The programme is promoted strongly through schools and community care groups. An agreement has been reached with the Australian authorities for the brand to be utilised in New Zealand. DoC will be the lead agency but they are reliant on regional and local councils getting involved, particularly the promotion and management of local events. There is concern that if organisations other than DoC do not become involved in this initiative, Weedbusters may fizzle out before it has an opportunity to get national support.

Material has also been provided for a Weedbusters display at Wellington Central library and will remain in place until 3 November.

- Presentations were made to the following organisations -
 - ◆ Powerpoint presentation to World Wildlife Fund and Habitat for Protection.
 - ◆ Talk to Twiglands Gardening staff
 - ◆ Powerpoint presentation to Rimutaka Trust AGM
 - ◆ Talk to Jim's Mowing franchise

The fortnightly Midweek articles have continued with material alternating between pest plant and animal issues. Feedback to date from the public has been very positive.

4. Land & River Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)

4.1 Planting Programme Update

Rainfall totals have continued to be very kind to all the planting programmes. All programmes are now complete except for some release spraying of some of the later planting.

Poles and seedlings planted in the early part of winter are exhibiting very good levels of growth and it is hoped the predicted northwesterly winds for November will not affect survival rates too much.

4.2 Akura Conservation Centre

The Akura Conservation Centre has closed for the year. Interim financial statements indicate that turnover is up on the previous year. Seedlings and poles sold during the winter planting period totalled 473,176. Native trees are in high demand, both for Council's riparian and biodiversity programmes, and in-gate sales to the public.

The new plantings of Veronese poplar have been completed and the annual fertiliser programme finalised. Soil moisture recordings have commenced

and a new probe has been installed in the recently planted block to enable more accurate monitoring to occur in the critical months that follow planting.

4.3 Catchment Scheme Annual Meetings.

The six Catchment Control Schemes will each hold their annual meetings throughout the latter part of November. The meetings provide an opportunity to review the works programme for 2002/03, report progress on the current year's programme, and prepare draft estimates for 2004/05. The winter period has been relatively free of heavy rainfall events and work is generally proceeding as per the approved programmes.

Reviews for the Awhea and Kaiwhata Schemes will be prepared in March 2004. This will entail a full review of progress since the inception of the schemes, a draft programme of works for the next five years, and the election of Advisory Committees to oversee the operational aspects of future programmes.

4.4 Soil Quality Monitoring

The last of the baseline monitoring for soil quality throughout the region has recently been completed. Hill country sites throughout the region were the last to be surveyed. A review of the data collected from the 75 sites will take place over the next few months to ascertain where future sampling programmes will focus. Early indications are that compaction under dairying and aggregate stability under cropping are two potential areas for future monitoring.

Soil intactness monitoring across the region will be completed in the autumn of 2004. This expanded programme will follow on from the pilot scheme which was completed earlier this year. Results from this monitoring programme will enable baseline data to be gathered on the intactness of the region's soils. Data collected from this programme will enable a range of environmental reporting to be completed including extent of vegetation cover, extent of active erosion, and where sustainable land use is occurring in relation to land capability.

4.5 Technical Services Activities

Tasks completed include:

- Completion of the airborne laser scanning of the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme from Moiki to Lake Onoke. Wet conditions resulted in a couple of hitches, however the work was finally completed in mid-October. Results are now awaited. This work will be utilised for the rating reclassification of the Lower Valley Scheme.
- Completion of the first stage of digital plan access for the river engineers.

- Development and implementation of a new filing system for the Division's photographs using an on-line photo gallery accessed through the intranet.
- Collection of flood level information from around the Tawaha floodway.

4.6 Tauanui Forest Logging Access

The focus has been on completion of all matters prior to the commencement of harvesting at the Tauanui Conservation Forest. The South Wairarapa District Council, assisted by Greater Wellington, have made considerable improvements to the Whakatomotomo Road.

A further meeting has been held between all parties and residents. The majority of residents appear to be very happy with the road improvements. Items discussed at the meeting included vehicle speeds, hours of operation, signage, improvements to the road dust, and the history of the Tauanui Forest. The residents group are to have another meeting in the first week of November.

It is clear that a number of residents on the Whakatomotomo Road had no idea that the forest existed and that it was about to be harvested. They wish to understand the function of the forest better and are keen to see the replanting of native vegetation. A meeting with the residents is proposed for January 2004 to discuss these issues.

4.7 River Management Issues

Flood damage repairs and pole planting have been the main activities for the river engineers. (A separate report on flood damage is elsewhere in the agenda).

The Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme Review Committee has met and received presentations on the development of an hydraulic model to demonstrate the impact of floods, and the past and future works proposed for the eastern and western tributaries of the Scheme.

The placement of willow clumps and lopping has commenced.

A meeting is proposed in November with all parties to progress the replacement of the Waiohine River Bridge.

4.8 Rule 52 Appeal

Rule 52 was developed to prevent the use of stopbanks as an access way by heavy trucks because of the potential for damage to the banks. Following submissions, the Rule was modified to a discretionary activity. Mr John Barton has appealed the Council's decision. Mediation facilitated by the Environment Court has not been successful. Staff are currently awaiting the Environment Court to schedule a hearing. The Lower Valley Scheme

Advisory Committee are interested in this matter and have been kept informed of developments.

4.9 Barrage Gates - Repainting

The Lake Wairarapa Barrage Gates operate in a very hostile environment due to the pressure of saline water. The gates are protected by specialised paints with strict criteria on the paint thickness.

The gates are scheduled to be repainted in the summer of 2004/05 and existing budgets contain a \$150,000 provision for this. A recent inspection revealed the rapidly deteriorating condition of the paint work on the submerged section of the gates. Our consultants have recommended that the work should be undertaken during the 2003/04 summer.

The matter has been discussed with the Lower Valley Development Scheme Advisory Committee and they agree that the repainting should be brought forward a year to the current financial year. The local community share of the cost would be funded from Scheme reserves, but the Council would have to agree to fund its 50% share this current financial year instead of in the following year as currently budgeted.

Staff have prepared tender documents and obtained quotations from three contractors. Currently, tenders are being evaluated and the orders ideally should be placed before Christmas to achieve the work this summer.

It would have been preferable for this matter to be dealt with at the six monthly review but the timing of mid-February would not have allowed the work to take place during the summer which is necessary for a good result.

5. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

5.1 Environmental Incidents

<i>Date</i>	<i>Incident</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
19.9.03	Discoloured water in Makoura stream	Unable to trace source.
11.10.03	Discoloured water in Makoura stream	Unable to trace source.
15.10.03	Rubbish dumped in Ruamahanga riverbed, Carterton	Still trying to trace offender.

5.2 Enforcement

Abatement and infringement notices were issued on a dairy farm, requiring compliance with consent conditions to prevent contamination of watercourses.

5.3 Notified Consents

<i>Consent Application</i>	<i>Status</i>
Opaki and Te Ore Ore Water Races – Masterton District	Signed agreement to conditions achieved with applicant and submitters. Formal hearing not required. Committee decision required.
Henley Lake take and discharge – Masterton District	Signed agreement to conditions achieved with submitters. Formal hearing not required. Committee decision required.
S Barton – Water take – Lake Wairarapa	Signed agreement to conditions achieved with applicant and submitters. Formal hearing not required. Committee decision required.
Sewage Discharge. Application for variation – Carterton District	Submissions closed on 19/12/02. Application on hold at applicant’s request.
Water Races - Carterton District (2)	Awaiting further information from applicant’s consultant.
Water Races - South Wairarapa District (2)	Submissions closed and pre hearing meeting held. On hold at applicant’s request to allow review of Code of Practice.
Featherston Sewage – Discharge	Notified.
Hammond and Co. Ground Water Take - Papawai	Limited notification. Submissions closed 20 October 2003. Pre hearing meeting to be held.

5.4 Appeals

<i>Appellant</i>	<i>Nature of Appeal</i>	<i>Status</i>
J Barton	Additional charges on withdrawn stopbank access application	Council’s evidence prepared, Council has accepted that the matter be determined “on the papers” without a hearing. Appellant’s response to this is awaited.
J Barton	Requirement for “up front” payment of estimated consent processing costs.	
I Alexander	Appeal of abatement notice requiring irrigation to cease	Heard before Judge Sheppard who has requested a copy of the water race map to determine jurisdiction. Decision has important ramifications.

5.5 Draft Wairarapa Coastal Strategy

400 copies of the draft strategy were provided, drawing 106 submissions - a very high response rate indicating strong community interest and participation in the development of the strategy. The majority of submitters support having a strategy.

The Group heard oral submissions on 8 October and met to consider all submissions on 28 October. A second draft will now be prepared for presentation and discussion at a District Council workshop to be held on 8 December 2003.

5.6 Mangatarere Draft Water Allocation Plan

100 flyers advising of the draft and the consultation programme were sent to interested parties from which 30 requests for the draft have been received. The draft is also available on the Greater Wellington website and has been forwarded to all consent holders and key organisations. It has also been publicised on radio and in newspaper articles

A public meeting was held at Dalefield on the evening of 7 November to discuss the draft. Comments close on 14 November 2003.

5.7 Carterton Sewage

A meeting and inspection has been held to update progress towards achieving consent compliance during the coming summer.

Carterton District Council are proceeding to construct wetlands to reduce bacteria numbers. A combination of surface and subsurface irrigation and injection on Council land will then be used to achieve compliance. The buffer storage capacity of the ponds will be used to buffer these discharges during periods of higher flow.

A consent application and AEE has been lodged. Further information on some aspects has been requested.

6. Recommendation

- (1) *That the report be received and its contents noted.*
- (2) *That the Rural Services & Wairarapa Committee recommend to Council that the repainting of the Lake Wairarapa Barrage Gates be undertaken this financial year instead of in 2004/05 as budgeted.*



Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa