

Catchment Management Division Update for period ending 30 April 2007

Biosecurity (Wayne O'Donnell)

1. Pest Animals

1.1 National Possum Control Agencies project programme

Ray Clarey, Senior Biosecurity Officer, Animals is the Local Government representative on this committee.

The National Possum Control Agencies (NPCA) has an annual programme of projects relating directly and indirectly to possum and vertebrate pest animal control. This is one facet of a range of services provided including:

- developing national industry best practice standards and guidelines;
- facilitating interagency cooperation;
- dealing with operation and policy issues;
- assisting the transfer and adoption of technology in the field;
- implementing public awareness initiatives;
- the provision of information services.

The NPCA project programme for 2007 is:

- Review and updating of possum population monitoring protocols using the leghold trap-catch and wax-tag methods.
- Develop best practice guidelines for monitoring and control of wallabies.
- Develop standardised signage for vertebrate toxic agents and a code of practice for tracking vertebrate toxic agents.
- Develop water sampling guidelines for 1080.
- Review and update the NPCA technical and safety publications relating to 1080.
- Production of safety information and guidelines to improve the monitoring of industry workers for exposure to 1080.

The Best Practice Guidelines for the Control and Monitoring of pest mustelids is due for publication in June this year.

All NPCA guidelines are made freely available with the primary audience being field operatives of control agencies and contractors. The guidelines allow flexibility for ongoing innovation and tailoring of operational design to local needs.

1.2 KNE Works

KNE control operations continue at 52 sites in the Western Zone and at 11 sites in the Eastern Zone. All are ongoing maintenance programmes. Maintaining control areas involves more than just replenishing bait stations with bait. Service routes need to be kept open to provide reasonable ongoing access, signage often needs to be replaced because of vandalism, and route and location markers need to be kept up to standard. All unused bait is carried out and disposed of in accordance with HASNO regulations. All of the areas are audited progressively.

New operations that commenced recently are

- Korokoro Reserve (possums and rats) – Western Hutt Hills
- Cannon Point (possums and rats) – Totara Park

1.3 Memorandums of Understanding

Most of these projects are funded on a 50/50 share basis with the respective territorial authority. Memorandums of Understanding are agreed annually with the Western Zone territorial authorities. These agreements for the 2007/08 financial year are currently with the respective councils for their consideration. They are based on working together in a spirit conducive to attaining the objective of supporting biodiversity to be of lasting benefit to the Wellington Region

1.4 Bait Station Trials

Bait station trials are being undertaken on the Gray property at Pauatahanui. These stations are novel in that they have the ability, for instance, to preclude rats but allow possums to feed. A night vision monitor is being used to record the pest interaction with the stations. Efficacy is proving to be very good but the robustness of the stations is of concern at this early stage.

1.5 New Brochure

The last in the new series of the 'Pest Animals – Everyone's Responsibility' brochures is ready for printing. It is a combined focus on feral pigs, goats & deer.

1.6 Wild Pig Problem

Wild pigs are eating the bait out of traps at the Waihora Key Native Ecosystem (Martinborough). The traps are 'set off' and covers are displaced nullifying any opportunity to capture possums and other predators. Whilst this can be a nuisance problem at other sites

this one is infinitely worse. Wild pigs are prevalent throughout the Wairarapa and may require some formal control measures at KNE sites.

1.7 Communications

- The Masterton YMCA Conservation Corps was given a presentation on the broad concepts of pest plant and animal management. This is a regular event as each new intake is formed.

The Conservation Corps undertake practical aspects for pest plant and animal control on Greater Wellington projects. For example, they replenish and service the bait stations at the Tora Bush and Linkwood Bush key native ecosystem sites.

- Two separate presentations were given to pupils of Evans Bay Intermediate School during March. Two further presentations are scheduled.
- Biosecurity staff prepared a display as part of the Hutt City Expo held at the Town Hall, Saturday 28 April.

1.8 Dry Creek possum control contract tender

The Dry Creek (Belmont Regional Park) possum control contract was offered for lump sum tender to three preferred suppliers on 20 March 2007. No tenders were received. The contract period was from 16 April to 25 June 2007 but was negotiable. Although the time of notice to respond to the tender and complete the project was short, it was surprising not to receive a bid. It is obvious that there is a capacity issue with contractors to be able to respond to these work opportunities.

The work will now be undertaken in two phases by Pest Animals Section staff. A portion of the funds for the operation is to be carried forward into the next financial year.

1.9 Possum control contracting industry

There are concerns being raised nationally about the looming possum control contractor capacity problem. The general opinion is that five years of competitive tendering for Animal Health Board contracts has resulted in a number of contractors downsizing, working in a single region, or exiting the industry. This has led directly to a lack of intensive staff training, an increasing lack of skilled personnel and a high staff attrition rate.

This situation raises major concerns for regional councils who are planning on initiating community schemes in areas where the Bovine Tb programme has stopped.

1.10 Rats

There have been many enquiries for advice on rat control this autumn. This is thought to be caused by the prolonged dry period through February to April where drains and small creeks have dried up. Rats are forced to seek water from an alternative source and invariably head

for human habitation. One client reported that water pipes under her rural house had been chewed through by rats seeking water. This was the first instance of this occurring in 15 years living at the site.

Rats often become a problem on lifestyle blocks with an abundance of fowls or ducks.

Whilst rats are included in the Regional Pest Management Strategy they are only controlled in key native ecosystems. Other rat problems need to be resolved by the occupier who has recourse to registered pest control companies.

2. Pest Plants

2.1 Eradication Species

- African Feathergrass – this species is proving difficult to control using recommended herbicides. Trials using another herbicide are underway, although risks to non-target species are elevated. Success of the trials will not be known until next spring when new growth commences
- Madeira Vine – staff continue to encounter urban landowners who are growing this species for consumption. Certain cultures within the region have attached a value to this species which is making eradication difficult to achieve.
- Bathurst Bur – extensive monitoring has resulted in infestation hectares nearly doubling since 2005/06. Significant increases are occurring in cultivated grazing land. The status of this species will be reviewed as part of the Strategy review process.
- Hornwort – Control trials using the new herbicide, Endothall, are programmed for a segment of the Lake Wairarapa wetlands in early May. Monitoring of effects will be undertaken by NIWA. Biosecurity NZ representatives will also attend gain technical knowledge of aquatic application methods.
- Smilax – this is another plant that is proving difficult to control using existing herbicides. A rust biocontrol agent has been identified that may be beneficial. The rust is a recent immigrant from Australia.
- Contractors – some concerns have been expressed regarding the costs of using contractors for managing Eradication species. Many of these species are difficult to identify and, as number decline, increasingly expensive to control. In many cases, GW staff are now undertaking an increasing amount of the control work. A review of the cost-effectiveness of using staff compared to contractors is underway.

2.2 Site-led Species

Notices of Direction – 7 notices have been issued under the Biosecurity Act since the beginning of March. All but one have been for the clearance of Old Mans Beard from boundaries in Wellington City. The remaining notice was for gorse clearance.

2.3 Plant Outlet Inspections

Twenty eight outlets were inspected during March. No Unwanted Organisms or RPMS plants were located.

Copies of the revised National Pest Plant Accord identification booklet, together with explanatory brochures, were mailed to 174 outlets in March. The booklet contains photographs and descriptions of over 110 plants that are considered to be pests of national significance. All of these plants are present in NZ, and are now banned from sale, propagation and distribution.

3. Bovine Tb

3.1 2006/07 programme

The table below summarises the areas contracted for the 2006/07 year.

	Possum (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks	121,317	10,807		132,124
Target Pest Control	50,247	11,174		61,421
Professional Guiding	55,009	3,301	6,781	65,091
J G McCaslin	11,545	860		12,405
EPRO Ltd	14,455			14,455
KBES	5,972			5,972
L Bowring			37,362	37,362
T Oakly			100,518	100,518
Totals	258,545	26,142	144,661	429,348

3.2 The following table details areas of the 2006/07 possum control programme which have been completed as at the end of February. Of this programme, 133,127 ha (51.5%) has been completed and assessed by performance monitor or audit. Contractors have notified in their monthly reports that they consider they have completed 187,430 ha (72.5%) of their 2006/07 possum control programme.

All pig surveys have a completion date of 30 June.

	Possum (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GWRC BioWorks	65,978	9,776	0	75,754
Target Pest Contracting	23,142	11,174	0	34,316
Professional Guiding	22,755	0	0	22,755
J McCaslin	5,542	0	0	5,542
EPRO Ltd	14,455	0	0	14,455
KBES	1,255	0	0	1,255
L Bowring	0	0	0	0
T Oakly	0	0	0	0
Totals	133,127	20,950	0	154,077

The following areas are currently being performance monitored. If these projects all pass then 62.5% of the programme will be completed.

- BioWorks 8,696 hectares
- Professional Guiding 6,285 hectares
- Target Pests 3,546 hectares

To date only BioWorks have indicated that 7,689 hectares of their projects will not be completed by the 30 June 2007. BioWorks already had contractual approval to complete 6,045 beyond 30 June 2007.

All contracts for vector control and vector surveys have been let.

3.3 Monitoring

All monitoring contracts have been let bar one in the Mangaroa Kaitoke operation. During the 2006/07 year, 84 performance monitors and 101 trend monitors are scheduled.

To date, 55 trend monitors and 41 performance monitors have been completed.

Five strata have had failed monitors, however, four of these have subsequently passed after further work by the contractor. Only one stratum has failed two monitors. This stratum has since passed the performance monitor.

These results compare very favourably for the same period in the 2005/06 year.

A registration of interest to carry out monitoring services for the 2007/08 financial year will close on 27th April 2007. To date only four registrations of interest have been received, three of which have also registered to carry out survey work. The contractors are evenly split geographically between the North and South Islands.

3.4 South East Wairarapa – Stage 3

All vector control carried forward from the 2005/06 year was completed by March 2007.

The 2006/07 initial and maintenance program included 30,378 hectares. To date 23,994 hectares has been completed. A rework required on HR 1 (2,726ha) and HR 5 (3,658ha) is due for completion in mid May.

3.5 Three year vector control plans

The Vector Management team has completed reviewing the three year Management Plans. These plans detail where vector control or surveys will be implemented in the region over the next three years (2007-2010). The plans also consider contractor capacity and management, and regional communication programmes.

To date, only minor changes to the proposed plans have been requested by the AHB. Approval of these plans by the AHB is expected early May.

The 2006/07 plan includes the following

- 269,405 hectares possum control
- 966 hectares ferret control
- 126,187 hectares pig surveys
- 26,817 hectares possum and ferret surveys
- 85 performance monitors
- 79 trend monitors

The proposed value of the 2007/08 programme including Management and National costs is \$4,502,200.

Flood Protection (Graeme Campbell)

1. Manager's comments

1.1 General

The major focus of the department over the last month has been to progress the planning for our Scheme works. The annual meetings for seven of the 9 major schemes in the Wairarapa have been held with all approving the proposed works programme and only one not wanting to increase rates in line with the construction cost increases. Meetings were also held to discuss the proposed rating review for the Lower Valley Development Scheme and we are now close to finalising the classification. The support for the proposed Kopuaranga Scheme was lower than expected and options for a reduced scheme are now being considered. Work is also progressing on the preparation of the Waiwhetu Floodplain Management Plan with the majority of the technical studies expected to be completed by 30 June 2007. There is still a significant amount of work required to complete this project. We are currently preparing a detail programme for the undertaking of the remainder of the work.

The capital works and maintenance programmes are progressing well with no major issues arising since the last report. All of these works are expected to be completed on programme and within budget except for the Whirinaki Crescent stopbank. Approval of the revised programme and budget for Whirinaki Crescent is being sought from the Landcare Committee following recommendations from the Hutt Advisory Committee and Upper Hutt City Council.

We did not receive any satisfactory applicants for the Strategy and Technical Support team leader position made vacant when Phil Purves left. We are now reviewing the job description for the role and will re-advertise the position. We will also approach the major employment agencies to see whether they have any suitable candidates. In the interim Sharyn Westlake is acting team leader and the work is being allocated within the wider department.

2. Kapiti floodplain management [Kees Nauta]

2.1 Friends of the Waikanae River (FOTWR)

A planting plan is currently being prepared for the Waikanae River, focussing on the stretch of the river from Otaihanga Domain to Kebbels Bend. A walkover with members of the FOTWR along with GW and KCDC Officers was conducted to look at the proposed sites and discuss any issues. Thirteen sites that meet the criteria of being suitable for environmental restoration while not restricting flood flow have been surveyed and logged on GIS. The plan, as well as identifying the sites, will recommend a pre planting weed control regime along with the numbers and species of native plants that will be required to carry out the restoration work. This will be tied back into a propagation programme for the nursery and will make things easier for the FOTWR to plan for each years work.

John Bissell has also taken part in several walkovers with the FOTWR to enable him to get familiar with the river and any issues regarding it.

2.2 Waikanae River Environmental Strategy

Work has started on the review of the Waikanae River Environmental Strategy. Information from the meeting held in 29 November 2006 has been collated and is being integrated into a draft document.

2.3 Review of the Friends Groups

A review of the friends groups has been started as per the requirements of the Environmental Strategy. The review will look at how things are going and whether any improvements can be made to how the groups operate along with the level of support they receive from Greater Wellington.

2.4 Friends of the Otaki River (FOTOR)

John Bissell attended a working bee in the nursery with the FOTOR and also took part in a site visit to look at future planting sites and to discuss issues regarding the Friends restoration work. John also took part in a site visit with Geoff Skene to look at the work the Friends have done and to discuss their funding.

2.5 Chrystalls Extended Stopbank

Submissions on the Notice of Requirement (NOR) and resource consent applications closed on the 30 March 2007. Seven submissions were received.

Three unconditional submissions in support were received from Wellington Fish and Game, Mike Tracey and Friends of the Otaki River. A further four submissions in support were received from OnTrack, Telstra Clear, Ashford Park Stud and Fletcher Concrete and Infrastructure Ltd that have requested conditions. Fletcher Concrete and Infrastructure submission requested the removal of the designation as soon as practicable after Flood Protection secured ownership of the underlying land and an appropriate plan change is implemented. The three other submissions have requested conditions relating to protecting existing property and assets potentially affected by the proposed works.

Flood Protection are in agreement with the suggested conditions and have requested Kapiti Coast District Council and Greater Wellington incorporate the requested conditions into their recommendation on the NOR and decision on the resource consents respectively. It is anticipated this will avoid the need for a formal hearing of the applications.

The final design of the western section of the stopbank located on land currently owned by GWRC is well advanced. We are presently attempting to drain the nearby Chrystalls Lagoon in order to kill off the algae infestation and remove the silt that has washed into it from the Otaki River. Our intention is to remove and dry out the silt so that it can be used for the

stopbank construction. We have also arranged for the removal of large pine trees on the western section of the stopbank alignment in preparation for construction.

2.6 South Waitohu stopbank

Councillor Turver and Flood Protection staff met with the Otaki Porirua Trust Board Executive on 22 March 2007 to progress agreement for construction of the stopbank. The outcome was that the Board Executive will recommend to the Full Board on 19 April “that the Board support in principle, GWRC going for resource consent for the construction of the stopbank”. We are optimistic that the recommendation will pass into resolution.

2.7 Waitohu Stream

The renewal of our existing resource consent for regular maintenance work in the Waitohu Stream is progressing well with a draft resource consent application sent to affected parties on the 5 April 2007. We have requested comments back to us by the 27 April 2007. Once we have received these, and made any necessary adjustments we will lodge the application with Environmental Regulation.

2.7.1 Gravel Extraction

The current application includes for extraction of up to 2500m³ per annum which remains unchanged. However, the quantity will be reviewed inline with bed level surveys undertaken in 2007 and subsequently at 5 yearly intervals. This proposed change in gravel extraction from the Waitohu Stream will bring it into line with the extraction policies for the Hutt, Waikanae and Otaki Rivers.

2.7.2 Timeframe

The current application has a three year term and we are proposing to extend this to 35 years. The extension is sought for the following reasons:

- Completion of the Waitohu Stream Study in 2006. The study and summary document sets out the management regime for the stream for the foreseeable future. The summary document was discussed and agreed with the community during 2004-2005 and is now being implemented.
- The effects on the environment from the proposed works are minor and well documented over the previous resource consents. There are no significant changes proposed to the nature of the existing works.

2.7.3 Notification

Flood Protection anticipates that the current resource consent will be a limited notified application. This differs from the 2004 application which was non-notified and required written approvals, from all affected parties before it was lodged.

3. Hutt River floodplain management [Daya Atapattu]

3.1 Ava to Ewen project

Good progress has been made with the Ava Rail stopbank reconstruction contract. By the end of March 2007, the contractor had placed about 15,000 m³ of fill materials in forming the stopbank. The contractor has also commenced placing rock in the river bed under the Ava Rail Bridge to form the bank edge protection. Rock supply from Takaka is continuing and by April 2007, about 2400 tonnes will have been supplied to site. The project is on track for completion by June 2008.

Civil works for the Opahu Stream pump station are now complete and electrical works are progressing. Commissioning of the pump station is expected in May 2007.

The contractor has now completed most of the maintenance works in the Alicetown stopbank. The remaining works, including the sealing of penstocks and grassing of disturbed areas will be completed by early May 2007.

Detailed design of the Strand Park stopbank reconstruction is complete and the tender documents are being prepared. Construction of this section is scheduled to commence in 2008/09.

3.2 Boulcott/Hutt stopbank

MWH NZ Ltd is now progressing with Stage 2 of the Boulcott/Hutt stopbank feasibility study. A site walkover of the two golf courses to discuss issues relating to each of the three alignments being considered was completed on 23 March 2007. Representatives from the two golf clubs and the golf course architect participated in this walkover. Limited topographic surveys along each stopbank alignment have commenced. Survey information will be used to refine the cost estimates and to provide accurate stopbank height information to adjacent property owners and the golf clubs.

3.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank

On 1 March 2007, the HRAC endorsed a revised programme for implementing the Whirinaki Crescent stopbank reconstruction project. Stage 1 construction has now commenced. The projects costs have increased and Report 07.234 of this Order Paper provides details.

3.4 Maoribank Riverbed stabilisation

Investigations on the cause of the degradation trend in the Maoribank reach of the Hutt River are underway. A walkover of the site with specialist consultants is scheduled for 26 April 2007.

3.5 Wet extraction of Hutt River gravel

Hutt River gravel extraction is progressing with a target of removing about 60,000 m³ by the end of June 2007. About 26,000 m³ had been extracted by the end of March 2007.

4. Western Operations [Jeff Evans]

All the western operations budgets and works programmes are running to schedule. The settled weather over the last few months has allowed us to complete most of the major programmed works on our river systems and it has also given us the opportunity to help progress some of the outstanding capex works in both Wellington and Kapiti.

Operations staff have been busy re-building and raising a section of stopbank behind Whirinaki Crescent in Upper Hutt and prep work has been done for the Chrystall's extended stopbank in Otaki. Chrystall's lagoon has been drained and the accumulated silts dug out will be used to soil the new stopbank batters.

4.1 Hutt River

Tree removal from the Upper Hutt stopbanks has been done in Totara Park and Whakatiki. This has been done as part of the audit programme to remove trees from stopbank. The gabion fence at Elbow Park has been repaired and a number of lengths of support wire have been replaced.

4.2 Hutt River Trail

Over the last period the river trail carriageway has been weed sprayed and overhanging vegetation has been cut back as required.

There have been a number of events held over the period, two raft races were held in the upper reaches and Trentham Harriers held their annual fun run. The bike trail was also a great success with over a thousand competitors turning out. A buggy walk was also held at Poets Park in Upper Hutt.

4.3 Hutt River ranging services

Ranging has included the usual patrols, enforcement duties and public relations. We have also been installing the new river trail signs in conjunction with Rotary. Volunteers from the Hutt Rotary have also been helping with the re-vegetation plot maintenance on the Belmont berms. Asset maintenance and vandalism repairs have also been carried out over the last period.

4.4 Watercourses

A number of wind blown trees have been removed from both the Waiwhetu and Waitohu streams and a minor survey was completed on the Waitohu gravel analysis.

Dam maintenance has been undertaken on both Stebbings and Seton Nossiter Dams and stream runs have been undertaken in Porirua and Takapu Streams.

4.5 Waikanae River

Gravel extraction is currently underway on the Waikanae River. 7,000 cubic metres have been extracted to date using both wet and dry extraction methods.

Beach recontouring has also been undertaken to stop further erosion at Blake's bend below Jim Cooke Park and willows have been replanted in the area. A number of rock groynes have been repaired and extended and the second river weir has been topped up.

4.6 Otaki River

Beach recontouring is now complete on the Otaki River. A number of eroding bank edges have had gravel pushed back into them to rebuild the berm and hold the river alignment and willows have been re-planted. The Wallace-Lutz debris fences have been repaired and the area has also been replanted.

The growth on the gravel beaches has also been sprayed to stop islands forming in the channel and keep the gravel mobile so it moves down stream.

Gravel extraction has now been stopped on the Otaki River for this financial year, as Winstones have now reached their annual limit of 40,000 cubic metres as per our consent requirements.

4.7 Gravel extraction

Gravel extraction figures to the end of March 2007 are set out below.

River	Area	Contractor	Period Year 2006/07 (cubic metres)		Year 2005/06 (cubic metres)
			Period	Year	Full Year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	8,134	33,663	49,154
	River	Horokiwi	13,499	25,440	60,680
Otaki	River	Winstones	13,736	40,929	41,442
Waikanae	Above Greenaway Road	Various	2,250	2,250	9,210
	Below Greenaway Road	Gary Holland Earthmoving	5,360	5,360	5,040
TOTALS			42,979	107,912	165,526

5. Wairarapa Operations [Mike Longworth]

5.1 Wairarapa River Schemes

5.1.1 Annual Works Programmes

The annual works programmes for the northern Wairarapa Rivers are now largely complete and for the LWVD scheme the annual works programme is approximately 75% complete with the expectation that it will be complete by the year end, subject to reasonable weather conditions. The northern river hands have been assisting with work in the lower valley, and will continue to do so until the southern work is complete.

5.1.2 Flood Damage Repairs

The flood damage repairs are now approximately 90% completed. Of the major work;

- Shelton and Guscott and repairs to slumping in the Pukio area are now completed.
- Repairs to the Hikinui sill are 60% complete, and laying of the reinforce grass matt is in progress, and will be completed by end of April subject to weather. The removal of the existing sill and installation of the debris barrier will be done summer 2008. Funds will be carried forward to next financial year for this work.
- The extension of the Reno mattresses at the Oporua spillway has been completed. Planting of natives in the wetland created at Oporua will be carried out during this winter.

5.1.3 Drainage Schemes

The maintenance spraying and mechanical cleaning of the drains is now complete. The pumped drainage schemes of Te Hopai, Moonmoot and Papatahi have adopted rate increases for the coming year.

The drainage schemes have had a variety of issues over the last few years (e.g. July 2006 flood pump damage) and as a result have drawn down heavily over their reserves. Most schemes are now facing an increase in the scheme rates to build these reserves.

5.1.4 Annual Scheme meetings

The annual scheme meetings are being held over the period 17 April to 11 May. At the time of writing, 5 out of the 9 schemes have held their meetings which have also involved river inspections. Most of the scheme committees have been asked to adopt rate increases in line with the increase in the cost of construction. At this time one scheme committee has refused to adopt a rate increase, citing the difficult year for the farmers on that scheme. Generally there has been a positive response from the scheme committees to the work the Council have carried out over the year.

5.2 Kopuaranga River Enhancement Project

The final public meeting to gauge the communities support for a scheme over the full length of the river up to Hastwell was held on 14 March. This meeting indicated approximately 70% support for a scheme but there was a vocal minority expressing strong opposition. As approximately 70 people attended the meeting representing in the order of 50 to 60 households out of 170 households within the scheme boundary, the committee asked that a postal vote be held to ascertain the “true” support for the scheme. The postal vote has returned 113 votes which indicate 51% support for a scheme on the Kopuaranga River. Once the committee has considered the result of the postal vote a recommendation on whether to proceed with a scheme will be made to the Council.

5.3 LWVD Scheme Review

The LWVD scheme classification review is now close to complete. Four public meetings were held over the 12 and 13 April to present the details of the review to the community within the schemes boundary. Once the committee has considered the feed back from the meetings the new classification will be recommended to the Council.

5.4 LWVD Scheme Global Consent

Work has continued on the LWVD Scheme Global Consent to the point where the AEE has now been lodged with the Council’s consents Department. Further consultation is in progress to get sign-offs from affected parties.

5.5 Study of Private Stopbanks and Other Structures around Lake Wairarapa

The proposed study of private stopbanks and other structures around Lake Wairarapa was outlined in the March meeting report and has subsequently been costed in the order of \$26,000. This level of expenditure exceeds the available investigations budget this year and options for reducing or deferring this work are being considered.

6. Planning and development services [Sharyn Westlake]

The following table summarises the number of formal, written requests attended to during the period from 1 March - 20 April 2007:

	March/April 2007	YTD
Requests brought forward	11	4
Additional requests received	35	146
Responses provided	27	131
Outstanding requests	8	8

7. Investigations and Assets [John Eyles]

7.1 Waiwhetu Stream floodplain management study

An application to the Ministry for the Environment's contaminated sites remediation fund for the clean up of the contaminated sediments was lodged in November 2005 and seeks \$5.9M or 100% of estimated clean up costs. Discussion with Ministry officials is underway to try to secure a viable level of funding. Hutt City Council are also considering their position with respect to a local contribution to the clean up costs. Structural flood protection works cannot start without doing the clean up work.

Phase 2 of the project, which examines non structural options available for the Waiwhetu catchment is underway. The technical work to complete Phase 2 is due to be completed in June/July 2007. The next WSAC meeting is scheduled for 7 May.

The WSAC, at its last meeting acknowledged that it may be some time before any major structural works were completed and officers were requested to consider the option of raising the worst affected houses. Work has commenced on the assessment of the house raising option and this will be reported along with the other Phase 2 Options.

7.2 Pauatahanui Stream (in conjunction with Porirua City Council and Transit NZ)

The recent flooding hazard study showed this stream is heavily overgrown with willows which increases the risk of flooding. A meeting with residents was held last November to advise adjacent property owners of their maintenance obligations and how this council can help under its isolated works budget. Steve Murphy has recently started preparing individual property reports to identify stream maintenance required. He is also working on a resource consent template for individual owners to use when they wish to start work. Transit have agreed to call tenders to clean up the whole stream, probably next financial year, with individual property owners to pay their pro rata share.

We will continue to liaise with PCC in developing an integrated whole of catchment approach for managing the Pauatahanui stream.

7.3 Detention Dams study, Stebbings Dam Hydrology

The Building Act 2004 defines the responsibilities that dam owners have with respect to the integrity of dams and how they should be managed to protect public safety in the event of failure.

Consultants NIWA have been engaged to complete a reassessment of the hydrology of Stebbings Dam. This follows similar work undertaken in 2001/02 for the Seton Nossiter dam. The purpose is to assess the maximum possible flood, with the objective of evaluating the sufficiency of the flood storage and the adequacy of current flood warning and evacuation procedures for ensuring public safety during extreme flood events.

7.4 Asset management

Assets

We are busy extracting and collating the information required to determine the new unit rates for all of Flood Protection's infrastructural assets. Once this process is complete we can revalue the department's flood protection assets, due to be completed by the end of the financial year.

A project team containing both Western and Wairarapa rivers staff is reviewing our asset management documents with the aim of producing a single base document for both Western and Wairarapa river assets. The completion of this task will be tied into the revaluation project to be completed by the end of the financial year.

Catchment Management Division staff John Eyles and Mike Longworth are participating in an organisation-wide asset management information system review. Proposals from suitable software companies have been received and evaluated with vendor demonstrations to be completed in May.

Land Management (Dave Cameron)

1. Manager's comments

1.1 Hill Country Liaison Group

A number of internal staff discussions have been held to begin the process of forming this Group. It has been agreed that a Steering Group of key landowners will assist in determining the structure and relevant roles of the Group. The Steering Group would give additional independence and accountability to the concept before it is taken to a series of district meetings.

While the hill country group was born from a concern over pole supplies, there are many issues facing our hill country landowners, including climate change, Animal Health Board funding, rural fire levies, the Combined District Plan and the Regional Strategy to mention a few. It will be important that representation of the Hill Country Liaison Group reflects these issues, and is able to form a strong and enduring partnership with Greater Wellington through the various planning and policy development processes.

1.2 Ballance Farm Environment Awards

The Ballance Farm Environment Awards culminated with the Awards evening at the Copthorne Solway Park. A very successful evening saw Andrew and Anna Renton from Bideford take out the supreme award. A field day will be held on the Renton property on Wednesday 16th May.

1.3 Catchment Schemes

Catchment Scheme Advisory committee meetings have been held in each of the six Schemes. Rate increases have been in line with annual indexation, except for the Kaiwhata Catchment Scheme which voted for a second successive rate increase of 50%. This increase will enable final storm repair work to be undertaken and the Storm Damage Reserve to be restored to the pre-storm level.

Scheme	Budget 2006/07	Revised Budget 2006/07	Expenditure to Date	Storm Reserve June 2006
Awhea/Opouawe	32,000	40,000	38,092	26,281
Whareama	16,100	26,600	17,377	1,705
Homewood	10,500	17,000	11,850	16,473
Mataikona/Whakataki	12,000	12,000	3,820	10,406
Maungaraki	12,000	12,000	5,639	10,215
Kaiwhata	7,700	12,000	8,747	15,964
Total	90,300	119,600	85,525	81,044

2. Farm Plans (Don Bell)

2.1 New Plans and Reviews

Eleven Conservation Plan reviews have been completed to date. Average ten year expenditure for the eleven Plans is \$41,000. The one Sustainability Plan contains a significant amount of programmed work. This is not untypical for Sustainability Plans as they contain greater analysis of farming options and have a higher grant rate than traditional Conservation Plans.

Activity	Completed	Annual Plan Target
New Sustainability Plans	1	3
New Conservation Plans	0	2
Ten Year Reviews	11	20

2.2 Annual Programmes

A small number of programmes remain to be finalised over the next two months. The bulk of this year's planting will be undertaken in the new financial year.

Current orders for 3m poles are approximately 30,000. Last year a total of 26,800 were planted. Our own nurseries will produce 16,295 3m poles. A further 9,220 have been secured from Aokautere. Orders will be trimmed to match supply with demand.

Activity	Completed	Annual Plan Target	Approved Expenditure	Annual Plan Budget
Annual programmes – Hill Country	120	130	\$458,500	\$500,000
Annual programmes – Shelter	17	20	\$31,200	\$50,000

3. Akura Conservation Centre (Stan Braaksma)

3.1 Nursery Operations

All stump and high pruning of stoolbeds was completed prior to the end of March. Four poplar and willow rust sprays have been applied at roughly 3 weekly intervals since January 2007. 0.5 kg/ha of foliar nitrogen is added spray mixture.

Weather conditions have been very dry since 8th December with a marked lack of heavy winds and consequently, minimal wind damage. There has been excellent growth at Akura, however 1yr cuttings have suffered grazing damage at Mangapakeha.

Irrigation started in the second week of January. A total of 7.2 ha has been irrigated with new cuttings a priority (2.2ha) followed by 2nd year cuttings (1.5ha), first year growth off stools (2.0ha) and some to 3yr old cuttings (1.5ha).

Very good survivals and growth of 2006 cuttings with 20,420 established (4.5 ha). This compares with 8,290 planted 2005. 10,500 stumps have been removed this year (2.2ha) in readiness for replanting in the spring.

Pole cutting tenders for winter 2007 have been received. The successful contractor has yet to be confirmed.

3.2 Trading

A number of very large orders for rail iron for Land Management, Catchment Schemes and Rivers have been received over the last two months. In excess of 1,000 metres has been used compared with the annual average of 600 metres.

A five year supply contract with RST Aokautere for the supply of 15,000 3m poles/annum was negotiated. Hawkes Bay and Horizons Regional Councils are also involved.

3.3 Budget

The sale of rail iron has assisted the trading account. While the Nursery is currently making a loss, there is a concerted effort of stool replacement, removing ill thrift and older aged beds. There is a three to four year delay before these blocks are producing again.

3.4 Staffing

Paul Henderson is the newly appointed Nursery Manager, due to commence duties on 7 May. He comes with a strong farming background and sales experience.

Peter Cameron will officially retire on 8 June and will be busy familiarising Paul with his new duties. He also has offered to assist through this coming winter.

The Nursery Assistant position is currently being advertised.

The Nursery Managers' workshop is a two day event which commences on 30 April and will cover inspections and discussion at Aokautere, Hort Research (PN) and Akura Nurseries.

Activity	Budget 2006/07 Operating Surplus	Revised Budget 2006/07 Operating Surplus	Current Operating Surplus
Nurseries	18,400	25,800	26,200
Trading	(53,100)	(76,000)	(103,900)
Total	(34,700)	(50,200)	(77,700)

4. Biodiversity (Megan Banks)

Planting sites for this season's Streams Alive programme are being organised, with seven sites confirmed so far, making up 2.9km of streamside. Three of these are in Otaki, one site in Wairarapa and three in Mangaroa. There are 15,000 plants to put in the ground for this winter so there is still room for more sites to be found.

Weed control continues among previous plantings within 24 sites.

The Ohariu Research project is an ongoing project around voluntary incentives for community participation in improving biodiversity. The Wellington group is hosting a workshop for all those involved in early May. The expected outcome of the workshop is an analysis on the positives, negatives and any recommendations for the project. From this, we will also be working towards developing a policy framework.

Other events planned for Ohariu in the near future are a farm field day in June, the publication of a planting brochure and newsletter articles, and the establishment of bird monitoring lines. Water sampling has been recently conducted in the valley with a report in process.

5. Operations (Kevin Burdan)

5.1 Silviculture programmes

The recent fire ban prevents the use of chainsaws in forestry operations. This has curtailed thinning operations over the last six weeks.

The lower returns from forestry over the last three years have seen a marked reduction in the amount of pruning requested by clients. The market is lifting slowly, however there is still some way to go, especially with the returns on pruned logs.

The 328.6 hectares of thinning and pruning has been completed across 44 properties.

Activity	Completed (hectares)	Annual Plan Target (hectares)	Expenditure to date	Annual Plan Budget
Thinning	159.1	250	\$47,100	\$75,000
Pruning	169.5	250	\$102,900	\$150,000
Total	328.6	500	\$150,000	\$225,000

Total Catchment Management (Ian Gunn)

TCM Issues and Update

Following the discussion at the last Committee meeting, integrated catchment management has morphed into total catchment management (TCM). The general consensus is that total catchment management is a simpler concept for all parties to understand.

Issues drive processes such as TCM. Discussions with staff have highlighted Porirua Harbour and the management of its contributing catchments as a worthy candidate for such a study. Controlling intensive land developments raises issues of flood and sediment control with the requirement to enhance the recreational value of the Porirua Harbour.

Water quality and quantity issues associated with land use practises are significant issues in the Ruamahanga River catchment. Work continues on a resource inventory of the catchment.

I am having meetings with Nigel Corry (Divisional Manager, Environment Management) and Geoff Dick (Divisional Manager, Catchment Management) on both possible projects and how such projects will be managed within Greater Wellington.

Enclosed separately to the order paper is further reading material on the Murray Darling Basin. I accept that the scale is somewhat different. However, the paper hopefully furthers your understanding of the TCM concept.

At the next Committee meeting I will include information on “ecology services” studies occurring within the Basin.