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Committee Environmental Wellbeing Committee  
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## **General Managers' report to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee on 5 March 2013**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform the Committee of Greater Wellington's activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibility.

### **2. The decision-making process and significance**

No decision is being sought in this report.

### **3.1 Biosecurity**

#### **3.1.1 National aquatic weeds chemical label reassessment project**

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) and a number of regional councils, the Department of Conservation (DOC), the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), and several power companies, have received their permissions from the Environmental Protection Authority to use Escort, Galant, Grazon and Garlon herbicides against aquatic weeds over water. This is a great outcome that will enable more effective control of pest plant species emerging from, or adjacent to, water. Future control of spartina, Manchurian wild rice, and many other programmes will benefit from the use of these chemicals. The national project group is now considering developing a set of national templates to ensure uniform compliance to the conditions imposed.

#### **Pest Animals**

#### **3.1.2 Rabbits**

Rabbit populations appear to have increased in parts of the region this summer. Pockets of Kapiti, Porirua and Wellington have had favourable breeding conditions, and there is a strong demand for pindone poisoning. Night shooting was carried out for Wellington City Council (WCC) in early February, following a large number of calls from the public.

The Wairarapa rabbit population still appears low overall, with the odd hot spot showing as the dry weather takes hold. The Tauherenikau River rabbit survey recorded low rabbit numbers in what has traditionally been a very rabbit prone area, and is a good indicator for the overall rabbit situation in the Wairarapa.

We suspect that the RHD rabbit virus has struck rabbit populations in Tawa and Seatoun in the last month, but there were no reports elsewhere. The virus often cycles in late summer.

### **3.1.3 Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Aerial 1080 Operation**

Carcass stomach contents have come back from testing, with results below the minimum detectable levels of 1080 (MDL). A flood event occurred on the night of 4 February, with 85mm of rain, which triggered river level alarms. Sample carcasses were inspected first thing on 5 February and, due to the advanced state of decomposition, it was decided there was no threat of poisoned carcasses washing down the rivers. As a precaution, Petone and Eastbourne beaches were searched by staff. No possums were found. Poison signs are due to be removed from the area on 1 March 2013.

The rodent bait stations in the Wainuiomata mainland island were filled for the first time since the aerial 1080 operation in late August 2012. Most of the bait from the August 2012 service was still present, indicating low rat numbers in the area.

### **3.1.4 Akatarawa Forest possum control 2013**

An aerial 1080 operation is being proposed to commence in May for the 15,000 ha Akatarawa Forest. Possum monitoring in December 2012 indicated that possums are at a level requiring control to maintain forest health and biodiversity in the water catchment. The last control operation occurred in 2007. Biosecurity and Biodiversity staff have begun the consultation phase.

### **3.1.5 Wi Tako Ngatata Reserve**

The Port Nicholson Settlement Trust (the Trust) now has ownership of Wi Tako Ngatata Reserve in Silverstream (previously managed by DOC). This area has long been one of the GWRC Key Native Ecosystem sites. Historically, GWRC only undertook initial pest control control since 2001, with Upper Hutt Forest and Bird members servicing possum and rat bait stations in the surrounding land. Since the change of ownership, we have engaged with the Trust about extending possum and rat control into the reserve. There is verbal permission to do so, and Biosecurity are working towards formalising the agreement. Upper Hutt City Council and the Trust are developing a management plan for the reserve and surrounding area.

## **Pest Plants**

### **3.1.6 Surveillance**

A mail drop to 1500 Raumati properties was undertaken in late January, resulting in a high number of client enquiries. Staff are controlling two new infestations discovered as a result of the survey, and are planning delimiting surveys around these sites.

A communication strategy around field horsetail to Wairarapa landowners is in the final stages of planning. Meetings with other GWRC departments are also underway to raise awareness of the biosecurity considerations while planning their operations in the infested area. The recently completed National Machinery Hygiene Standard was introduced at the meetings. This internal awareness campaign will give staff the tools to adequately answer landowner queries and ensure that GWRC operations set best practice standards when undertaking activities in the field horsetail infested area.

### **3.1.7 Total Control species**

The team is in the midst of annual inspections for the Total Control species sites. A number of inspections are often required to ensure no reproductive plants reach maturity.

During this period, a number of thistle and burr species have emerged as a result of the dry hot weather. Annual inspections of target climbers are showing a reduction in seedling emergence, and very few mature plants.

### **3.1.8 Biodiversity**

We have completed or activated 37 control contracts in the Key Native Ecosystems and Reserve sites. Staff are developing options for operational activity for next season.

### **3.1.9 Biological control**

Translocations and monitoring were undertaken for a number of biocontrol agents at recent release sites. Translocations were completed for Smilax rust, and monitoring has been completed for tradescantia tip and leaf beetles, green thistle beetle, buddleia leaf beetle, ragwort plume moth, broom gall mite and thistle gall flies.

### **BioWorks**

#### **3.1.10 Rimutaka Range Aerial Project**

The Medical Officer of Health has been advised that we consider all baits and carcasses have broken down or decayed sufficiently, so that the area no longer poses a risk to the public, their pets or livestock. We intend to remove all poison warning notices and signs from 1 March onwards.

#### **3.1.11 Pukeatua Aerial Project**

Aerial 1080 baits were applied on 7 November 2012. Weekly checks of poison signs have finished now that the 1080 baits were declared non toxic on 11 February. Possum carcasses continue to be monitored.

#### **3.1.12 Ground projects**

Staff are currently focusing on completing the Mangaroa Kaitoke HMR 1 carry forward project, Otaki possum surveys and Mt Bruce Waipoua possum surveys.

Staff have completed approximately 20,000 ha of the 61,000 ha AHB programme for the 2012/13 year.

### **3.1.13 Pukaha Mt Bruce Buffer**

The Pukaha Mt Bruce buffer is an area of land which forms a complete protection zone around the Mt Bruce Reserve (Pukaha). The GWRC buffer management area covers 2200 ha. To date, five services of bait stations and traps have been completed. Cat and ferret captures are slightly down on previous years, but the peak for these species is normally in the February to May period.

## **3.2 Biodiversity**

### **3.2.1 Department planning and reporting**

Work continues on developing department systems, policies and procedures, including a reporting framework and a policy that sets out how the department allocates its community funding.

### **3.2.2 Policy advice and research**

Advice was provided on four resource consent applications to Environmental Regulation, and a submission was made on one consent application to a Territorial Authority.

The department continues to provide advice on the development of the Regional Plan. Specific topics include:

- Exploring the potential for rates relief as an incentive for legal protection of biodiversity on private land.
- Review of the draft provisions for coastal environments and wetlands.

The department contributed to three GWRC submissions on external planning documents (Upper Hutt City Council: Proposed District Plan change 36, Wellington City Council: Proposed District Plan change 77, and Kapiti Coast District Council: draft District Plan).

### **3.2.3 High value biodiversity areas**

Active management was undertaken in 32 Biodiversity Management Areas, with pest control delivered in 32 and weed control in 29.

Seventeen Biodiversity Area Plans are currently being prepared. Some are being finalised in consultation with landowners/managers and stakeholders.

Following a change of ownership, pest control work has resumed at Lake Pounui to protect the high biodiversity values of the property.

Fernbird have been sighted on the northern side of the Waikanae Estuary for the first time. This area has recently been included in the predator trapping programme.

### **3.2.4 Site-specific biodiversity advice**

Technical biodiversity advice was provided to five external and two internal stakeholders regarding wetland, riparian, and freshwater and forest ecosystems.

Biodiversity staff are engaged with Roopu Tiaki in the continuing development of the management plan for the Parangarahu Lakes.

### **3.2.5 Priority areas for community engagement**

A plan for the coordination of community planting at Wairarapa Moana Lake Domain is in progress. The planting will be carried out in a series of working bees involving Catchment Management Group departments, school groups, and the wider community.

Work is continuing with the community volunteer group on restoration at Onoke Lagoon. Discussions with iwi include the adoption of the name Okorewa for the Lagoon, and appropriate management of the identified archaeological sites there.

Principals and teachers of South Wairarapa schools have been invited to a workshop organised by Biodiversity staff, Enviroschools and Trees for Survival, to establish how schools can best be supported to use Wairarapa Moana as a context for curriculum-based learning.

Two restoration sites in the Porirua Catchment have been confirmed for this planting season: a community restoration event in Pauatahanui Inlet, and a school restoration site in Te Onepoto Bay. Restoration plans for these sites are currently being developed.

### **3.2.6 Region-wide ecological restoration support and key messages**

Preparations for Restoration Day are progressing. The event will be held in Silverstream on 27 April 2013.

The Communications and Biodiversity Departments are working together to deliver a fortnightly newspaper column printed in the Kapi-Mana News, The Wellingtonian and one of the Wairarapa newspapers, as part of the Joint Communications Plan between GWRC, WCC, and Porirua City Council.

The Wairarapa Moana website framework is ready for content to be put up. A draft document of protocols for content management has been submitted to the Wairarapa Moana Management Team for agreement on the process.

## **3.3 Land Management**

### **3.3.1 Akura Conservation Centre**

The six hectares of new poplar and willow plantings at the new nursery continue to grow well with stems reaching 2 metres in height since October. Since the meteorological station was installed in early November, a total of 200mm has been recorded. Additional to this, the irrigation system has

delivered a further 90mm. Overall the nursery is looking in very good shape as the end of the summer season approaches.

Pruning operations are nearly complete. Fungicide spraying has been regularly undertaken, and this operation has been aided by high temperatures and little rain which keeps the humidity low.

A major focus for staff at the moment is a redesign of the compound/retail area at Akura. Currently the site is a mix of operational and retail activities. This makes the site very congested for the public and has raised questions around their safety. Another safety factor is the entrance/exit point onto the bypass road. This is a very busy road and traffic is still travelling at 100kph. The redesign will look to improve access and provide a lay-by for turning traffic. A draft design will be presented to the Akura Board for consideration in early March.

### **3.3.2 Primary Industries farm visit**

Six staff from the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) visited the Wairarapa to learn more about the Council's land management programme, and how they may look to integrate national policy with a range of regional initiatives. The National Forestry Schemes review is still to progress through the policy development stage, but there are positive signs that two of the more successful programmes over the last five years will survive the review largely intact.

MPI have a long term objective to increase primary production. Staff who visited the farm of Jamie Falloon at Bideford were clearly of the view that erosion control integrated into a whole Farm Plan delivered on this objective and also linked very well to improving water quality through the reduction in sediment loads.

The Hill Country Erosion Fund, which funds the Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative, still has long term funding in place, and it is hoped that funding for Council for at least the remaining six years will be secured. The Afforestation Grant Scheme has been a great success, especially in this region where 1,113 hectares of erosion prone land were afforested. This accounted for 20% of the funds available through the Regional Council pool.



### **3.3.3 Taueru River Willow Logjam**

A meeting has been held with landowners involved in the spraying of willows in the Taueru River. In 2002, an 8 kilometre section of river was sprayed to manage rampant willow growth. The methodology consisted of spraying with Roundup but leaving unsprayed sections intermittently to act as collection points for debris as the trees decayed and fell into the river.

An assessment of individual blockages along the river has identified three major areas and eight sites of lesser priority. The landowners agreed to contribute 70% to the cost of removing the bulk of the material from the river. The remaining 30% will come from the Flood Protection Isolated Works fund. Landowners will be responsible for burning the debris once it has been removed from the river. It is likely that a future meeting will be required to ensure the remaining eight sites are cleared.





Staff will make contact with other landowners in this catchment who have recently sprayed willows, so that issues and responsibilities are clearly identified and the resultant debris does not affect downstream landowners.

#### **3.3.4 Forestry update**

As from 11 February 2013, the Forestry Department has been transferred across to Land Management. Meetings have been held with Forestry staff and Murray Kennedy who is currently managing the cutting rights process. A draft Forest Sale and Purchase Agreement will be completed by mid April. It is envisaged that a call for tenders on the cutting rights will be made in June 2013, and a report tabled at the September 2013 meeting of Council.

A two stage tendering process is planned with all interested parties submitting tenders, then selected parties invited to complete due diligence prior to final tenders being received. Depending on Council's decision on whether to proceed with the cutting right sale, the present timeline has a new contract in place for 1 July 2014. Forestry staff are currently building an accurate map of all compartments within the forest to support this process.

Forest asset valuations are currently being updated. This requires the 2008 valuation to be reassessed with updates being provided for land, trees, roads, fences and bridges. A draft report is expected by the end of March 2013. Consultants will provide the valuations for land and trees; the remainder will be provided by internal forestry and engineering staff.



## **3.4 Flood Protection**

### **3.4.1 Boulcott/Hutt Project**

The Boulcott/Hutt project is progressing to the shortened programme, with the target of completing the project by June 2013. The contractor is now progressing with the stopbank construction works on the section from Illot Pond to the northern end. The golf course was closed for play during the last two weeks of January 2013, enabling the contractor to make good progress with the stopbank works where it cuts across four fairways. The contractor is now working on the stopbank at the Illot Pond, and installation of the Military Road stormwater pipe. The golf club has found that play over the 17<sup>th</sup> hole in the Hutt course will be difficult because of the new stopbank. The club has requested Council review the course design in the affected area and carry out any mitigation works required. Council is in the process of preparing a response clearly stating that we see this as the club's responsibility following our recent settlement agreement.

The realigned section of Connolly Street is substantially complete. The proposed works at the entrance to Safeway, and the security fence along the Safeway boundary, remain to be done. These works have not been constructed yet because Safeway is not satisfied with the mitigation works, and is asking Council to do further mitigation works. Council has written back to Safeway asking for more evidence as to why the proposed works do not meet requirements.

### **3.4.2 City Centre Stopbank Project**

The project scoping for the City Centre Stopbank Upgrade Project has commenced. A consultant will be appointed before the end of February 2013 to assist the staff with project scoping. A number of workshops will be arranged with key stakeholders to provide an understanding of the project and to identify issues.

A meeting between the CEOs of GWRC and HCC is being arranged to brief them about the project. A presentation on the proposed project and the key issues will be made to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee workshop on 5 March 2013. A similar presentation will be made to the 19 March 2013 meeting of the Hutt Valley Floodplain Management Subcommittee. Project scoping is programmed for completion by June 2013.

A second meeting with the Mills Street residents was held on 12 February 2013. In this meeting, GWRC officers presented information on the overall timeline and how the project can be broken down into a number of components for construction purposes. The Mills Street residents have differing views on suitable timing for construction of the Mills Street section. Our analysis shows that a number of timing options are available for this section. The construction sequence for project implementation has to be determined through the planning approval process following consultation with all affected parties from KGB to Ewen Bridge.

A request from directly affected land owners in 2009 was for the Mills St section to be undertaken near the end of the construction period (2018/19), and Council will proceed with this as a preferred position unless there is a clear request from affected land owners for an alternative construction sequence.

The Waimarie Croquet Club Committee received support for their relocation fund raising proposal from the membership at a special General Meeting of the Club held on 9 February 2013. The Club is planning to make a presentation to the Hutt Valley Floodplain Management Subcommittee (HVFMS) on 19 March 2013.

### **3.4.3 Lower Waitohu Stream**

Land entry negotiations with the landowners along the lower Waitohu Stream from Convent Road Bridge are progressing. Staff have been discussing draft land entry agreements with eight land owners on the south side of the stream, from the road bridge to the Otaki and Porirua Trusts Board land. At this stage, five land owners have signed the agreements which include esplanade strips, easements and arrangements for construction and maintenance access.

Staff are continuing land entry discussions with a representative of the Māori landowners of 74 Convent Road.

### **3.4.4 Lower Wairarapa Valley Development (LWVDS) Work Programme**

The main development work programme for 2012/13 has now commenced with boulder protection work being constructed at Paul's bank and Macland farm bank adjacent to Lake Onoke. Negotiations of land ownership under the new Tobin's stopbank are continuing with the adjacent land owners, with the aim of Council assuming ownership of the land under the stopbank. The balance of the property not required for river protection purposes will be put back on the market once negotiations are completed and the house on the property is prepared for sale.

### **3.4.5 Floodplain Management Plans (FMPs)**

#### **Waiwhetu Stream**

Design work, and the related hydraulic modelling scenarios, on four options combinations is complete. Reports summarising the findings of these investigations were received at the beginning of December 2012. A review is underway to determine the next steps and undertaking community engagement towards identifying a preferred option combination.

Presentation of the option combinations investigated as part of this work project was not able to be given to the HVFMS in December 2012 due to the cancellation of this meeting. This is now due to be presented to the HVFMS on 19 March 2013.

#### **Pinehaven Stream**

A consultation strategy has been agreed with UHCC, with a particular emphasis on one-on-one consultation with affected landowners. The first round of consultation has commenced. A review is underway to determine the next

steps, including community engagement, towards identifying a preferred option combination

An update on progress is to be presented to the HVFMS on 19 March 2013.

### **Waikanae River**

The Waikanae FMP outcomes were approved by the Environmental Wellbeing Committee on 27 November 2012. Preparations are now being made to reprint the FMP with its addendum. A presentation was made to the Environmental and Community Development Committee of KCDC on 21 February 2013.

### **Otaki River**

The review of the river management aspect, in support of the River Management Resource Consent Project – Western Rivers, is ongoing according to the programme. A review of the structural and non-structural methods is also underway.

### **Waiohine River**

Phase 3 investigations are proceeding, and the results of modelling were presented to members of the community at the end of January and the beginning of February. These consultations were very successful and a second round of consultation will be undertaken in March.

This second round of consultation will address some of the questions from the community and give them more information in relation to the costs and impacts, as well as the river management and planning options. The information and results of the two rounds of consultation will be presented in early April to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will then weigh up the information and comments from the community, before making a recommendation to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee.

### **Upper Wairarapa**

The UWVFMPs final scoping report, produced by Boffa Miskell, has been completed. The Project Plan and Programme for Phase 1 has been refined by the project team for endorsement by the Flood Protection management team, bearing in mind that this is a “living document”. Some elements of the Phase 1 investigations are already underway.

Detailed costings and resource allocations, as far as practically possible, have been completed for the Phase 1 element of the project, particularly for the 2012-13 fiscal year. Additional funding for this fiscal year will be sought in order to fulfil our commitments in relation to the river management resource consent application timeline. An additional \$36,000, in addition to the existing budgets, will also be sought for the 2013/14 financial year.

The Phase 1 Engagement Strategy has been completed. Attendance by staff at the Masterton A&P show on 16/17 February, a key component of this strategy, was reasonably successful. Attendance numbers at the Show were low,

although the engagement with those who visited the GWRC staff was very good.

Work is continuing to set up a sub-committee to work on governance matters, as agreed at the last Environmental Wellbeing Committee meeting.

### **3.4.6 Other Investigations and Project Support**

#### **Waikanae River – Staged Flood Maps for Flooding Preparedness: Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Grant Funded**

Modelling work and supporting survey work has been completed, and a workshop presenting the draft flood maps is scheduled before the end of February 2013. The final adopted maps are to be completed by the end of June 2013.

#### **Waikanae River – Sedimentation Transport Study**

The final reports on the Waikanae River – Sedimentation Transport Study: Phase 2A (Sediment Budget), and Phase 2B (River Management Options), have been received. A preferred combination of options has been presented to stakeholders, for feedback, at a community meeting.

A guideline bed level envelope is being developed in conjunction with the outcomes from the above study. The outcomes of the Sediment Transport Study and the guideline bed level envelope will support the River Management Resource Consent Project – Western Rivers.

#### **Porirua Flood Hazard Maps**

A communication strategy is being developed on the consultation and publication of the Flood Hazard Maps in line with the 'Floodplain Management Plan principles'. This is anticipated to be completed by the end of February 2013. This strategy is to be presented to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee for endorsement.

#### **Whakawiriwiri Stream – Mitigation of Adverse Effects.**

Our resource consent application was received and acknowledged on 26 October 2012. Full application notification was advertised on 27 and 31 October 2012.

The closing date for submissions was 23 November 2012. A total of seven submissions were received, including two accepted late submissions.

One was in support; one was neutral; and five were opposed. Six of these wished to be heard. A hearing date has not been set yet.

At the request of the GWRC Environmental Regulation department, it was agreed to have a second independent review commissioned of the Hydraulic Modelling/Channel Design. It is anticipated that this will be completed at the beginning of March 2013.

A first round of consultation/discussions has been completed with affected landowners on entry agreement, mitigation, compensation and future maintenance requirements. Follow-up letters have been sent to all concerned parties, and work is progressing on these agreements.

### **Flood Hazard Advisory Services**

Staff input, including attendance as an expert witness at the hearing, to the Alliance on the McKay's to Peka Peka (M2PP) RONS project has been finalised.

Input to the NZTA consultants on the Peka Peka to Otaki project (Kapiti Express Way Project) is ongoing.

Queries on flood hazard advice have considerably slowed down in comparison to the same period last year. Based on the current 'trend', the total number at the end of the fiscal year is projected to still be around 400.

### **Floodplain Management Guidelines**

Workshops were held in November and December 2012 on the preparation of Guidelines for the implementation of Floodplain Management Plans. The completion date for the draft final Guidelines is anticipated to be March 2013.

## **3.4.7 Western Rivers and Streams**

### **Hutt River**

Rock line and groyne maintenance is underway at various areas along the Hutt River to repair minor flood damage. Mowing and track maintenance has continued, and drainage channel maintenance is underway in Upper Hutt as part of the ongoing works programme.

### **Otaki River**

Mowing and spraying activities has continued to keep Kapiti staff busy. Work to remove trees from Upper Taylor's stopbank is underway. Vandalism by four wheel drive vehicles has been a problem over the last few months, with a number of barrier gates needing to be replaced and damage occurring to both stopbanks and berms.

### **Waikanae River**

Tree work and layering along the Waikanae River has now been completed, and a vegetation spray round is underway. A flood on 4 February caused damage to the access track at Kebbels Bend and resulted in a number of large poplars falling into the river channel during the event. The damage to the track has now been repaired and the trees removed.

### **Other Western Watercourses**

Waiwhetu Stream weed clearing continues with staff working closely with the Friends Group and the contractor. Hand and machine clearing of weed has also been undertaken in the Mangapouri Stream, and debris removal has been carried out in the Waitohu Stream below the Ringawhati Road Bridge. Hand

clearing runs are underway in the Wainuiomata River and the Pinehaven, Takapu, Porirua, Korokoro and Taupo Streams.

The flood event in February also caused damage to the Speedys Creek Debris Arrestor, and staff are working with Hutt City Council and Capacity to seek funding to repair the damage.

### 3.4.8 Wairarapa River Schemes

The main work being carried out in the Wairarapa Rivers is vegetation spraying, rock placing, berm lowering, and some beach and bed re-contouring work when river conditions permit. In the Ruamahanga reaches, between Greytown and Martinborough, the river has to be low enough to allow access along the river with a bulldozer. In the upper reaches in-water work has been suspended for periods to lessen the stress on the river environment when river levels have been too low.

Staff have initiated a proposal with DOC, the local land owner, Sustainable Wairarapa, Iwi, the local fishing club, and possibly Carterton District Council, to develop a public river access point to the Ruamahanga River off Carters Reserve. Coordination between the interested parties is continuing.

The Lake Onoke opening to the sea has remained open since mid December. However, it blocked again on 19 February and will be monitored until conditions are right for an opening.

### 3.4.9 Recreation Activities

A number of activities associated with the Great Outdoors Summer Programme have taken place this month. The Hutt Great Gravel Grab took place on 9 February, and the Otaki Great Gravel Grab took place on 17 February. Collectively there were over 500 vehicle movements, providing a great opportunity for staff to interact with members of the public. The Otaki event will feature in a Radio New Zealand Spectrum programme expected to air in a few weeks time.

As a result of the fine weather, a large number of people have continued to enjoy the river areas for both organised and informal recreation. The Otaki Friends Group walk to Chrystalls Bend took place on 10 February on a very sunny day. Maintenance and improvement work has continued along the trails.

### 3.4.10 Gravel Extraction

Details of gravel extraction volumes are provided in the following table:

River	Extraction Volumes (m <sup>3</sup> )	
	YTD 12/13	FY 11/12
Hutt Mouth	17,542	29,057
Hutt	47,462	49,873
Otaki	33,195	50,265
Wairarapa	75,420	209,359
<b>Totals</b>	<b>173,619</b>	<b>338,554</b>

Gravel extraction has continued in the Hutt River at Avalon with the material being used to complete works on Boulcott Farm Golf Course Project. Gravel extraction continues in the Otaki River above SH1 Bridge.

#### **3.4.11 Drainage Schemes**

A project plan has been prepared to implement the Papatahi Pump Drainage Schemes' decision to withdraw from GWRC management. Legal advice has been sought to confirm the legal and statutory requirements for the transition. Meetings are planned to commence with the scheme committee in March, with the transition planned to be complete by 30 June 2013.

#### **3.4.12 River Management Resource Consent Project**

Since the last report, work is continuing on the draft of the resource consent application for the Hutt River, with the aim of having that ready for internal review by the beginning of March 2013. External consultation on the Hutt application will be undertaken later in March 2013.

Work is progressing on the preparation of a draft application for Waikanae River by mid March 2013, with Otaki and Wainuiomata Rivers to follow.

#### **3.4.13 Asset Management and Planning**

The integration of SAP Plant Maintenance into Flood Protection business processes has continued. The current focus is on the use of notifications to record unplanned work to ensure a consistent process for capturing information in a centralised system, to manage future work, and to provide meaningful reporting. The new process is being trialled prior to being applied to all maintenance activities.

A review of the asset condition assessment process is also underway to ensure a consistent approach across the operational teams. A valuable workshop, involving ten councils who manage flood protection assets, was held on 14 February to share information on how to undertake this activity. This activity will be increasingly important with the change to the Local Government Act, which will require annual reporting against asset management performance measures from 2015.

### **3.5 Wairarapa Moana Wetland Project**

#### **3.5.1 Recreation**

A draft Wairarapa Moana Experience Development Plan has been prepared for discussion by the management team. The plan proposes a total of 5 nodes in the Wairarapa Moana area. Our Community education staff believe that the node concept has great merit in introducing school children to Wairarapa Moana.

The Wairio/Te Ara o Parera walkway resource consent has been lodged. The actual name for this walkway still needs to be determined. The proposed car



park, which South Wairarapa District Council agreed to fund up to \$10,000, is being finalised between the parties.

### **3.5.2 Marketing**

Toni de Lautour from the Biodiversity Community Education team is close to launching the Wairarapa Moana Wetland project website.

Protocols for the use of the Wairarapa Moana logo are almost complete. The Wairarapa Moana book was successfully launched in late November 2012.

### **3.5.3 Relationships**

The recent Wairarapa Moana Management team meeting considered the issue of Māori place names. Local iwi are keen to be able to tell their stories based on place names. After some discussion, it was agreed that both iwi will work together to clarify any Maori naming issues. GWRC are currently dealing with two naming issues: the correct name for the Lake Ferry lagoon, and a correct name for the 'Te Ara o Parera' walkway. Considerable research is required prior to the two iwi being able to formulate an opinion.

A review of the grazing policy has commenced.

### **3.5.4 Progress on community projects**

The Biodiversity Department's Community Education team has undertaken the following activities:

- A tool to introduce the community to the concept of ecosystem health indicators through the monitoring of kakahi (fresh water mussels) in Wairarapa Moana is being developed. Kakahi are particularly vulnerable to water pollution, sedimentation, and declines in certain fish species which are needed to support the parasitic mussel larvae.

Amber McEwan (consultant) has been contracted to create a protocol which will be peer reviewed by the GWRC Environmental Science team. The protocol will be published alongside information about kakahi in a booklet, and on the website. To achieve an iwi perspective in the document, advice from Ngati Kahungunu and Rangitane will be sought. Once completed, GWRC Biodiversity staff will facilitate the community to be involved in the ongoing monitoring of kakahi.

- A 5-year restoration plan for Lake Onoke lagoon, situated east of the access road to the Lake Ferry side of Onoke Spit, is currently being developed in collaboration with DOC and the South Wairarapa Biodiversity Group.

### **3.5.5 Biodiversity**

- The Ramsar application has been lodged. Excellent preparatory work was undertaken by DoC and GWRC staff. The application is now

with the Wellington Conservancy and the Area office for DOC to fulfil the administrative requirements of the application.

- The wetland bird expert engaged to assess wetland bird diversity and abundance at each of the six selected edge wetlands has made some interesting observations. Bittern (Nationally Endangered) (*matuku hūrepo*), Spotless crane (*pūweto*), and Marsh crane (*kotoreke*), have been detected at the wetlands, while large concentrations of wetland bird species have been recorded at various sites; e.g. 50 scaup (*pāpango*) at Barton's Lagoon, and large numbers of grey teal and pied stilt in JK Donald Reserve. A large moulting shoveler duck population was noted recently in JK Donald (around 500 birds); only three other large shoveler moulting sites are recorded in New Zealand.

One of the biggest surprises was the discovery of over 200 shag nests (a colony comprised of three different species) in some willows in Matthews Lagoon. A shag colony was noted in the area over 30 years ago, but indications are that it was much smaller at that time. All of this information is being fed back into decisions about pest plant control at the wetland sites, as the habitat for these species needs to be considered when determining willow control plans. A first for Lake Wairarapa was also recorded at Hayward's Lagoon (private property), where the landowner has confirmed the first known nesting of Royal spoonbills (*kōtuku ngutupapa*) in the area.

The paper 'Wairarapa Moana Challenges and Opportunities', by Philippa Crisp (GWRC) and Tony Silbery (DoC), was presented at the New Zealand Ecological Society conference held in November. The talk focussed on how we are gaining knowledge about the ecological processes at Wairarapa Moana through our ongoing research. A key point was that we are dealing with an altered system and are constantly surprised by what we find. The need to work with the community and to be adaptable in future planning for this wetland complex, as a result of this ongoing learning, was stressed.

### **3.5.6 Fresh Start for Freshwater Clean-up Fund-Progress**

- **On-farm assessments.**

Some 20 on-farm assessments have been completed. Opportunities for on-farm projects have been categorised into:

- (1) Primarily water quality - including improved effluent management; i.e. effluent storage and irrigation, eliminate runoff from tracks, development of constructed wetlands, improved accuracy and efficiency of irrigation/fertiliser spreading, and improved drain management.

- (2) Primarily biodiversity - including riparian fencing and planting, planting restoration; i.e. shelter management, weed control, planting in front of stopbanks, and wetland areas.
- A second set of water quality data has been collected at Barton's and Matthews Lagoons. The results have replicated the initial sampling run which showed Matthews Lagoon in its current form to be stripping a significant portion of the nitrates, and less so the phosphates. Barton's Lagoon has a low residence time so the reduction in nutrients is less.
  - Nutrient loadings for all waterways entering the lake have been calculated by the Environmental Science team. They show that the Otakura and Whakawhiriwhiri Streams contribute the largest nutrient loadings to the Lake Wairarapa system.
  - Concept plans for the redevelopment of the priority wetlands are being developed by NIWA, our wetland specialists.
  - A programme of activities to remove weeds has been developed, and is being implemented with the focus primarily on the removal of willows and alders.
  - A pamphlet regarding the types of aquatic weed and their management possibilities is under preparation.
  - An exotic fish removal project has been scoped, and initial discussions have been held with Fish and Game New Zealand.

#### **4. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:



**Wayne O'Donnell**  
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