

Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Colin Wright, Divisional Manager, Wairarapa

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of current activities and provide information of interest since the previous meeting held on 8 February 1999.

2. Divisional Matters

2.1 Financial Position

The financial position for the Wairarapa Division as at the end of February is covered in a separate report from the Divisional Accountant. This report gives more information than has normally been provided to the Committee in the past.

2.2 Federated Farmers

As mentioned by the Committee Chairman last time, the Wairarapa Federated Farmers Executive will meet with Committee members following this Committee meeting to discuss items of mutual interest. I will endeavour to find out which items they are particularly interested in beforehand as it may be worthwhile making a short presentation on some aspects.

The executive members have been invited to join the Committee for lunch at 12.30 p.m. with the discussion meeting to follow.

2.3 Next Meeting

Cr Turver has suggested that the Committee meet in another part of the region, and therefore it is proposed that the next scheduled meeting on 9 May be held in the Otaki area. If members desire, a short tour of items of interest could be held following the meeting.

2.4 Long Term Financial Strategy

The Council has completed its proposed Ten Year Plan and 2000/01 Annual Plan. This document will be open for public submissions during April/May with decisions on the final content to be made by late June.

It would be fair to say that managers are somewhat relieved to get to this point as the review of the Council's Long Term Financial Strategy and associated aspects involves a large amount of work. Now we need to see what issues arise through the public consultation process.

2.5 Communications

The following communications items are additional to some other information sharing opportunities mentioned later on in this report –

- (a) The TV programme 'Country Calendar' on 8 April will feature Castlepoint Station and the programme is likely to include Dave Cameron, our Regional Soil Conservator talking on sustainable land management.
- (b) Also sometime in April, 'Maggie's Garden Show' will feature an item on control of possums and other pests in large gardens. Rachel Helson, one of our Upper Hutt based staff, provided much of the information for this segment of the programme.
- (c) Several Wairarapa staff attended the Wairarapa wetlands open day run by the Department of Conservation on Saturday, 12 February. Staff had prepared various displays of relevant Council activities and we were able to discuss items of interest with the public.
- (d) The Division's open day at Pirinoa is to be held on Wednesday, 12 April, from 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. The intention is to take the Division out to the people by providing information and items of interest that are of relevance to people in the surrounding area. Local schools have been invited and a letterbox drop will also occur. It is hoped that we will be able to show locals what the Council is doing and also discuss matters where we may be able to provide assistance to individuals.

If successful, this type of open day will be repeated elsewhere in the future.

3. Operations Department: (Ian Gunn)

3.1 Akura Nursery

High temperatures over the last month have resulted in good growth throughout the nursery. All blocks due for cutting this winter have reached the required height and diameter thresholds. Trimmings from the Tangoio willow block will continue to be dispatched to the fodder trial at Riverside until the end of March. The cooler nights have caused some leaf drop, but feed quality still remains high.

3.2 Castlepoint Seaweed

Staff have been involved with two initiatives at Castlepoint. The Department of Conservation is running a coastal awareness programme and has enlisted the services of Stan Braaksma to talk about coastal erosion, Council's role in Beachcare programmes, and to inform participants of the Council's various assistance programmes for restoration and protection.

The second initiative involves a joint project with the Department of Conservation, Masterton District Council, and the Castlepoint Ratepayers Association. A foredune area next to the basin has been partially destroyed by the effects of motorbikes, foot traffic and wind. Materials have been provided to fence off the dune. Signs will be erected to advise persons of the restoration project, and in time a re-vegetation programme will be undertaken. Staff will continue to work with the Ratepayers Association to develop a comprehensive Beachcare programme.

3.3 Riparian Management Guidelines

In consultation with the major forest management consultants in the Wairarapa a set of guidelines have been established to manage riparian zones that have a high risk of severe erosion. Typically these zones have existed on farm land that have been purchased for afforestation. Soil Conservators have been concerned that these zones should be managed in a way that recognises their inherent instability. In many cases blanket planting of *Pinus radiata* is inappropriate.

Excellent co-operation has been evident in the setting of the guidelines. Matters covered include the use of recognised riparian species, the control of noxious weeds and pests, stock grazing management, and use of best management practices for harvesting operations. Additionally, staff have made themselves available to inspect sites prior to planting and to provide information on potential, high risk erosion sites.

3.4 Resource Consents for River Management

A resource consent application is being prepared to cover routine river maintenance activities for the Waiohine, Waipoua and Upper Ruamahanga River Management Schemes. The consent is being sought for a 20 year term on a non-notified basis, and consultation is proceeding with Tangata Whenua, Fish & Game NZ, and the Department of Conservation. Also, an introductory workshop has been held with these affected parties as well as the representatives of key

interest groups. Once completed the draft Assessment of Environmental Effects will be circulated for comment, and an additional workshop will be held. It is expected that the application will be lodged early next financial year.

3.5 Waiohine SH2 Bridge – Value Management Workshop

A Values Management Workshop organised by Transit NZ was held in early March. The purpose of the workshop was to obtain feedback from key interest groups regarding the possible replacement of the Waiohine SH2 Bridge. This was the first stage of an investigation planned for completion by late June.

The Chairpersons of the Waiohine Floodplain Advisory Committee and Waiohine Scheme Advisory Committee, as well as Council staff, attended the meeting to represent floodplain community interests. The main issues identified were:

- Inadequacy of bridge flood capacity
- Strategic importance of the bridge to future flood protection works
- Traffic, cycling and pedestrian safety
- Flood scour and debris risks to the bridge
- Earthquake hazard
- Maori Cemetery flooding, access and parking

3.6 Logging at Hiwinui

Logging has commenced on the additional target of 10,000 tonnes for this financial year.

Increased fuel costs have caused an increase in cartage rates. However, logging returns are up on this time last year.

4. Biosecurity Department: (Wayne O'Donnell)

4.1 NPMS Bovine Tb Review Meeting

The Animal Health Board has requested a meeting with the Council on the 29 May to discuss the review of the National Pest Management Strategy for Bovine Tb. The Board is required to have a new Strategy in place by 1 July 2001. This meeting presents an important opportunity for Council, as a funding partner, to influence the review outcomes. The meeting is scheduled to be held in the Masterton office, commencing at 9.30am.

The Board has asked the Council permission to allow members of the Regional Animal Health Committee and Federated Farmers Executive to also attend this meeting. It would be appropriate for Committee members to collectively consider this.

4.2 Bovine Tb Update

The Bovine Tb programme is on schedule despite only 47 percent of the area being completed. Treatment areas are not deemed to be completed until all baits are 'safe' and all traps have been removed. There are large tracts of land where treatment has occurred but are not yet ready for restocking. Aerial operations during April will also redress this apparent imbalance. That is, large areas will be treated in a short time frame with a low labour input.

Of the 35 operational areas, 9 have been completed, 13 are operational and there are 13 to commence.

4.3 External Contractors

The Homewood/Riversdale, Rewa Rewa Crown, Mataikona Block One and Mataikona Block Two contracts have been completed. Mataikona Block Three has been started and the large Bideford contract is 65% completed. The Bideford contract will have a progress monitor during April.

4.4 Aerial Control

Aerial operations were carried out recently over small areas totalling 1,929 hectares within the WRC Initiative areas of Pirinoa, Moeraki/Ngakonui and Tora. The sowing rates ranged from 2 to 3 kilograms per hectare.

Approximately 4,600 hectares of the Bideford operation has been programmed for aerial control in April 2000. Public Health/District Council approvals and resource consent have been applied for. This area is predominantly pine forest, which was originally scheduled for ground control methods.

4.5 Ferret Control

The Woodside sector of the 20,500 hectare ferret control operation is almost completed. Staff are currently using various methods to determine which are more proficient. To date only 34 ferrets and 6 stoats have been trapped. It is not known how many have been killed in the area treated with the diaphacinone fish paste. The small numbers caught to date raises the question of whether broadscale area control techniques are efficient. There is increasing evidence that control needs to be maintained at favoured sites for very long periods to dramatically reduce mustelid populations.

4.6 Post Operational Monitoring

The targets for post operational residual trap-catch (RTC) results are 5% or lower. The following are those to hand over the past four months.

Otaki Buffer	Ground Control	<u>RTC</u> 1.3%
Owahanga (2kg/ha feed and toxic)	Aerial Control	1.0%

	Ground Control	3.1%
Taueru/Maungaraki	Ground Control	4.6%
Te Wharau (2kg/ha feed and toxic)	Aerial Control	0.8%
Waingawa	Ground Control	0.8%
Bideford (Interim – Bovine Unit)	Ground Control	3.7%
Homewood Riversdale	Private Contractor	4.0%

4.7 Pre-Operation Monitoring

Pre operational monitoring for the following operations confirmed the need for them to be scheduled for control in the 2000/01 year.

Otaki Crown	RTC 24.9%
Featherston Crown	RTC 13.2%

4.8 Improved 1080 Apple Baits for Possum Control

In October 1999, Pest Solutions of Christchurch were contracted by Council to carry out research in an endeavour to improve the efficacy of diced apple baits for possum control. Apple baits have been used for some time in bait stations by this Council and were already proven to be very palatable. However, at times there have been variances in bait quality.

The critical research objectives were achieved, resulting in apple bait that promises to be superior to the old standard.

In pen trials, the new apple bait formulation far exceeded expectation and rated 30% higher than the standard bait. The most significant advance was created through the formulation of a solution containing a mix of surfactants, microcides, anti-oxidants and lure used on Granny Smith apples. A new toxic loading for 1080 was also recommended.

The results of the research have revealed new ideas that may improve the quality of carrot baits and is another positive step in the search for optimum possum baits.

4.9 Possum Control Workshop

A possum control workshop was held in Masterton for Biosecurity staff on 28 February. It was presented by Pest Solutions and funded by the Animal Health Board. The workshop focussed on best practice for possum control with the main themes being quality of bait, effective control strategies and proficient long-term maintenance. Some key points that arose were -

- Poison applications must be accurate, precise and uniformly mixed.
- Both toxins and lures degrade in storage.

- Poisons need to be adequately masked to overcome taste and smell aversions.
- Possums repeatedly exposed to new foods are more likely to eat baits.
- Pre-feeding increases bait consumption and kill rates.
- Broadcast baiting achieves better results than use of bait stations.
- Possums develop behavioural resistance to poisons after repeated exposures but it can be avoided.
- Cost effective long-term control depends on achieving high initial kills and kills in excess of 80% during maintenance control.

4.10 Communications

- Biosecurity staff attended the Wainuiomata 'Over the Hill' promotion on 11 March this year. They received a good response to the pest plant and animals display and considered it merited attendance again if it is held next year. Although the event catered for a lot of stallholders, it also involved a 'farming' theme.
- Staff were also in attendance at the Masterton Agricultural and Pastoral Show on 18 to 20 February. It was considered worthwhile having a display although interest was more limited than previous occasions.
- A Biosecurity display was also set up at Trentham Memorial Park for the Upper Hutt Carnival on 26 February.
- Several Biosecurity staff attended a Wellington Plant Conservation Network Meeting held at Otari Botanic Garden. Selected staff will now attend these meetings whenever they are held. They provide an important link with other agencies, groups and individuals involved in the conservation and restoration of native species.
- It is planned to have a display at the Wairarapa Earth Day Celebrations at Masterton on 29 April 2000. This is to support the Wairarapa Forest and Bird Society who are promoting the local event. The focus of Earth Day is on a healthy, safe and ecologically rich environment, with the sustainable use of resources.

4.11 Key Native Ecosystem Management

- Bait stations at the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary were emptied and refilled with 100 grams of waxed anti-coagulant pellets. The old bait was weighed to assess how much had been eaten. From a total of 210 stations, three had been emptied and seven had baits missing. All indications are that there are no possums left within the Sanctuary.
- In the Western Zone, work is continuing on the Kaiwharawhara/Ngaraunga, Huntleigh Park (Ngaio), Te Rama and Waikanae Reserve sites. The Redwood Bush (Tawa) and Karehana Bay (Plimmerton) sites are in an advanced stage of planning. A public meeting was held at the Plimmerton Hall on 15 February to discuss the Karehana Bay proposal with local residents. The residents were in favour of the operation proceeding. The

Haywards Scenic Reserve site at Waiwhetu (Hutt City) is to be tendered for external contract.

- In the Wairarapa, work is continuing on the Clareville site. New KNE operations to commence soon are Battersea (Greytown South) and Bighill (Tuturumuri). The Bighill site is the subject of a trial baiting strategy using Feracol (VitaminD3) paste. Greytown Park Bush is due for maintenance from 26 April 2000.
- Aerial photographs have been taken of some of the KNE sites. These are useful for identification and promotional purposes and in some instances for monitoring changes to the canopy and the general composition of the site following possum control.

4.12 Rook Control

Successful rook control has been undertaken at three locations (Mt Bruce, Bideford, and Whareama) during February. The rooks were attracted to newly ploughed or sown crops at each location. Diced bread was used as bait. It is estimated that over 220 rooks were destroyed.

4.13 1080 and Forest Invertebrates

An article has recently been published in Volume 26 of the NZ Journal of Zoology (1999) about forest invertebrates found on baits used in pest mammal control and the impact of 1080 on their numbers. The research was carried out at Ohakune in the central North Island during the winters of 1995, 1996 and 1997. A covering note sent with the report from one of the authors states: "from this work we conclude that while a wide range of invertebrates are at risk from 1080 (which appears to cause a reduction in their numbers) the effect is localised and short term". The report states that recovery of invertebrates started within six days of toxic bait removal and that any reduction in invertebrate numbers did not extend more than 20 centimetres from a bait.

The sowing rate commonly used by this Council for aerial baiting is approximately 300 baits per hectare or 3 kilograms of bait per hectare. This equates to one bait for every 33 square metres. Given that many (if not most) of these baits are eaten within the first two nights it can readily be assumed that any adverse impacts on invertebrates is extremely minimal.

4.14 Manchurian Wild Rice

Further areas of Manchurian Wild Rice were recently sprayed at the wetland site south of the Waikanae wastewater treatment ponds. This season's work focused on the major infestation directly south of the ponds. Small areas of regrowth from last season's application were also treated.

Because of the density of infestation only a depth of 12 meters can be penetrated into the periphery of the main infestation with each application. To gain a quicker coverage of the total site two applications in a year could be trialed.

These could be applied in October and April. However spring application could be delayed if surface water is present.

4.15 Random Inspection Programme – Wellington City

The first round of random inspections of 200 recorded Old Man's Beard sites in Wellington City has been completed. A total of 51 or 25.5% of the properties inspected had active infestations. While some occupiers cleared infestations immediately, it was necessary to serve a total of 38 Notices of Direction. After further inspections, 34 Notices were cancelled as the required work had been completed. Of the four notices remaining active one has a time extension, one is under legal investigation and the remaining two have had the work completed in default.

A further 100 inspections of recorded sites will be completed in late March. These will target problem sites where either the former infestation was extensive or the owner/occupier had previously been reluctant to undertake the required work.

4.16 Ragwort

The infestation levels of Ragwort are noticeably higher this season compared with previous years. The increase is region-wide and can be attributed to the moist summer and abundance of stock feed. Occupiers have responded well to requests that they control this Boundary Control species. Only one Notice of Direction has been issued.

4.17 Nodding Thistle

Infestation levels of Nodding Thistle have been higher this season. Plant numbers have increased on several recorded sites which had previously been in decline. In the inland area of Cape Palliser there has been a significant increase in plant numbers over areas where biological control had historically maintained densities at low levels.

Three new infestations have been located and cleared during the season. One scattered over an area of 40ha in South Wairarapa and two minor infestations in the Masterton District.

4.18 Old Man's Beard River Contracts

Contracts on the Waiohine and Waingawa Rivers have now been completed. Both contracts were for maintenance control. A further contract has been approved on the Ruamahanga River. This is for initial clearance and covers the west bank of the river from the Martinborough Bridge downstream, a distance of 10kms. On the lower Ruamahanga River the infested areas are generally narrower, are less subject to heavy ground cover, and have easy access. However, most sites contain the original infestation and are therefore extensive and well established. Infestations also tend to cover willows extending out over the water from the riverbank. This necessitates a greater use of vine cutting and

chemical treatment of stumps rather than spray application to avoid chemical contamination of the water. The former tends to be a slower process.

5. Planning & Resources Department: (Steve Blakemore)

5.1 Environmental Incidents

<i>Date of Report</i>	<i>Incident</i>	<i>Details</i>
31/01/00	Offensive Odour coming from local animal processing plant.	Activity found to have consent and be within consent conditions for the operation. Odour attributed to more frequent killings and adverse wind direction.
2/02/00	Abandoned car in Ruamahanga river.	Car removed from river by Council and taken to the landfill.
4/02/00	Large quantity of rubbish dumped on Waingawa River bank.	Clean up paid for by Regional Council. Person responsible for rubbish could not be traced.
7/02/00	Foul odour from neighbouring septic tank system.	May be consentable premises. Still being worked on by staff.
9/02/00	Member of the public phoned to report a dust problem.	No dust was seen on site however a small amount of dust was visually seen at the yard when a forklift was working.
10/02/00	Member of the public phoned to report a dust problem.	No dust was seen on site however a small amount of dust was visually seen at the yard when a forklift was working.
11/02/00	Dust from sawmill	Site visited, small amount of dust being emitted, Other dust sources observed and investigated nearby.
11/02/00	Petition from 12 people in one street presented to Council lodging a complaint about dust from neighbouring industries	Petitioners have been approached personally by staff. Industries have been written to and spoken to. Further monitoring of dust levels required. Still being worked on by staff.
13/02/00	Foul odour coming from industrial site, Carterton	Investigated site, foul odour confirmed. Still being worked on by staff.
16/02/00	Dust and odour reported from industrial site, Masterton.	Still being worked on by staff
17/02/00	Suspected spray drift affecting plants in domestic property, Martinborough	Inconclusive whether or not spray drift had caused plant die-back. Spray contractor written a cautionary letter.
18/02/00	Domestic ducks in waterway creating water pollution	Yet to be investigated
21/02/00	A member of the public complained about dust nuisance from a local industry in Masterton.	The dust nuisance had stopped prior to arriving at the site. The matter is under further investigation.
21/02/00	Sewage type odour coming from the Awheaiti Stream at Tora on the SE Wairarapa Coast.	Complaint passed onto SWDC Health Officer who is currently dealing with the problem.

21/02/00	Potentially unconsented drainage works observed at a subdivision in South Wairarapa	Work found to be cleaning of existing drains, permitted activity in the Freshwater Plan.
22/02/00	An oil spill was reported on the Rimutaka Hill Road	Minor quantities of diesel were discharged from a vehicle on the majority of the hill road. Contractors had cleaned up any residual diesel. No diesel entered any watercourses.
24/02/00	Landowner reported that a recently dug drain was diverting water and depriving downstream landowners of stock water.	Still under investigation
24/02/00	Offensive odour from industrial site, Carterton.	Still being worked on by staff.
25/02/00	Old landfill in South Wairarapa being eroded and rubbish entering waterway.	Emergency consent granted for river works to move creek flow away from landfill site. Long term solution still required.
25/02/00	Offensive odour from industrial premise, Carterton.	Still being worked on by staff.
28/02/00	Dead fish at edge of Lake Wairarapa.	Suspected to be someone who had dumped fish, along with bait. No further action required.
3/03/00	Dirty water entering Waipoua River from tributary.	Found to be stock in the water race causing significant muddying of the waters. No action taken, but it is acknowledged to be an environmental problem.
6/03/00	Industry in Carterton causing nuisance by burning plastics	Company concerned was asked to stop burning plastics in their waste.
6/03/00	Major discolouration of Ruamahanga river caused by algal bloom in sewage ponds.	Yearly problem. District Council working on upgrade of the plant.
10/03/00	Foam in Ruamahanga River, South Wairarapa.	Unable to trace the source. No further action taken.
13/03/00	Odour from neighbour's compost causing nuisance.	Found to be minor issue, but person responsible will re-site compost bin away from the boundary.

5.2 Compliance

Two abatement notices have been issued relating to installation of a culvert causing backing up of stream flow and breach of an irrigation take consent. Two meetings have been held with parties involved in the culvert installation and agreement obtained to obtain a consent and remove and reinstall the culvert at a lower level. This should take place within the next week or so.

Council has adopted the proposed policy for charging for responses to environmental incidents which was considered at the last meeting of this Committee.

Infringement notices will be able to be applied following consideration of procedures at the next meeting of the Environment Committee.

Inspections of all dairy discharge consents have been completed and inspections of 'other discharges' are proceeding. The results of these inspections will be reported to the Committee in an annual report.

5.3 Notified Consents

JNL – air discharge variation	Advertised with submissions closing 22 March
Greytown Sewage – discharge	Hearing scheduled for 27 March with Councillors Long, Buchanan and McQueen comprising the Hearings Committee.
Craggy Range Vineyard –water take	Application on hold with further information on surface water effects to be provided. No further action by applicant.
Martinborough Sewage – Discharge	Comment provided to consultants on draft AEE. Consultation to then be followed by a revised application.
Featherston Sewage – Discharge	On hold awaiting full assessment of effects and consultation. Agreed lower priority than Martinborough.
Masterton Sewage – discharge	On hold. Consultants are proceeding with development of proposals Consent application scheduled for August 2000.

5.4 Appeals

Ruamahanga Gravel Consent	Second mediation held 1 February. Meeting of proposed Gravel guardians group held 1 March. Final wording of Memorandum of Understanding still to be agreed.
DTS Riddiford – Marine Farm	Callover sought - <i>refer report in order paper.</i>
DTS Riddiford - Consent Charges Boulder Wall	Callover held - <i>refer report in order paper.</i>
Flat Point (Carterton District Council)	“Mediation” meeting held 9 February.. Consultants engaged to review change in proposed sewage treatment system.

5.5 Hydrology

February was a very dry month with little westerly rain in the Tararuas. Consequently the Upper Ruamahanga and Waiohine Rivers reached five year lows in early March. Irrigation bans were placed on a number of consents. Subsequent widespread rain has increased river levels and removed the need for irrigation. Some 25 to 30 mm was recorded throughout the Wairarapa.

5.6 Meteorological Service

Five weather forecasters were hosted by the Department, as a reciprocal visit to a previous staff visit to the Service. The visit gave the opportunity to put faces to names and improve the understanding of our activities and needs. A number of issues were discussed including ways of improving the flow of information during events. Field visits were made to the Taratahi automatic weather site and the Waiohine gorge river gauging station.

5.7 Communication

Activities have included:

- presentation on the Tararua weather patterns to the Geological Society,
- a hydrology talk to Cornwall Street School
- newspaper publicity on irrigation bans, illegal dumping adjacent to rivers, the Mangatarere Stream prosecution, and the JNL application to vary their consent
- display and attendance at the Lake Wairarapa Wetlands open day
- meeting with Wairarapa Wine Growers Association

5.8 Land Accretion

As part of her requirements for a Resource Planning degree, Anita Longworth wrote a paper on accretion and its relationship with the Resource Management Act. A very well organised workshop was held recently for Planning and Operations staff based on her study. Anita was employed on a short-term contract in the Policy and Planning Section and has now departed to full time employment with the Whangarei District Council.

5.9 Wairarapa Waste Management

Through the Waste Management Wairarapa Committee – WMW, the three District Councils are developing long term solutions for waste management in the Wairarapa. This is being driven by the approaching closure of current landfills.

The Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee considered WMW's Public Discussion Document at its August 1999. This was followed by its submission that:

“The Regional Council generally supports the development of a single regional landfill for the Wairarapa, combined with waste minimisation options such as those advocated through ‘Zero Waste’ ”.

WMW has now prepared a draft Regional Waste Management Plan. The Plan identifies goals for solid waste management in the Wairarapa and states actions to be taken by the District Councils to achieve those goals. This is currently going through final editing, and will then be taken to the respective District Councils for their approval.

It is anticipated that the Plan will be put out for public comment in the first half of this year, with submissions and hearings to follow. The Regional Council will have an opportunity to make a submission at this time. WMW hopes to have the Management Plan formally adopted by the District Councils by October 2000.

It is interesting to note that the Management Plan does not identify a preferred residual waste disposal option, but intends to identify this after the Plan preparation process later in the year. Should a regional landfill be the desired option, site identification is not scheduled until early 2001. If any appeals are

lodged on the resource consents required for the landfill, then these may not be resolved for some time after that date.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Colin Wright
Divisional Manager, Wairarapa