

# Resource Investigations Department Report

## John Sherriff, Manager

**May 2000**

### 1. Resource Information

#### 1.1 Flood Warning

Since the last meeting the following severe weather bulletins were received:

4 April	Heavy Rainfall Tararuas Ranges
9 & 10 April	Heavy Rainfall Tararuas & Rimutaka Ranges

The following rainfall and river alarms were also received and responded to:

22 March	Kapakapanui, Rainfall Alarm
5 April	Mangaroa, River Level Alarm
24 & 25 April	Skull Gully, Warwicks Rainfall Alarms

#### 1.2 Quality Assurance System

The review of our Quality Assurance System is now scheduled for 23 & 24 May 2000. The Resource Investigations Department currently has ISO 9002 accredited quality systems for its hydrological and air quality monitoring activities. We have been working towards extending this accreditation to include the Environment Division's consent management and incident response activities.

This review, to be undertaken by TELARC, is the first major audit of our existing quality system since it was accredited three years ago.

#### 1.3 Response Service Contingency Plan

We have recently completed a Response Service Contingency Plan for the Department. This plan sets out the procedures that need to be followed so that our flood warning, saline intrusion warning and pollution response services are operational after a major emergency event (e.g. a flood or earthquake). It also includes procedures to test the quality of groundwater resources used for public water supply.

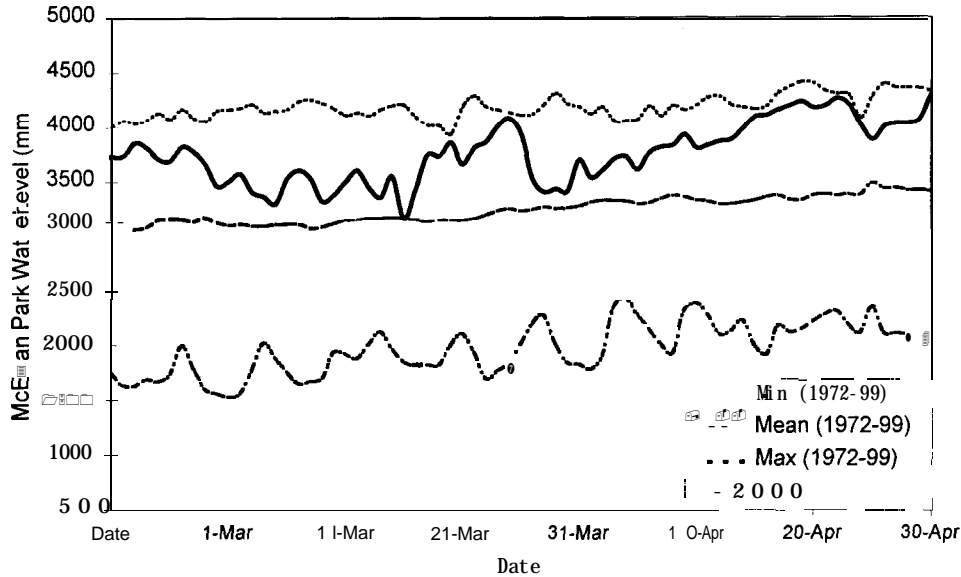
The report has identified that transport will be a major issue following an emergency. We rely totally on road transport to get access to our monitoring sites and equipment. This may be severely compromised after a major event.

A copy of the plan has been given to Emergency Management and we will shortly be working out ways to resolve these potential transport issues.

## 2. Resource Analysis

### 2.1 Groundwater Levels

Artesian pressure in the Waiwhetu Aquifer, measured at McEwan Park, has remained well above average and close to maximum recorded values for the period January to April.



Groundwater levels on the Kapiti Coast have also been higher than for the same period in previous years. Levels recorded in the Waitohu Groundwater Zone are the highest recorded since measurements began in 1995.

### 2.2 Moera Gravel Aquifer Bore

In the first week of May we started a seven day pump test at the Moera Gravel Aquifer bore. The pump test will enable us to determine how much water is available from this water resource and what effect the abstraction of water has on other groundwater resources in the Hutt Valley.

There is increasing interest in the water resources of the Moera Aquifer, which is located about 115 metres below Lower Hutt. The information provided by this investigation will be used in assessing any resource consent applications to take this water.

### 2.3 Rainfall and River Flows

Rainfall during April was above average across much of the western Wellington Region. The south-eastern catchments of Orongorongo and Wainuiomata received the greatest proportion of rainfall, being 175% and 145% above average respectively. This is the effect of predominant southerly rainfall events.

The Tararua Ranges and the northern end of the Rimutaka Ranges received around 120% of average April rainfall. After very dry months in February and March (where rainfall was around 50% of the average) rainfall on the Kapiti Coast during April increased to 70% to 90% of the average.

River flows around the western Region in April are summarised in the attached figure. River flows on the Kapiti Coast remain below average with the exception of the Otaki River which drains the upper Tararuas. The Waikanae River and Waitohu Stream had only 58% and 69% of their average April flows respectively. The Waitohu Stream fell below its first stepdown level of 180 litres per second for a period of 19 days during March reaching a low of 145 litres per second on 18 March. This level was just above the minimum flow of 140 litres per second set in the Regional Freshwater Plan.

The Hutt, Wainuiomata, Orongorongo and Porirua Rivers all had above average flows during April.

### **3. Resource Quality**

#### **3.1 Pollution and Non-compliance Complaints**

A summary of pollution complaints and our performance in responding to them is reported separately.

#### **3.2 Enforcement Action**

An infringement notice was issued to John Ray Ltd on 26 April 2000 for breaching an abatement notice issued on 1 February 2000. This abatement notice required John Ray Ltd to prevent the discharge of silt into an unnamed tributary of Pauatahanui Stream. This followed investigation by Council staff on 11 April 2000. The infringement fee of \$750 was paid.

New Zealand Oil Services Limited have entered a guilty plea in relation to the unauthorised oil discharge which occurred at Seaview in October last year. A hearing date has yet to be confirmed.

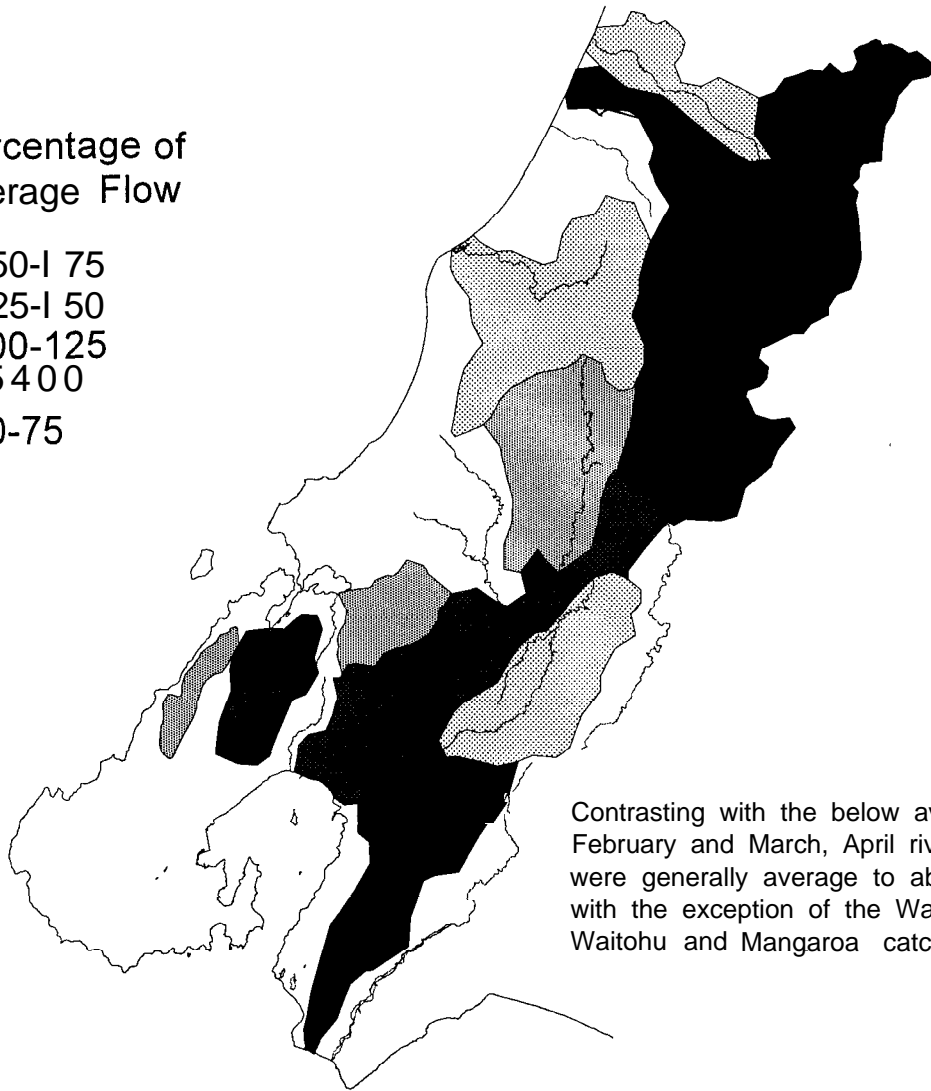
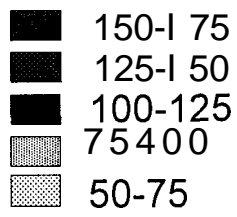
### **4. Staffing**

Two new staff have started as Resource Technicians. Aotasi Iose and Wendy Purdon have both worked for the Council previously. Aotasi was employed as a Resource Quality officer on a nine month contract last year. Wendy worked for the Council as a Resource Technician on an eighteen month contract about three years ago.

Jon Marks, previously our longest serving Resource Technician, has been appointed to the position of Section Leader Resource Information.

## River Flows - April 2000

Percentage of  
Average Flow



Contrasting with the below average flows of February and March, April river flows were generally average to above average with the exception of the Waikanae, Waitohu and Mangaroa catchments.