

Flood Protection Manager's Report for period ending 11 April 2003

1. Manager's comments

New staff

We have now advertised for a new engineer and a riverhand to fill the last of our vacancies. We got a good response to the engineer advertisement, and should have a first round of interviews completed before the Easter break. The riverhand advertisement had just closed at the time of writing.

Mabey Road Depot

We are continuing our feasibility study into the future of the Mabey Road Depot. A surveyor has examined the depot site. The resulting report concludes that subdivision would be relatively straight forward and the shape of the surplus lot is "eminently" suitable for residential housing. If the Council chooses to retain a depot at Mabey Road, and dispose of the surplus land, the key thing we would need to do is to ensure the remaining depot facility does not have adverse affects on adjoining residential development. That would require adequate screening by way of good fencing and planting, and probably a new coat of paint on the main depot building.

Peter O'Brien has now engaged an independent valuer to review the valuation estimates used to determine whether staying at Mabey Road or shifting to a new site is the most economic option.

2. Waikanae River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]

2.1 Otaihanga Domain stopbank

This item is reported in detail as a separate report in this order paper. In summary the necessary Resource Consents have been lodged with Greater Wellington and Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC). A report has also been prepared for KCDC's Finance, Operations and Property Committee meeting on 15 April 2003 seeking their approval as landowner. Detailed design and tendering is now underway with a contract expected to be let by the end of the financial year.

2.2 Friends of the Waikanae River

A Friends meeting was held on 5 March 2003. An outline of Council's activities over the next few months was given to the group to ensure they were fully informed of any proposed river works. It would appear that the current Chairman and Secretary will step down at the next AGM and we are assisting the group with the planning for their replacements.

2.3 Gravel extraction

Gravel extraction has started in the lower reaches of the Waikanae River under the new extraction consent. Approximately 800m³ has been extracted from the tidal reach and 1200m³ from the Pukekawa reach. We anticipate extracting another 2000m³ from the Pukekawa reach in May 2003.

2.4 Pukekawa Reserve

Work has started on the design of landscape improvements in the Pukekawa Reserve, and at the end of Greenaway Road. Work proposed includes bollards at the end of Greenaway Road to stop vehicle access into the river, improvements to the existing riverside parking area and relocating a section of the riverside walkway. We will also look at how to incorporate the former Jennifer Gibbons property into the Reserve and the reinstatement required around the old ponds, which were filled in to eradicate the eel grass infestation.

3. Otaki River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]

3.1 Friends of the Otaki River

No meetings of the group have been held since the last report. The Friends have started planning their Care Group project for next financial year. The project will entail weed clearing and native planting at the lagoon mouth to add to the work already undertaken by Council.

3.2 Stresscrete protection works

The final design for the Stresscrete extension works has been completed and construction commenced. Work is expected to be completed within budget by Easter.

3.3 Flood hazard mapping

The flood hazard maps for Otaki and Waikanae have now been completed and handed over to KCDC for them to use in the plan change consultation. The next major input from GWRC staff will be responding to the outcomes of the consultation process, although work is continuing on a report to document the mapping exercise.

4. Hutt River floodplain management [Daya Atapattu]

4.1 Ava to Ewen project

We are making slow progress with the Strand Park land transfer process. The negotiations should come to a head in mid April 2003 when Ministry of Education representatives seek Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) approval of the proposed land transfer process. If LINZ approves the proposed process, we expect to appoint the contractor within a month and complete the land transfer before the end of June 2003. If LINZ requires a different route under the Public Works Act, it may take more than six months to complete the transfer and the appointment of the contractor will be delayed. Such a delay will result in the completion of the Strand Park River realignment being delayed by one year.

We are pleased to report that Tranz Rail management has now signed the Memorandum of Understanding, which records the agreed waterway improvement works for the Ava Railway Bridge. The design of these improvements is programmed to commence in the 2004/05 financial year.

Discussions with Hutt City Council to prepare the cost sharing arrangements for the Opahu Stream pumping station and associated works is progressing well. Our aim is to present the proposed agreement to the Landcare Committee in July 2003.

4.2 Belmont improvements

We had a successful community meeting on 13 March 2003 at Belmont to discuss the proposed flood protection improvements for the Belmont area. Those present at the meeting were happy with the proposed edge protections design. A draft consent application for the proposed edge protections and associated environmental enhancement works is currently out for consultation.

We expect to lodge the consent application in early June 2003. The community and stakeholders will have further opportunity to make submissions through the formal resource consent process. The construction works are programmed for the 2003/04 financial year, although there is a possibility construction could be delayed by a shortage of reasonably priced rock.

We have made further progress with resolving the Belmont encroachment issues to the satisfaction of both the Council and residents. Significant unauthorised improvements at two sites have been removed. A licence has now been issued for one of the two significant encroachments allowed to remain. Peter O'Brien will follow up with all remaining landowners where encroachments need to be removed, early next month (May 2003).

4.3 Non-structural measures

A first draft of provisions for the Upper Hutt plan will be ready for Upper Hutt City Council officer's review by mid April 2003. Hutt City Council officers are leading the process of drafting provisions for the Hutt City Plan. It is expected that the first draft will be ready by May 2003.

Work on the six emergency enhancement projects is also progressing well. Two projects are complete and the remaining four are 75% to 90% complete.

5. Porirua Stream

5.1 Findlay Street

We have received a preliminary draft of the Kingett Michell Limited ecological assessment report. Some of the field data was not available to be included in this preliminary draft. However a couple of the report findings that stand out from an initial read were:

- A number of inanga were found in the slow moving section of the stream from the footbridges upstream. While the stream itself has only 'moderate' ecological values, the combination of slow water speeds, cobble stream bed and good riparian vegetation gives this section of the stream "relatively high" fishery values, when compared to adjacent reaches.
- Some of the ecological values mentioned above will be lost with the proposed realignment due to a change in the bed substrate, and a loss of the relatively long slow moving section of stream.

The report requires completing and further study before some final conclusions can be made. In particular, mitigation options will need some further thought.

5.2 Seton Nossiter safety review

Our consultant advisors, DamWatch Services Limited, are still heavily engaged with a number of other projects. We have now been advised the report will not be available until May.

6. Planning and development services [Phillip Purves]

The following summarises the formal, written requests for information or advice attended to during February and March 2003:

| | February and March 2003 | YTD |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----|
| Requests brought forward | 14 | 13 |
| Additional requests received | 35 | 136 |
| Responses provided | 22 | 122 |
| Outstanding requests | 27 | 27 |

6.1 Waitohu flood hazard assessment

We are making good progress with this project. The survey contract (which is a major component of the 2002/03 programme) is behind the agreed completion date, but the survey results are expected to be available by mid April. The hydrological analysis (which has been peer reviewed) is also essentially complete and we should be ready for a concentrated effort on the hydraulic modelling component to begin in May. The hydraulic component is to be done in-house and this part of the work programme fits well with other staff commitments. Good progress has been made on the historical research component, so that overall the flood hazard assessment is expected to be close to complete by 30 June 2003.

7. Operations

7.1 Wellington [Jeff Evans]

Hutt River

Work has been completed on both the Owen Street and Belmont rock line extensions. A total of 1250 tonnes of rock was placed. We are currently unable to source the 2250 tonnes of rock rip-rap needed to complete scheduled maintenance. Most of the rock supply quarries in the lower North Island are having trouble either supplying rock to specification or meeting the current high demand. However we hope to get the required rock by the end of June.

We have demolished the buildings that were encroaching on Council land at 2 Mudie Street in Alicetown. A new fence has been erected to clearly define the boundary. Staff have also filled in the swimming pool at 76 Owen Street which was also encroaching on Council land.

Cross-blading has been carried out in the lower river at Belmont and Avalon to protect eroding bank edges and to correct the channel alignment.

Hutt River trail

Minor maintenance work completed over the period includes weed spraying and repairs to the retaining walls and culverts through the Taita George section of the trail.

Hutt River ranging service

Patrolling and surveillance has been provided most weekends and during the week. During the recent hot weather the river was extremely busy with a huge upsurge in users swimming, walking and picnicking. The Ranger presented two talks to schoolchildren over this period, at Belmont School and Hutt Central School.

There have been a number of events along the river; More FM held a raft race, which attracted 250 participants. A drive in movie was held at Avalon and various harrier and walking club events were held along the trail with the largest being the Aurora harrier club of Petone which held a marathon, half marathon and a 10-kilometre walk.

Watercourses

We have started the extraction of excess gravel from the Porirua city centre reach of the Porirua Stream. There are approximately 4,600 cubic metres of gravel to be removed from the streambed over the next two financial years.

The improvements to the Waiwhetu Stream floodway behind Griffins and up to Hayward Terrace are complete. Overhanging and dangerous trees have been removed, and the area opened up for vehicle access and future maintenance.

Work for other departments

Vandals caused extensive damage to the Resource Investigations Department's Waikanae River recorder site. Repairs are underway.

7.2 Kapiti [Garry Baker]

Otaki River

We have commenced stripping of vegetation and gravel extraction on the Soil Conservation Reserve portion of Mangahanene Island. This will widen the channel, reduce flood levels, and relieve pressure on the right bank toe rock-line. We consulted representatives from both the Katihiku X Trust and the Logan Whanau before commencing this work.

We completed a section of crossblading against the left bank below the State Highway Bridge, in conjunction with some channel diversion work under the road and rail bridges.

Waikanae River

Due to the current “low flows” in the Waikanae River, a variation to the lower river gravel extraction consent is being sought to allow a change of methodology in the Pukekawa Reserve reach. We want all the beaches above water level to be extracted on a continuous basis in the reach. This will eliminate the need to extract from the active channel, greatly reducing sedimentation and thereby protecting the fishery. In agreeing to this variation, the Department of Conservation has commended Flood Protection’s proactive approach to reducing the effects on the native fishery in the Waikanae River.

Watercourses

The Waitohu Stream mouth was realigned, following notification that it had met two “triggers”, as set out in the Regional Coastal Plan.

7.3 Operations support [Steve Murphy]

Waiwhetu Stream

The Environment Committee have approved the renewal of our resource consent to apply diquat to the Waiwhetu Stream. Considerable work went in to the application to clearly explain the weed management problems in the Waiwhetu Stream. While the emphasis remains on manual clearing, there is the need to spray on occasions. Only one objection to the proposal was received and this was later withdrawn after discussion, consequently no hearing was required.

Preparation of a resource consent application to carry out a weed spraying trial in the Waiwhetu using glyphosate is underway. There is some hope that glyphosate (Roundup GII) will actually eradicate the major pest weed, Cape Pondweed, by killing it’s root system. Diquat on the other hand, simply defoliates the plant, which quickly regrows.

Asset management

Steve Murphy has now “picked up” the responsibility for running the Flood Protection asset management system. The key areas he will be working on between now and year-end are updating the asset register, ensuring the necessary monitoring work is underway, and generally checking all the required documentation is up to date and in the right place.

Geoff Dick
Manager, Flood Protection