

# **Flood Protection Manager's report for period ending 02 September 2004**

## **1. Manager's comments**

### **1.1 Southerly storm - 16-19 August 2004**

The fierce southerly storm that hit Wellington over 4 days last week caused only minor problems in the rivers and streams managed by Flood Protection.

The storm brought heavy rain to the lower Hutt Valley, Wainuiomata and Orongorongo catchments (like February 2004). 196mm fell in 24 hours at Birch Lane (Lower Hutt) and 220mm at the Orongorongo Swamp gauge. Not surprisingly, the largest return period flows again occurred in the Waiwhetu Stream (4 year) and Wainuiomata River (about 5 year). The flow in the Waiwhetu Stream, while substantially less than February 2004, was sufficient to cause a precautionary evacuation of houses at Hayward Terrace and Riverside Drive south.

The southerly storm caused some minor damage to recent works and plantings in the Wainuiomata River and blew down some trees in the Takapu Stream. An area of wind thrown trees in the Korokoro Stream is being inspected to see if it poses any risk to the debris arrestor.

### **1.2 Bay of Plenty Flood Emergency**

Phil Purves has been seconded to Environment Bay of Plenty for a week (23-27 August) to assist with processing some of the regulatory enquiries (house floor levels etc) that have stacked up while EBOP staff deal with the aftermath of the flood disaster. It is possible Phil will be required for a second week at a later date.

Following the February emergency in the Manawatu Region it quickly became apparent that the best staff resources to back up the authority having to cope with the emergency were likely to be from neighbouring Regional Councils. Hawkes Bay and Greater Wellington staff assisted with the Manawatu emergency, and similarly staff from Waikato, Hawkes Bay and Greater Wellington are pitching in to help with the recent Bay of Plenty flood. A protocol for formalising assistance procedures is being prepared by the River Managers group.

## **2. Waikanae River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]**

### **2.1 Friends of the Waikanae River Inc.**

The Friends recently wrote to the Council Chairperson expressing concern about the damage the gravel extraction operation is doing to the south bank walkway, upstream of Otaihangā. Our gravel extraction contractor, Gary Holland Earthmoving, uses the south bank as the haul route for the extraction operation. Parts of the haul route are not properly "formed" road and this has led to large mud holes and heavy rutting. The current walking track follows the haul road, hence the concerns about its condition.

The gravel extraction is due to recommence in December. There are a number of options to avoid the haul road/walk track conflict including opening up a new walk track separate from the haul route and forming a proper metal haul road. A meeting with the Waikanae Friends is scheduled on 25 August to discuss the various solutions.

## **2.2 Jim Cooke Park realignment**

A surveyor has been commissioned to prepare a survey office plan for the land to be purchased from Woodleigh Stud.

Meetings have been held with the Iwi, DOC and the Friends to introduce the three design options that have been prepared for the realignment. The three groups have all indicated a preference for the option that proposes rock groynes to form the bank protection rather than longitudinal rock walls. Discussions are continuing, and these views will be incorporated into the design process.

## **3. Otaki River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]**

### **3.1 Friends of the Otaki River**

The Friends held a meeting on 28 July 2004. No matters of significance to Greater Wellington arose. The group is in the final stages of completing their application to become an incorporated society with Kerry Hoggard, the past Chairman of the Kapiti Floodplain Management Committee assisting in this area.

### **3.2 Flood hazard mapping**

The Kapiti Coast District Plan change was notified on 19 August 2004. Submissions close on 30 September 2004.

## **4. Hutt River floodplain management [Daya Atapattu]**

### **4.1 Ava to Ewen project**

Rock placement work in Strand Park River realignment contract is scheduled to commence in the first week of September 2004. Cashmore Contracting Ltd (CCL) has now fenced off the work areas on both banks. Clearing of vegetation on both banks will start by the end of August 2004. Rock delivery to site is now proceeding as planned by the contractor. 3500 tonnes were delivered to stockpile by the beginning of August 2004. CCL expects to build a 5000 tonnes stockpile by the end of August 2004.

### **4.2 Belmont works**

We are currently investigating options to further refine the flooding and erosion hazard for Belmont. We are also working with HCC officers to draft District Plan rules to deal with any remaining flooding and erosion risk. We expect to present outcomes of our investigations to the Belmont Community at a public meeting on 2 September before recommending options to the September 2004, Hutt River Advisory Committee.

## 5. Planning and development services [Phillip Purves]

The following summarises the formal, written requests for information or advice attended to during July 2004:

|                              | July 2004 | YTD |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Requests brought forward     | 16        | 16  |
| Additional requests received | 22        | 22  |
| Responses provided           | 29        | 29  |
| Outstanding requests         | 9         | 9   |

*Property Insight* have asked Council to provide all its flood hazard data so that the company can provide a comprehensive, one-stop property information service. Property Insight describes itself as a web-based information portal where cost effective hazard information (and associated educational material) for an individual property can be purchased.

Provision of this data to Property Insight would be free, in terms of Council's recently established licence agreement for the supply of data. Property Insight intends to add value to the data by reformatting the information into a form suitable for the flooding module of its hazard report. There are, however, a number of issues that need to be worked through before the data is released.

## 6. Investigations [Phillip Purves]

### 6.1 Waiwhetu Stream floodplain management study

Scoping of the proposed Waiwhetu Stream flood hazard investigation is nearing completion. The draft scope report has been presented to Hutt City Council officers, who have suggested some minor amendments only. It is planned to present the report to the Committee in November 2004.

In the meantime the opportunity has been taken to commission an aerial laser survey, while the equipment is available in New Zealand. This will ensure that the necessary ground data will be available for the study to commence this financial year.

### 6.2 Waitohu flood hazard assessment

Work is continuing on the collation of the consultation feedback in preparation for a further newsletter and writing the summary report.

### 6.3 Mangaroa River flood hazard assessment

The Mangaroa River flood hazard assessment is programmed to commence in this year. Scoping of this two-year capital funded investigation has commenced, in order to determine the physical extent of the project and the best mix of staff and consultant input.

## **7. Operations**

### **7.1 Wellington [Jeff Evans]**

#### **Hutt River**

With the days now starting to get longer, and spring rapidly approaching, the planting season is in full swing on the Hutt River. Staff have been kept busy preparing sites for planting then following up with infill planting of both rooted willows, and 5 meter poles along the river edges.

This year's planting programme also has a strong emphasis on willow rejuvenation work. Some of the older willow stands have died, or are very fragile (see Asset Monitoring Report for details). Willow stock is being cut from the healthy existing stands and replanted in the areas requiring renewal.

A maintenance audit of all the flood gates and debris arrestors is now under way. This will help determine any maintenance requirements we may have for the coming year.

#### **Hutt River trail**

Maintenance of the trail over this period has largely consisted of debris clearing and drainage work for water run off. Some weed spraying has also been undertaken.

#### **Hutt River ranging services**

We held three very successful school planting days over the last month. Two hundred children planted a total of 500 plants over a three-day period. It is great to see both the teachers and the children taking pride and ownership of the planting areas. A river information pack and a native seedling was given to each child at the completion of planting.

Extensive damage caused by misused vehicles was done to both the berms and stop banks in the Taita and Pomare areas. In conjunction with the Lower Hutt Police we have followed up on several vehicles which members of the public had reported as causing the damage. We have now further restricted vehicle access along the Taita berms with concrete blocks, to minimise any further damage in the interim, until a more permanent solution can be found.

#### **Watercourses**

Willow planting in the Wainuiomata River is now complete for this financial year. This planting will continue over the next two years to re-establish healthy willow stands following the damage caused by the February floods.

New flood height level markers are being installed at the Seton Nossiter Dam. These are much larger than the existing ones so they can be monitored from a distance.

Work has also been undertaken on the Korokoro debris arrestor. Several of the crossbars have been replaced and rock riprap has been install along the edges to stop lateral erosion.

## 7.2 Kapiti [Garry Baker]

### General

July saw the annual willow and poplar planting programme on the Kapiti Coast get underway in earnest. Planting is complete on the Otaki River banks and berms, and a start has been made on the Waikanae River which should be completed by mid-August. Extra plants have been purchased to infill our nursery on the Otaki River. Many of the original nursery plantings of the early 1990's are now "past their useful life" and are being replaced with new stock.

Annual resource consent reports have been completed for the major Kapiti waterways. The reports highlight some interesting statistics about "just how wet was it in 2003/04?" Stage flow and height readings supplied by, Resource Information) show that there were a significant number of flood "events" last year:

#### *Otaki River:*

- <5-year 1 day
- 2 to 4 year 2 days
- 1 to 2-year 14 days
- 4.00 - 4.50 m 8 days

#### *Waikanae River*

- <5-year 2 days
- 2 to 4-year 4 days
- 1 to 2-year 6 days
- 3.00 - 3.20 m 10 days

From an operations and maintenance perspective, 2003/04 was an "above average" year for rainfall and flood events. We are looking forward to this coming year being a "below average" year, but then, that could be tempting fate.

#### *Waimeha Stream*

The Waimeha Stream outlet was realigned following heavy seas and high tides eroding the northern sand dunes.

## 7.3 Operations Support [Steve Murphy]

### Asset Management

The period just past has been a busy one in the asset management area.

A reciprocal peer review of Kapiti flood protection assets has been carried out in conjunction with the Wairarapa Rivers Management staff. These reviews bring an independent professional view point to a situation. Their report concludes that Otaki and Waikanae assets are being correctly maintained.

With the physical inspections completed, work has turned to analysis of the data, and the preparation of the annual Asset Management Report 04.508 in this order paper.

## Health and Safety

A 'wind shift' has occurred in Greater Wellington's corporate approach to Health and Safety. Previous practice for many years saw each department responsible for their own H&S systems. Employment Relations are now taking a co-ordinating role across Council. Jacky Cox, Assistant Engineer, is a divisional representative on the Corporate Health & Safety Advisory Group and is directly involved in this change.

In Flood Protection we have set the H&S objectives for the coming year. These include quarterly H&S meetings with all operational staff as well as meetings for office staff. Routine work such as audits, and task assessments will also continue.

## Makara Stream Mouth

The protocols for cutting the mouth of the Makara Stream have been advised to the Makara Residents Association. A gauge board has been installed at the mouth, and indicates when the water level in the estuary is such that a mouth cut is appropriate and complies with the Regional Coastal Plan.

## 7.4 Gravel extraction

Gravel extraction figures to the end of July 2004 are set out below.

| River         | Area                    | Contractor                  | Period<br>Year 2004/05<br>(cubic metres) |              | Year<br>2003/04<br>(cubic metres) |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--------------|-----------------------------------|
|               |                         |                             | Period                                   | Year         | Full Year                         |
| Hutt          | Estuary                 | Winstones                   | 3,990                                    | 3,990        | 40,698                            |
|               | River                   | Horokiwi                    | 0  | 0            | 10,380                            |
| Otaki         | River                   | Winstones                   | 0  | 0            | 28,088                            |
| Waikanae      | Above<br>Greenaway Road | Various                     | 0  | 0            | 0                                 |
|               | Below<br>Greenaway Road | Gary Holland<br>Earthmoving | 0  | 0            | 7,310                             |
| <b>TOTALS</b> |                         |                             | <b>3,990</b>                             | <b>3,990</b> | <b>86,476</b>                     |

**Geoff Dick**  
Manager, Flood Protection

# Parks and Forests Manager's report for period ending 2 September 2004

## 1. Manager's comments [Murray Waititi]

### 1.1 Conservation Week

Conservation Week has been celebrated in the first week of August each year since 1969. It is a week of activities and action for the environment co-ordinated nationally by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Conservation Week activities are organised by local DOC offices in association with a wide range of agencies and groups including Iwi, regional and city councils, schools, conservation organisations, churches, and corporate sponsors.

The theme this year was "Conservation in the Community". In keeping with this theme, Parks and Forests had a display in the Wellington Cathedral of St. Paul that highlighted how the regional community is involved in conservation in the regional parks. The display was also temporarily moved to Parliament Buildings for the Conservation Awards ceremony. The Wellington Conservancy of DoC do a great job locally and Conservation Week is an annual highlight for all of us who work in the field.

#### Wellington Conservation Awards

Each year the Minister of Conservation presents the Wellington Conservation Awards. The awards are designed to recognise sustained commitment by an organisation or individual to a project involving voluntary effort and/or community involvement with a positive conservation outcome. It is hoped that by highlighting the efforts of conservation champions in our communities, we can help to inspire others to become involved in worthwhile conservation projects.

The highlight of the recent Conservation Week was undoubtedly the honouring of Robin Maud and the Combined Hutt Valley Rotary Clubs' work on the Hutt River Trail. Nominated by Parks & Forests in the recreation category, the award recognised the Rotary Clubs' efforts from their initial planning, securing co-operation and funding, and final implementation (constructing bridges, signs and seats and planting trees).

Other individuals or community groups that Parks and Forests are regularly involved with that had their efforts recognised by receiving an award were:

- *Daphne Steele* for leading statutory and community advocacy to protect the amenity and unique character of the Kapiti coast over the last 14 years;
- *Plateau School* for the ecological restoration and enhancement of the immediate and wider school environment, including riparian margins with significant integration with local community ecological projects

### 1.2 Inappropriate Behaviour at Queen Elizabeth Park

Matt Ballantine, Chris Muller and I met with local Kapiti Coast Police to discuss an indecent act that occurred within the park and to formulate an action plan that would deter that kind of behaviour from reoccurring in the Park in the future.

The Police were careful to emphasise to us that they believe QEP is a safe place for the public to recreate in and that incidents of this kind are rare in the park. In response to the incident, we have increased our regular monitoring of at risk areas, and intend to redesign these areas to make acts of inappropriate behaviour harder to commit.

## **2. Planning and policy [Dr Philippa Crisp]**

### **2.1 Capital works projects [Graham Laws]**

QEP Ranger's office designed

The architect has designed the new Ranger's office at MacKays Crossing, Queen Elizabeth Park. Tenders will be sought in August with construction planned to start in November.

### **2.2 Pest Control**

A further cull of pigs in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo water collection area has been completed, resulting in the removal of another seventeen animals. Pampas has been sprayed and/or cut in Queen Elizabeth Park and buddleia cutting is continuing in along George's Creek in the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo water collection area.

### **2.3 Monitoring**

Rata digital photography and foliage browse assessments have been completed in both the Hutt and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo water collection area. Hinau fruitfall plots were also re-measured in both areas. A marked fall-off in the number of possum-browsed hinau berries was recorded in the Hutt catchment (11% in 2004, as opposed to 95% of the fruit in 2003). This is because of the lowered possum numbers in the area as a result of the 1080 possum control operation completed last year.

Jaap Knegtman (Environmental Ranger) and Simon Griffin (Eastern Mobile Ranger) have completed the last re-measurement of the foredune trial plots in Queen Elizabeth Park. There are three trial plots in place on the dunes: one on the foredune and two in the backdunes. The foredune trial was designed to assess the effect of fencing and fertiliser use on the growth of spinifex and pingao. We will advise the Committee of the outcome of this trial once the data is analysed.

## **3. Planning and policy**

### **3.1 Planning and Policy**

The planning and policy team are currently recruiting a new staff member, as Victoria Owen has left her position with the Parks and Forests team to take up a role at Housing Corporation, New Zealand. She has made a major contribution to parks and forests planning in her time here, especially in her work in developing the Regional Parks Network Management Plan and drafting the Belmont Park Management Plan. We wish her all the best for the future.



## **4. Marketing and design [Amanda Cox]**

### **4.1 Brochures**

Over the past few weeks we have completed a “Farm Visits” brochure for Battle Hill Farm Forest Park. This is aimed at early childhood and school teachers, and encourages them to take groups of children to the park for an introduction to a working farm. Judging by the numerous thank you letters the children write to the ranger, the visits are very popular.

A brochure promoting The Big Coast event has been developed, and the event organisers will be distributing it throughout the country via Mongoose cycle outlets. We are optimistic that our support for this event will give it an even stronger following amongst both locals and visitors to the region.

Our listing in the 2005 Wellington Official Visitor Guide is confirmed. 180,000 copies of this booklet will be distributed in New Zealand and overseas. Now that the visitor guide includes information on the Hutt Valley, it is even more important that the regional parks are included in this publication.

### **4.3 Information boards**

Apart from the one at MacKays Crossing, all information boards at Queen Elizabeth Park have been erected. The East Harbour boards are being gradually installed over the next month and should be in place by the end of September. Feedback on the new information boards has been very positive.

We have developed maps and narrative for two information panels at the Wainuiomata Recreation Area, which should enhance the visitor experiences there. They will include information on the guided walking tours in the Wainuiomata Water Collection Area, and help to answer questions and direct further enquiries.

### **4.4 Parks research framework**

Tourism Resource Consultants have started their review of relevant park visitation, awareness and satisfaction research, as well as the methodologies used by other agencies in similar situations as us. They will present a summary of this information and first thoughts on a draft framework to a meeting of staff in mid-September.

### **4.5 Regional Outdoors Programme**

Discussions are starting with potential partners on event ideas for the programme, which will run from January to March 2005. A meeting of staff in early September will be an opportunity for everyone to contribute their thoughts on how we should keep the programme fresh and inviting.

### **4.6 Landscape projects**

Planning is underway to confirm the range and timing of projects to be carried out this year. Annabel Riley has recently done some sketch drawings for a viewing area at the Korokoro Dam.

## **4.7 Volunteer Co-ordination**

### **Friends of Belmont Regional Park**

Tourism Resource Consultants met with the Friends at their recent monthly meeting to discuss recreation in the Park. This is part of the background research into potential windfarm sites commissioned by Murray Kennedy.

During the meeting the Friends also tabled a brochure they have developed on birds in Belmont Regional Park. This is the second of a series they wish to produce on different park topics. Staff provided technical information but the initiative for the brochures came from the Friends who are keen to see more educational material on the Park.

Forty people attended a Friends revegetation planting near the environmental education trail in Stratton Street on Sunday August 25. The 450 plants went in very quickly and an enjoyable sausage sizzle followed.

### **Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park**

Cr Chris Turver addressed the Friends monthly meeting on July 19, and along with Parks staff, discussed the Friends' role and the management planning process in the Park. The Friends have formed two sub-committees; one to look at items they would like included in a management plan submission and the other to plan the riparian project for which they recently received support from Council.

### **Planting at Queen Elizabeth Park and Battle Hill**

Two successful plantings have taken place at the Park recently involving the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park and park supporters. 500 Spinifex were planted by 15 people on an eroding foredune near Raumati while 20 attended a planting at the "Pickle Pot" near Paekakariki to plant toetoe and Ngaio trees.

At Battle Hill, 200 plants were planted in the Streamside Paddock by a hardy group of ten people in very wet conditions on July 17. A good number of plants were put in the ground in what will be a great picnic and camping spot in years to come as well as helping to improve the quality of the stream. Interestingly the newspaper articles and publicity as a result of this planting has generated a number of enquiries for future events. Another planting is planned for September and hopefully conditions will be a little kinder.

## **5. Western sector [Matt Ballantine]**

### **5.1 Battle Hill Farm Forest Park**

With visitor numbers down during the colder weather it has been a good opportunity for staff to get stuck into projects and maintenance work. This has included pest animal control work on mainly goats and possums, and "drilling and filling" willow and holly trees prior to restoration plantings commencing.

The cleanup following the two big storm events of the last financial year has now been completed with specimen trees being planted to replace those lost during the storms.

With a good wet planting season in full swing, staff have been getting a lot of plants in the ground on the park. Areas planted include the swampy gully wetlands, the front paddocks riparian site, a flax planting in the bush reserve and gap filling around other planting sites.

The replacement of the old cattle yards is nearly complete which will make a big difference to the smooth running of the farming operation on the park.

Two new tracks have been marked to assist park visitors in making the most of the different recreation and scenic opportunities in the park. The 'wetlands walk' takes people past the new wetland areas that have been created over the last two years. One of these new wetland areas is in Swampy Gully paddock, which will become even more scenic as the new plantings take hold. The second trail takes people past one of the wetlands and then up on to the Gasline Ridge for views of Transmission Gully. It then swings back towards the woolshed past a seep area and through a riparian streamside planting. New signs are already in place along these routes, which gives park users the opportunity to learn as they go.

Park Ranger, John Bissell attended a meeting of the Plimmerton Rotary Club as the guest speaker. John talked about what his job involved and touched on some of the sides of the job that visitors don't see. People were amazed and amused at John's stories of people wandering into his house to use the toilet, television and shower. He also talked about the more rewarding side of the job such as working with people, education groups and conservation. John also took the opportunity to thank the members for the way that they have run the Food and Farm Festival and reiterated that Greater Wellington was keen to continue its support of community initiatives such as this.

## **5.2 Belmont Regional Park**

Contractors were required to clear further tree falls in the Korokoro Valley that had blocked tracks in the area. Parts of the old pine block in the area remain susceptible to falling during periods of high winds. Contractors have concentrated on making the area safe as well as reopening tracks to minimise inconvenience to park users.

We have installed an automatic security gate at the Hill Road entrance to the park in response to Landcorp concerns about security for their farm and staff in the area. The gate will be fully operational next month and will assist in controlling after-hour access to the Hill Road carpark and farm area. In one incident recently, the police were called after a Landcorp farm employee was threatened near his residence.

The Landcorp block is closed for lambing from 16 August to 16 October this year. We have signposted various park entry points as well as publishing public notices to make park users aware of this temporary closure to part of the park.

Two orienteering events utilised parts of the park. A mountain bike orienteering event was based at the Stratton Street woolshed classroom facility and riders negotiated various waypoints from this area through farmland. This was a successful event with over twenty participants. The organisers were pleased with the turnout given the event was held in very bleak weather conditions. The second orienteering event was the "City Safari" which began in Lower Hutt. It was unusual in that participants were able to use public transport in order to get to various waypoints. The orienteering course extended into Belmont Regional Park and again the organisers were confident that it would become a regular orienteering event.

The annual Belmont Scouts camp was held at Dry Creek in frosty conditions, and the Take Action programme have been utilising the woolshed classroom with a number of schools going through over the period.

The police held a training exercise between Stratton Street and Dry Creek entry points to the park during August.

### **5.3 Queen Elizabeth Park**

Several meetings were attended with various organisations including the Friends of the Park group, Eventing Wellington, Te Ra school and the Raumati South Residents Association. Rangers have also attended meetings with local Iwi and Heritage experts to discuss proposals regarding the Whareroa Pa site and stream.

Recent events held include a planting day at the 'Pickle Pot' at the Paekakariki end of the park. An 'Adopt a Dune' theme was used for this planting with the concept that volunteers would feel some ownership for the area and therefore be more willing to return for further plantings or releasing days.

Eventing Wellington also held a show jumping event in mid-August.

As usual this time of year, we are continuing tree planting, releasing and preparation of planting sites. Other maintenance in the park recently has included fencing, weed control and animal pest control.

The Southern lease block boundary fence has been replaced as has the Wainui stream flood gate that is on the southeastern park boundary. The new Tilly road track that has been developed to link Tilly road to the Wainui stream walk has also been fenced off so that planting can be undertaken.

Gorse control along MacKays road has been carried out and the variegated thistles on the Lease blocks have been sprayed. This year's efforts by the Taskforce green team have just come to an end and it should be noted that they have made an excellent contribution to weed control in the park – particularly with boneseed seedlings and hawthorns.

Animal pest control continues with a combination of trapping, bait stations and spotlighting been used to target possums and rabbits. Possum numbers are relatively low throughout the coastal dune remnants – a good sign. However, rabbit numbers are picking up again after been knocked back earlier in the year. Planning is also underway to start targeting mustelids and rodents.

## **6. Eastern sector [Fraser Oliver]**

### **6.1 Akatarawa/Pakuratahi Forest**

#### **Akatarawa Forest**

Heavy vehicle use, poor weather conditions, an old log culvert that failed on Rimu Road and several small slips on Clearys road all combined make it necessary to have a 12 tonne digger do road maintenance. Maintenance was carried out from Bulls Run Road at the southern point through to Valley View forest on the north-eastern side.

Inmates have done vegetation maintenance cutbacks throughout the Cannon Point Walkway and Birchville Dam areas clearing several small slips and wind thrown trees off the walking track.

There were nine four wheel drive club days, three quad motorcycle event days, two army exercises and two driver training exercises held.

#### **Pakuratahi Forest**

Good progress has been made on the damage-prone watertables along the Rimutaka Incline walkway with watertables being cleared of all the debris and sludge that has accumulated. This is generally required to be done biannually.

Removal of the wind thrown logs that are stacked along the walkway formation after the February storms is progressing well. The logs have been sold to a local firewood merchant.

Inmates have been busy filling and compacting potholes on the entire 9kms of the Rimutaka Incline Walkway. We have also graded the road from Maymorn to Tunnel Gully and re-metalled the well-used Maymorn tunnel surface.

Ongoing patrolling, co-ordinating maintenance contractors and liaison with recreational users on the Rimutaka Incline and Tunnel Gully areas continues. No consented events were held in the forest, however, public use of recreational areas has been consistent this period.

## **6.2 Kaitoke Regional Park**

The Landscape work crew has been bark mulching the campground area and tidying the amenity plantings in readiness for the upcoming summer season. Inmates have been clearing gorse in the campground.

The Berkett lease at Te Marua has been re-negotiated setting aside an area to be planted to link two bush remnants.

Big House Ltd did a days filming for a film promotion.

Steve Edwards, the Ranger, gave a presentation to the Upper Hutt Probus club on the Parks and Forests network and ranging duties at Kaitoke Regional Park. He also showed 80 musicians from New York being hosted by rotary around the park.

## **6.3 Wainuiomata/Orongorongo**

The Ranger provided a Greater Wellington display at a recent Rimutaka Forest Park open day for the public. The day was informative with DOC, Landcare Research and other Greater Wellington displays on show. A school planting day was also held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August. Local children planted over 200 plants near the front carpark area.

A recent run of bad weather brought down a number of trees on the Orongorongo access road. These were cut up and cleared for access. Recent maintenance to the road has settled and all culverts are clear enabling the road to cope with large amounts of rain and surface water. The Catchment tour planned for July was, however, cancelled due to predicted bad weather on the day. High winds and heavy rain were forecast and the safety of staff and tour participants is our main priority. The following day a tree fell across the tunnel road.

The contracted pig hunter came across the decomposing body of a large pig in the Skull Gully watercourse. The carcass was removed from the water with assistance from with the ranger.

## **6.4 East Harbour Regional Park**

The huge effort put in by the construction team over the past six months has meant that the vast majority of structures throughout the park now meet building industry standards.

The Tracks Team has completed clearing vegetation on tracks on the eastern bays side of the park, and are now focussing on the Wainuiomata side. Track vegetation clearing has been completed on the Rata Ridge, Zig Zag, Fern Gully and Lees Grove tracks. A contractor has completed clearing work using a machine on the Rata ridge track. A steep section has been re-routed making the track much more user friendly.

There is some way to go but all in all the East Harbour Regional Park track network has seen considerable improvements.

All new entrance and internal directional signs have now been manufactured and the Construction Team has been busy mounting all this material on to posts. Completed units have been carried out into the field (not the best way to enjoy the great outdoors) and a few have already been installed. The new signage will be a great asset to a regional park where getting lost has become an art form. The key goal for the winter months within East Harbour is to get the signs installed before summer. Together with the upgrade of the tracks and structures this will make a visit all the more enjoyable, particularly for visitors from further afield.

Ranger Gareth Cooper has continued to deal with numerous public inquiries and issues regarding the park, the park boundaries and sometimes things nowhere near the park! Gareth is continuing to liaise with, and where possible support, the needs of park interest groups such as MIRO. This community group in particular, which initially started the environmental work in the area, is making a good effort to work along side Greater Wellington with the objective of improving biodiversity within the park.

Hutt Valley Orienteering Club utilised tracks in the Lowry Bay area of the park for one of their events.

**Murray Waititi**  
Manager, Parks and Forests