



Report 08.727
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Committee Catchment Management
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Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress and any matters that have arisen since the previous meeting held on 4 September 2008.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The Departmental Managers' reports are attached.

4. Divisional matters

4.1 Resignation

I have resigned from my position of Divisional Manager, Catchment management with my last day being 28 November 2008. The decision to stand down is for personal reasons including time out to catch up with some of my own projects, and a desire to begin the move back to the South Island.

My decision was not easy. The last two and a half years, while challenging and demanding, have been immensely interesting and great experience. During this time the Division has been formed, a huge range of issues dealt with, and steady progress made towards implementation of the "whole of catchment" approach. I've really enjoyed working with our Masterton based staff and getting to know the Wairarapa better.

From December I will be based in GW's Wellington office and have agreed to help with preparing the Greater Wellington's LTCCP. April and May have been blocked out in the diary for a bit of extended R & R which will do the body and soul a hell of a lot of good.

4.2 Upper Ruamahanga and Waipoua consent compliance

Our Wairarapa based river management staff completed a very busy works programme in the various Ruamahanga river schemes last year. In the Upper Ruamahanga and Waipoua Rivers it appears we were somewhat too enthusiastic and exceeded our resource consent conditions for in-channel works.

Our 2007/08 consent compliance returns for the Upper Ruamahanga were for 1120 metres of channel realignment and bed recontouring works as against a permitted 1000 metres, and 380 metres in the Waipoua against a permitted 300 metres. An infringement notice of \$500 for breaching the Upper Ruamahanga work has been received from Council's Environment Regulation Department.

The matter was brought to Council's attention after fishermen complained to Fish and Game NZ about the extent of work being done in the river. Fish and Game pursued the matter including conducting their own survey of the river. Subsequent discussion with Fish & Game has resulted in a thorough documentation of all Regional Council related river works activities including gravel extraction and beach grooming work permitted under Council's Regional Freshwater Plan.

While breaching the consent conditions is a serious matter, the big issue raised by Fish and Game is the total extent of work required to maintain our river systems and the impact this may have on fish habitat.

Since becoming aware of the matter I have put steps in place to ensure that we work within our consent conditions for this financial year and beyond. I have also asked staff to commence a review of our river management practices, and have agreed to an open discussion with Fish and Game NZ about the extent of river management works required, and potential areas for improved practice. A letter of undertaking has been sent to Fish and Game in this regard.

4.3 Regional possum programme

The Regional possum programme concept is getting closer to when Council will need to make some important decisions following the Committee's consideration of the matter at its last meeting.

The two key decision points are:

- Adoption of the new Regional Pest Management Strategy which provides for the formation of Possum Control Zones in the region, including Bovine Tb roll-out areas.

- Affordability and funding of the programme through the Council's LTCCP process leading to the Proposed 2009 – 19 LTCCP in March next year.

A special Councillor workshop to discuss the matter is being considered. In the meantime I will be working with Wayne O'Donnell and team to look at options for a possible scaled back scheme should affordability be an issue, and also a further look at funding shares.

4.4 Upper Plains and Opaki stormwater

During wet winter periods stormwater generated in the rural outskirts of Masterton can enter the town boundaries, particularly during intense storms. The town's stormwater system is not designed to cope with this leading to flooding of houses and residential properties.

At the Upper Plains and Opaki town boundaries there are some cut-off drains and a stormwater detention dam that appear to have been originally constructed by the former Wairarapa Catchment Board.

The stormwater issue is, I believe, a Masterton District Council responsibility. However the flooding is a real issue and I have agreed to assist Masterton District Council (funding and study scope) to commission a study of the Upper Plains and Opaki areas to determine the extent of the stormwater problem, the condition and effectiveness of the current cut-off drains, their future maintenance and to have a preliminary look at options for improvements.

4.5 Communications

Our Communications team have been active on a number of fronts over the last period. Jim Flack based at Masterton office now has a good understanding of the Divisions responsibilities and key issues, and is helping out on a number of matters.

Communications led the consultation with stakeholders on improving the Lake Domain Concept Plan, and assisted with a wetland planting at the domain. 70 stakeholders helped plant 2000 wetland plants and gave valuable input on the concept plan. This is preliminary work to creating a wetland park at Lake Wairarapa, involving Greater Wellington, the Department of Conservation, the South Wairarapa District Council, and local iwi and hapu.

Jim Flack is leading discussions with 18 landowners who are requesting flood protection works in the lower Whangaimoana Stream at Palliser Bay. A landowner meeting was held in Martinborough where options for flood protection works and funding were discussed. Jim is also working with Biosecurity to put together on a communications plan to tackle the feral pig liberation issue – a real challenge requiring some creativity to be successful.

Newspaper articles were placed in Wairarapa papers regarding:

- Wetland planting and consultation on a concept plan for Lake Domain - promotion and follow up
- Stories wanted for cultural heritage study on Lake Wairarapa wetlands
- Reporting on three plantings on Makoura Stream for Conservation Week.

Newspaper articles were placed in Wellington community papers regarding:

- Rural sustainability field day at Ohariu - promotion and follow up
- Pest plant operation in Upper Hutt.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

Report prepared by:

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