

Catchment Management Division

Departmental Managers' Update
for period ending 21 August 2009

Biosecurity (Davor Bejakovich, Manager)

1. Pest Animals (Ray Clarey)

1.1 Rooks

September heralds the beginning of the rook nesting season. The aerial surveillance programme is due to commence on 16 September (weather permitting) with control operations to commence shortly thereafter. A media release has been prepared to seek information of rook sightings from the public. This appeal has been very successful in past years in disclosing new rookery sightings. Most existing rookeries now contain only a small number of birds and can be quite cryptic. There are 97 known existing or former rookery sites to check with perhaps 25% of these occupied by rooks.

Approval for control is required from the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) to conduct the baiting of nests. The application was lodged on 17 June 2009 and at the writing of this report there has been no response from the MOH. This situation is becoming critical as undue delay would adversely affect the proficiency of the proposed operation.

1.2 Rabbits

A day and night inspection was conducted at Riversdale Beach resort after concerns had been expressed about high rabbit numbers. There have been dune and amenity planting programmes over the winter months and rabbits were considered to be a threat to the successful establishment of these areas. Whilst rabbits might have been more noticeable for a time, the inspection only disclosed five rabbits sighted. It is obvious that the rabbit calicivirus disease has cycled through the area as no other control measures had been carried out to our knowledge. Rabbits were also posing a nuisance in some areas at Castlepoint but that problem has declined as well.

This is the time of year when complaints about rabbits tend to increase and some people demand that GW fix their problem. It is timely to remind landowners that rabbit control on private land has been their responsibility since 1998, prior to which some rabbit control was funded by the council. GW now only provides advice and education on rabbit management for private land, with any control provided at a cost. This RPMS rule applies to all un-covenanted areas of private land, meaning that large rural landowners in rabbit prone country may be faced with considerable rabbit control costs if the calicivirus becomes less effective.

1.3 Biosecurity contribution to the future of Pest Management Project

The Biosecurity Department is taking part in a MAF BNZ led project to design a framework for the future of pest management in New Zealand. GW is contributing an analyst, Ewan Kelsall, to the Physical Control and Monitoring Tools work stream.

The focus of this work stream is to ensure that there is a coordinated and planned approach to the development of a physical control and monitoring toolbox over time and that there are mechanisms in place to:

- Identify gaps in the toolbox
- Share information about available tools
- Ensure that learning and best practice are captured
- Ensure there is consistent application of standards relating to tool use
- Streamline regulatory approvals that ensure safe use of tools

The work stream will identify the monitoring toolbox that supports national and regional performance reporting, and research opportunities that will be taken to improve and increase the range of tools available.

The outcome of this project will have a large impact on the way pest management is undertaken in New Zealand.

1.4 Combined Hutt water catchment, Akatarawa Saddle and Kaitoke Regional Park aerial operation

The aerial baiting segment of this 11,703 hectare operation has been completed. The prefeed application at 1.2kg per hectare was carried out on Sunday 26 July and the toxic application at 2.0kg per hectare occurred twelve days later on Friday 7 August. The aerial operation went smoothly and an excellent result is expected. There were seven consecutive fine nights following the application of the toxic bait.

Observers at the aerial site included a public health officer conducting an audit, two officials from the Civil Aviation Authority also conducting an audit but on the aerial company only, two officials from the NZ Food Safety Authority (ACVM Group), the senior advisor (1080 coordination) from ERMA NZ and some GW staff not directly involved with the operation.

Rainfall subsequent to the bait drop and bait detoxification is being monitored closely in order to effect the earliest possible retake of water from the Kaitoke weir. The Medical Officer of Health is to be advised when baits have reached less than 10 mg/kg 1080, at which time a decision will be made if the water intake at the Kaitoke weir can resume.

A media release occurred at 3:00pm on the day of the toxic application advising that this part of the operation had concluded. This operation involved GW staff from Biosecurity, Parks, Water Supply and Communications.

1.5 MAF BNZ undaria submission

Biosecurity submitted on the MAF BNZ review of the undaria commercial harvest policy in New Zealand. Undaria is an exotic marine plant declared as an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act. GW is not actively involved in the surveillance or control of this species. Whilst present in the region, the full extent of the infestation is unknown.

Within the submission GW emphasized that Central Government has the responsibility for control or management of marine pest organisms and undaria. Greater Wellington has no expertise to deal with a marine pest. GW supported a precautionary approach to any lifting of restrictions on undaria utilisation until information is available which clearly demonstrates the potential economic benefits outweigh the potential impacts on the marine environment. GW acknowledged that control was no longer possible but considered that commercialisation could increase spread.

2. Pest Plants (Richard Grimmett)

2.1 Regional surveillance

The focus for pest plants surveillance this year is to complete all National Pest Plant Accord inspections (plant retailers and markets) and Total Control species delimiting surveys. The second priority is to initiate delimiting of known Surveillance species sites and further investigate cost-benefit limits for RPMS species.

2.2 Biological control

This programme has been active over many years. A number of biological control agents been released and successfully established in the region. However, some agents have been unsuccessful. The programme has evolved without the support of robust cost effective monitoring to quantify the value of the resources invested. This did not allow for effective comparison with alternative control options. A recent review of the programme indicated that a management plan that supports staff decisions on the best allocation of resources was needed. A project to design an effective management plan was instigated. Staff have completed initial project draft reports. These cover the history of biological control activity, the monitoring requirements for each agent and a timeline to capture information on current agent performance. The task would be substantial if all agents were considered. However, staff have selected only three agents to commence the research. The reports will include advice on cost effective monitoring of agent performance. Staff have been working closely with Landcare Research (LCR) during the last year to develop our monitoring standards and set up the programme for the selected species. This is targeted towards one new release (Boneseed leafroller), a recent release (Gorse thrips) and one well-established agent (Gorse seed weevil).

2.3 Grass carp

Staff are assessing management options for utilising Grass Carp to control aquatic pest plants in a range of site situations. The use of these fish in selected situations will provide less invasive control than current chemical or mechanical options. Current discussions and research are focused in the Forest Lakes (Otaki) and Lower Ruamahanga Scheme areas. A key requirement is developing a plan to ensure Grass Carp are contained within their release areas. The project is assessing the entire suite of potential sites for release, required inputs and timelines to understand the resource requirements to support a long-term control programme. The cost sharing options will also be considered.

2.4 Pest plant information

Publications have been reviewed to complement the new RPMS. Key outcomes of this project were:

- defining communication requirements to satisfy RPMS outcome statements, and
- a communication plan developed to inform target audiences across the region.

3. Bovine Tb Vector Management (Graeme Butcher and Grant Crawford)

3.1 2009/10 vector control programme

The AHB vector control programme within the Wellington Region for the 2009/10 year is as follows:

	Approved projects	Approved hectares	On Hold projects	Technically Rejected projects
Possum Control	72	208,281	0	0
Possum & Ferret surveys	29	87,690	0	0
Pig Surveys	15	249,039	0	0
Deer Survey	1	88,492	0	0
Feral Cattle Control	1	966	0	0
Performance Monitor	52		0	0
Trend Monitor	106		7	3

All possum control, possum and ferret surveys, pig and deer surveys, cattle control and performance monitors proposed for treatment by the GW vector management staff for 2009/10 have been approved by the AHB.

Ten trend monitors have not yet been approved to proceed (refer section 3.4).

The table below summarises projects let as at 19 August.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GW BioWorks	49,020	26,164	0	75,184
Professional Guiding Services	74,615	14,132	0	88,747
T Oakly	0	0	202,381	202,381
Totals	123,635	40,296	202,381	366,312

The following table details areas of the 2009/10 control programme which have been completed as at 19 August 2009.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GW BioWorks	0	0	0	0
Professional Guiding Services	7,430	0	0	7,430
T Oakly	0	0	0	0
Totals	7,430	0	0	7,430

Contractors have completed two possum control projects and have commenced control activities within a further eight projects. Contractors estimated that they have completed 13,562 hectares of possum control. No activity has started for possum or ferret surveys. The feral cattle control and deer survey is still to be released to contractors.

3.2 2009/10 Pig survey

The following table details pig survey progress to date for the 2009/10 year.

Project	Area (ha)	Required Samples	Samples received to date	Positive Tb samples
Akatarawa	20,538	30	12	
Bideford	39,023	40	1	
Castle Hill	4,500	30	5	
East Alfredton	4,900	20	2	
Featherston	5,325	30	0	
Homewood Riversdale	25,789	120	13	
Kapiti	22,486	50	0	
Mataikona	6,779	40	14	
Moonshine	6,250	20	4	
Otaki Crown	3,552	15	0	
Pakowai	6,910	60	37	
Stronvar	25,976	85	33	
Te Wharau	13,995	100	0	
Tinui	35,675	120	46	
Wellington	29,640	50	0	
Totals		810	167	

No suspicious Bovine Tb samples have been collected to date in the 2009/10 year.

The Featherston, Te Wharau and Wellington pig surveys are still to be let. Tender documents have been released.

3.3 2009/10 tender rounds

A number of projects are still to be let for the 2009/10 year. Approximately 41,000 hectares are due for contractor release in the AHB tender round 2 on the 28 August. This parcel includes the Holdsworth to Woodside Crown operation (9,344 ha) which was last treated with 1080 pellets in October 2003. The current RTC ranges from 7.94% to 11.58%.

BioWorks and Professional Guiding Services both have two year preferred supply contracts with AHB. They have received a portion of these parcels and the rest will be released shortly.

3.4 Trend monitoring not approved by AHB

To date the following trend monitoring projects have not been approved by the AHB.

Project	Strata	Budget Value	Status	Reason to Proceed
Featherston Waiorongomai Cr	HMR 1	\$12,000	On hold	To gather information to determine when vector control should be implemented. Last treated April 2006.
Featherston Waiorongomai Cr	HMR 2	\$12,000	On hold	
Holdsworth Woodside Cr	HMR 1	\$8,000	On hold	To ensure control inputs have achieved control objectives. Vector control likely to be 1080 aerial control.
Holdsworth Woodside Cr	HMR 2	\$8,000	On hold	
Holdsworth Woodside Cr	HMR 3	\$8,000	On hold	
Hutt Valley	HR 2	\$4,300	Technically rejected	Input contract. To determine if the inputs (designed by AHB) have been sufficient to maintain low population levels (below RTC 2.0%).
Mt Bruce Mikimiki Cr	MR 1	\$12,000	On hold	Requested by AHB during planning to determine if further vector control is required as the adjoining area moves towards Tb freedom in 11/12.
Orongorongo	HR 1	\$25,000	On hold	To determine possum population levels prior to release for vector control. To justify the use of aerial 1080 and provide information for contractors to base tender prices upon.
Pakowhai	HR 1	\$3,300	Technically rejected	Input contract. To determine if the inputs (designed by AHB) have been sufficient to maintain low population levels (below RTC 2.0%).
Pakowhai	HR 2	\$4,100	Technically rejected	

3.5 2008/09 Programme

The following table details projects which were not completed by 30 June 2009. These projects are due for completion during August 2009.

Control Projects	Area (ha)	Project	Value (\$)	Comment
Akatarawa HR 1	1,497	Control	69,000	20% Complete
Akatarawa HR 1		Monitor	6,300	
Akatarawa HR 6	1,453	Control	48,300	Completed
Akatarawa HR 6		Monitor	6,300	Completed
Akatarawa HR 7	1,035	Control	34,500	50% complete
Akatarawa HR 7		Monitor	5,400	
Haurangi Crown HR 1	289	Control	3,475	Completed
Haurangi Crown HR 1		Monitor	3,360	Completed
Haurangi Crown HMR 1	5,664	Control	120,171	Completed
Haurangi Crown HMR 1		Monitor	10,200	Completed
Kahutara Pirinoa HMR 4	762	Control	10,850	Completed
Kahutara Pirinoa HMR 4		Monitor	2,000	Completed
Kahutara Pirinoa HR 3		Monitor	2,925	Completed
Kahutara Pirinoa HR 4		Monitor	2,926	Monitoring still to be completed.
Moonshine HR 1	903	Control	40,100	Re-work to be completed
Te Wharau HMR 7	943	Control	18,206	Re-work to be completed
Te Wharau HMR 7		Monitor	2,000	Completed
Te Wharau HR 4	1,610	Control	22,540	Completed
Te Wharau HR 4		Monitor	3,026	Completed
Waiorongomai HR 2		Monitor	4,828	Completed
Totals	14,156		416,407	

3.6 Haurangi Crown aerial 1080 pellets

The application of 1080 pellets for the Haurangi Crown operation occurred on the 25 July. No issues have arisen to date. The Wellington, Upper Hutt and Wairarapa branches on the New Zealand Deer Stalkers Associations have been informed that the 1080 application has occurred.

Post operation population monitoring has occurred in three areas to determine the effectiveness of this operation for those areas treated with and without deer repellent:

- Haurangi Crown HMR 1 RTC 0.24% (deer repellent treatment)
- Haurangi Crown HR 1 RTC 0.0% (non deer repellent treatment)
- Kahutara Pirinoa HMR 4 RTC 0.0% (non deer repellent treatment)

3.7 Infected herds 2008/09

		I Herds @ June 2008	I Herds @ end of June 2009 (one clear test in brackets)	Target I Herds @ June 2010
VFA	Cattle	0	0	8
	Deer	0	0	
VRA	Cattle	9	5 (4)	
	Deer	0	0	

3.8 Contractor Resignation

John McCaslin, a possum control contractor who has completed AHB vector control contracts within the Wellington Region since 1995/96 has decided he will no longer contest AHB vector control contracts.

Mr McCaslin will still undertake possum control for Greater Wellington under the RPMS programmes. He is selling a large proportion of his plant and equipment.

Flood Protection (Graeme Campbell)

1. Manager's comments

Staff continued to be very busy throughout July and August with the SAP Asset Management project and the Mills Street investigations affecting the department's normal work programmes. However, these two projects are now substantially complete and we expect to get back to the normal works programmes by the end of August.

The initial setup of the SAP Asset management system was completed on 17 August 2009 achieving a major milestone for the department's new asset management process.

Investigations to determine a preferred alignment for the Mills Street stopbank was completed and a recommendation was made to the Hutt River Advisory Subcommittee on 26 August 2009.

Work is also progressing on the normal Flood Protection activity areas including Waiwhetu project, Boulcott/Hutt stopbank design and Waiohine flood hazard maps.

2. Western Floodplain Management Plans [Daya Atapattu]

2.1 Ava to Ewen project

The contractor has now commenced the tidying up works of Strand Park berm areas to be completed by October 2009. The contract maintenance period extends up to June 2010.

2.2 Boulcott/Hutt stopbank project

The two golf clubs are making good progress with discussions on merging of golfing interests between the two clubs. The detailed design for the stopbank at key locations, Connolly Street, Boulcott clubrooms and Hathaway Avenue is currently being refined to address issues raised through consultation. Staff made a presentation to the Central/West Community Committee of Hutt City Council as part of the consultation plan for the proposed channel improvements.

2.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank

A landscape plan was prepared for the unused section of the existing stopbank and sent to UHCC officers for comment before consulting with the affected residents.

2.4 Mills Street stopbank

A meeting of the Hutt River Advisory Subcommittee (HRAS) is now planned for 26 August 2009 to consider the officers' recommendation on the preferred alignment for

the Mills Street stopbank. The HRAS recommendations will be tabled at the 1 September meeting of the Catchment Management Committee.

2.5 District plan changes

UHCC officers have presented to their Policy Committee the proposed plan change 15 to update the Hutt River flood hazard information in the district plan. Officers of the two councils are currently working on a consultation strategy.

2.6 Kapiti floodplain management

2.6.1 Waikanae Floodplain Management Plan

Progress on the Stage 2, 10 year review detailed report has been delayed because of staff involvement in implementing the SAP asset management system.

2.6.2 Otaki Floodplain Management Plan

The proposed purchase of LINZ land as part of the Chrystalls Extended Stopbank project has passed the clearance and disposal process and staff are now able to move towards obtaining valuations and starting the negotiation process to agree a sale price acceptable to both parties. The land purchase includes areas between the new stopbank and the river, presently leased to Winstone Aggregates and Stresscrete, and setting aside the river as reserve for flood protection purposes. The agreement also provides an easement for access to the south side of the river from Otaki Gorge Road.

2.6.3 Friends of the Waikanae River (FWR)

FWR had a successful Honda Treefund planting day at the Dricon site on the Waikanae on 25 July 2009. In conjunction with Kapiti Coast District Council, FWR have received \$40,000 of funding for the Oxbow restoration in the Waikanae River from DoC's Community Conservation Fund. They are providing the plants from their own nursery for this project and planning for the project, including preparation of the site is proceeding. FWR held their AGM on 15 July.

2.6.4 Friends of the Otaki River (FOR)

A planting plan has been developed to guide FOR's restoration work for the next 3 years (on the Otaki River corridor). This and a work programme for existing restoration sites, provides the means for the new part time river hand contractor (funded by Ministry of the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund) to plan and implement work activities. The contractor started work on 1 July 2009 and is settling well into the work programme. Additionally, FOR have been successful in obtaining funding (\$1000) from BOC Gases New Zealand to assist with restoration in the river corridor at site 8 in the planting plan.

3. Western Operations – Jeff Evans

3.1 Hutt River

Willow planting is now complete on the Hutt River while native infill planting is still underway in a number of areas along the river bank. Track maintenance work is underway north of Silverstream and native plant plots are being mulched in the lower river.

3.2 Hutt River ranging services

Throughout the last period the usual undesirable activities have continued. There were a number of illegal piles of rubbish dumped, and trail bikes and vehicle misuse was evident in a number of areas.

Even with the bad weather people were still out and about enjoying the brisk river air and its surrounds. Areas like County Lane and below Belmont School had a steady stream of dog walkers even on the stormiest days.

3.3 Otaki River

The annual willow planting run was carried out over the entire length of the river. A number of areas required clearing out and replanting, mainly due to the old Booth willow stock dying off.

3.4 Waikanae River

The willow planting run is complete. Staff are still helping the Friends on a number of native planting areas and site line clearing is also underway.

3.5 Watercourses

Wind blown trees have been removed from many of the watercourses in the region due to the recent stormy weather. Staff were kept busy in the Mangaroa and Collins Creek area of Upper Hutt after high winds and heavy rain eroded a number of large trees.

4. Wairarapa Operations [Mike Longworth]

4.1 Wairarapa River Schemes

4.1.1 General

The work programmes in the Wairarapa rivers for 2009/10 have commenced with winter planting programme along the river edges.

A flood on 23 and 24 July produced flows in the middle reaches of the Ruamahanga River in the order of a 5 year return period flow. The flood ways operated without any issues. The small amount of flood damage will be repaired within the existing scheme budgets.

Staff have been involved in training for the implementation of the new SAP asset management system which went live on 17 August.

4.1.2 Gravel

The gravel returns for last year were well down on the previous year, in the order of 40% less. New gravel licences for this year are in the process of being issued. The likely demand for licences and the final gravel returns for last year won't be known for a few weeks yet.

4.1.3 Development Work Programme for the Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme (LWVDS)

The majority of this year's work won't get under way until the second half of the year when it is dry enough for earthworks construction. In this early part of the year there will be native tree planting completed and investigations regarding land purchase for the proposed gravel deposition area at the Tauanui delta.

4.2 Investigations and Technical Advice

4.2.1 Waingawa Scheme Review

Work on the review has progressed with most of the background technical analysis being completed. The hydraulic model was refined once the accurate ground levels became available following the Lidar survey. The results of the work have been reported to the Waingawa River Scheme Advisory Committee. The next work will involve determining the environmental impact of the scheme work on the river. Once this work is completed a number of river management options will be assessed as to their suitability and affordability for discussion with the community.

4.2.2 River Management Consents

The existing global consents for carrying out river management work have proved to be inadequate for the scope of work that is planned in the upper valley rivers. This position has gradually occurred as the various river scheme budgets have increased following scheme reviews to meet the adjacent landowners expectations. It is planned to apply for short 2 year term consents to enable the scheme work programmes to be carried out in the interim, while longer term consents are developed, following consultation with affected parties.

4.2.3 Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan

Work has progressed on the Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) for the Waiohine River floodplain. The hydraulic modelling is being finalised with flood hazard maps expected to be ready for presentation at the inaugural meeting of the FMP Committee. These flood hazard maps will allow the remaining items in phase one of the FMP process to be completed. The new Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan Advisory Committee will meet and elect a chair at an inaugural meeting once the flood hazard maps are ready.

4.3 Drainage Schemes

The wet winter caused higher than normal power usage and a series of unplanned electrical and mechanical maintenance problems at three of the pump stations. Consequently, budgets for the drainage schemes were over expended last year. Rate increases will be necessary for affected schemes that do not have adequate reserves. Meetings to propose rate increases on the five pumped schemes will be held over the next month. The drainage schemes are entirely funded by the benefiting farms.

5. Investigations and Assets [John Eyles]

5.1 Waiwhetu cleanup project

Preliminary work is now underway along the banks of the lower Waiwhetu Stream setting the foundation for flood protection and stormwater upgrades. Earthworks have begun on the true right bank next to the Port Road Bridge. An eight metre wide access way is being created to allow machinery to access the area where retaining walls will be built on both banks. A pump station is being installed at Hutt Park near the Seaview Road Bridge with sheet pile walls in place around the edge of the excavation area. A sewer pipe located under the stream bed will need to be lowered as the stream bed is deepened, and a pump is required to ensure that the flow through the pipe is maintained. Good progress is being made to date.

The clean-up of the contaminated sediments, which involves isolating sections of the stream will be undertaken in the drier months commencing in October 2009.

5.2 Pinehaven flood hazard assessment

A joint project with Upper Hutt City Council is underway to complete the first stage of a flood hazard assessment for the Pinehaven Stream.

The next stage of the project is to present the initial results of the study to Upper Hutt City Council before embarking on public consultation. The project is due for completion in September.

The main outputs from the study will be a set of flood hazard maps which will identify those areas at risk of flooding.

5.3 Asset management

SAP went live for Mabey Road on 10 August with the first works orders for plant maintenance being raised. This represents a considerable step forward for the department in terms of asset management. The go live date for Wairarapa and Kapiti operations was 17 August.

A peer review of assets for Horizons Regional Council was successfully completed on 30 and 31 July.

Annual asset inspections are delayed from last financial year due to the heavy commitment of operations staff to the implementation of SAP asset management software. These should be programmed in September/October.

6. Strategy and Technical Support [Sharyn Westlake]

The following table summarises the number of formal written requests for advice responded to over the period from 16 July – 18 August 2009. These include information requests from the public, local authorities and also Flood Protection comment on resource consent applications to GWRC.

	16 July – 18 August 2009	YTD
Requests brought forward	2	1
Additional requests received	38	45
Responses provided	34	41
Outstanding requests	6	6

Comments have been provided to UHCC over their proposed Plan Change 15 – Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan change, and discussions have been held at officer level with HCC and WCC regarding proposed plan changes.

Land Management (Dave Cameron)

1. Manager's comments

1.1 Land Management vacancies

Two Land Management vacancies are currently being advertised. Land Management Officer, Andrew Patrick has resigned to take up a role with Environment Waikato. In addition the Project Co-ordinator for the Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative (WRECI) is being advertised.

The WRECI position is 75% funded in the first two years by the MAF Hill Country Erosion Fund and 50% funded in the remaining eight years of the project.

Applications close on 28 August.

1.2 Winter planting programme

Despite a very wet July staff have been able to make good progress with the planting programme. It is envisaged that the bulk of the programme will be completed before the end of August, with only the release spraying of new forests to be completed. A three week period of fine weather through the early part of August has been of great benefit.

Our cause has also been greatly assisted by the secondment of Robert Glanville from BioWorks. This arrangement has been a great success and we are hopeful of securing his services for next winter. The secondment coincides nicely with a quieter time for BioWorks and an extremely busy time for Land Management

1.3 Issues for the next period

- Appointment of two new staff
- Securing a nursery lease at Homebush
- Completion of winter planting programme
- Preparation of the 2009/10 H&S Plan

2. Farm Plans (Don Bell)

2.1 Delegated approvals - New Plans, Reviews and Annual programmes

The preparation of new plans and reviews will begin in the second quarter of the year. A new addition to the table is WRECI Plans. 10 WRECI plans are scheduled for 2009/10 and the remaining 90 will be spread over the following six years.

Approvals – Year ending 30 June 2009	New 10-year Plans, Reviews	Annual Plan Targets	Total Programme Estimates
New Sustainability Plans	0	3	\$
New Conservation Plans	0	2	\$
WRECI Plans	0	10	\$
Ten Year Reviews	0	20	\$

Programme delivery – 2009/10	Annual Programmes Undertaken	Annual Plan Target	Expenditure to date	Annual Plan Budget
Annual Programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability plans • Conservation plans • Shelter plans 	104	130	\$200,778	\$565,000
Isolated works	1	5	\$0	\$186

2.2 Lower Valley planting

Land Management has been contracted by Flood Protection to plant a section of the Ruamahanga River at the top end of Lake Onoke. River margins have been planted with a variety of eco-sourced native plants to assist with bank stability and to improve the biodiversity values of the area. In total some 3,700 plants have been established.

2.3 Community planting days

A number of these days have continued at Riversdale Beach. Since the session with Tinui School, further days have been held with Whareama School and at-risk youth from the local Youth Choices Trust. A total of 3,000 sand binding grasses have been planted to date. Two more days are planned over the next two weeks to complete the programme for this year.

3. Akura Conservation Centre (Stan Braaksma)

3.1 Nurseries

Pole harvesting is now slowing down. Some 1,000 – 2,000 poles per week are currently being harvested. To date, 16,000 3m poles (86%) have been harvested and bundled. A further 4,500 3 metre have been processed from the Aokautere nursery in Palmerston North. 23,000 3m poles are available this year. There are 2,500 poles still in stock and it is hoped that all will be sold. The recent dry spell has resulted in a reduction on some orders.

3.2 Trading

The August weather has produced an upsurge in sales, especially on Saturday mornings. It is evident that dairy farmers are not as active as in past years.

To date, 300,000 Pines (85%) have been sold, with continuing interest in alternative exotic species such as Redwoods, Acacias Douglas Fir and Eucalyptus. A number of the Care Group programmes have been sourcing native tree stocks and this has greatly assisted this aspect of the business.

3.3 Budget

The Akura Business Unit has an operating deficit at the end of July totalling \$90,600, against a budgeted deficit of \$27,600.

The Nursery unit is exhibiting a significant loss relative to the overall budget. Currently there is a variance of \$45,500. August figures are indicating that this figure is reducing as revenue from poles is received. An updated situation for the end of August will be tabled at the meeting.

The Trading situation at the end of July is also showing a variation to budget but again this is should be much improved by the end of August.

Activity	Operating Surplus - Actual July 2009	Operating Surplus - Budget July 2009
Nurseries	(31,800)	13,700
Trading	(58,800)	(41,300)
Total	(90,600)	(27,600)

4. Biodiversity (Jacki Byrd)

4.1 Streams Alive

Riparian planting has been completed for all sites. In total 2.5km has been completed in the Mangaroa Valley, 1.8km in the Otaki and Waitohu catchments, and smaller sections within the Waiohine and Upper Ruamahanga catchments. Blanking has also occurred at a number of sites planted last year.

Release spraying will be undertaken at all sites in the next month.

4.2 Expenditure to date

	Budget 2009/10	Expenditure to date	% of Budget
Riparian Management	\$196,200	\$65,500	33.3%
Streams Alive	\$100,000	\$55,521	56.1%

5. Operations (Kevin Burdan)

5.1 Contract pole and seedling planting - 2009/10

Activity Contractor	Completed This Period	Expenditure	Year to date	Expenditure to date
Pole Planting	7,080	\$28,640	7,080	\$28,640
Seedling planting	32,400	\$13,066	32,400	\$13,066
Release/Pre Spraying	0	0	0	0

- Properties involved with contract pole planting this winter have so far numbered thirty five.
- In addition to the Farm Plan planting identified above, three Afforestation Grant Scheme blocks totalling 149.6ha have been established plus the plotting and mapping of a further 81.6 ha.

5.2 OSH investigations

- Two quad accidents involving contractors have been investigated and measures put in place to prevent reoccurrences.
- Staff have reported two incidents, one involving an insecure load and the other related to loading a quad on the deck of a utility vehicle. Safe operating procedures have been relayed to staff in relation to both incidents. For the amount of field based activity that occurs during the winter period the number of incidents and near misses is relatively low.

Total Catchment Management (Ian Gunn)

1. Draft supercatchments preliminary assessments

Draft assessments have been completed for the five supercatchments. The natural hazards section still needs to be peer reviewed by Iain Dawes, our Natural Hazards Analyst.

Preliminary discussions have been held with Ngati Kahungunu and Rangitane o Wairarapa on the Eastern Wairarapa supercatchment assessment and with Porirua City on the Porirua Harbour supercatchment. Porirua City is keen to initiate discussions between themselves, Wellington City and Greater Wellington on stormwater and urban subdivisions due to the build up of sediment within the Porirua Harbour.

The commencement of community consultation by GW with regards to development of the proposed new Natural Resource Management Plan will start in early 2010. It is intended that the supercatchment assessments will help inform the consultation process. Copies of the draft assessments are currently with managers from the Environment and Catchment Management Divisions for their comments.

Research will continue on the best way to introduce the total catchment management philosophy to staff. There is still no news of the transfer of the natural heritage modules used by the Department of Conservation to their intranet. Work will also commence on determining how the Catchment Management Division may assist in the development of the new Natural Resource Management Plan.

Attached to this report is a set of maps (**Attachments 4 to 12**) summarising some of the findings from the supercatchment assessments, as follows:

1. The land ownership map highlights that the key stakeholders within supercatchments do vary, eg. private land ownership dominates in the Ruamahanga and Eastern Wairarapa while in the Wellington Harbour supercatchment local authorities, such as Greater Wellington, are the key stakeholders impacting on natural resources – **Attachment 5**
2. Erosion prone land occurs primarily in the east of the region in the Ruamahanga River and Eastern Wairarapa. There is still a large area of untreated erosion prone land in these areas. There are pockets of erosion prone land on the south coast of the Wellington Harbour supercatchment – **Attachment 6**
3. The Ruamahanga River floodplain is predominantly high quality soil. High quality soil being defined as those land use classification units showing the most versatility. Pockets of high quality soil are found on both coasts, south of Riversdale and at Otaki – **Attachment 7**
4. Dairying is primarily found on the high quality soil. There is an extensive area of high quality soil which could possibly be used more effectively. The dairying

areas mapped in blue, on the lower quality (probably stonier soils) soils are likely to be runoff blocks used only during the winter – **Attachment 8**

5. Watercourses leaving bush clad catchments and/or only travel a short distance to the coast typically have high quality water. Poor water quality is associated with agricultural and urban areas. Dairying areas are often associated with poor surface water quality. Some of these sites have been monitored as having poor water quality for a number of years. Our state of the environment water quality network does not include the “sinks” found in the supercatchments such as harbours or estuaries – **Attachment 9**
6. A large percentage of the Eastern Wairarapa and Ruamahanga and the coastal plain in the Kapiti Coast supercatchment are mapped as red and orange using the land environments classification of NZ methodology. These are areas with low biodiversity values, ie they contain only remnants of the original bush cover. The Wellington Harbour supercatchment has the highest biodiversity values. It has the potential to be the “biodiversity” capital in NZ – **Attachment 10**
7. Possum control occurs through a variety of programmes over a significant area of the Wellington Harbour supercatchment. This is no doubt assisting the biodiversity values as it does wherever it occurs. The vulnerable Kapiti Coast plain receives only limited possum treatment – **Attachment 11**
8. The resource consents map shows the concentration of land use permits in the urban areas. Water use permits are concentrated in the Ruamahanga River supercatchment and the coastal permits in the harbour supercatchments. The scattered nature of consents in the Eastern Wairarapa supercatchment suggests that more analysis could be completed to determine the impacts of these resource consents and what status may be appropriate under the new NRM Plan – **Attachment 12**

2. Flood Protection assistance

Flood Protection staff in the Wairarapa are working to prepare short term resource consents for their annual maintenance work programmes. The writer is assisting with this process and also completing the designation process to ensure Flood Protection assets such as stopbanks and floodways are correctly identified in the new Wairarapa Combined District Plan.

Forestry (Barry Leonard)

Review of operations for the period ended 31 July 1009

1. Plantation forests (Wellington)

1.1 Log Harvest Contract

July continued the downward trend in results. However, the blame was poor quality logs as the export prices improved at destination, the exchange rate change was favourable but the shipping cost increased. With June being the end of the quarter, there was also an adjustment of cartage, which resulted in an increase of 2.2 percent. The result for July was \$43,403 in net income for a tonnage of 5,156 and an average return of \$8.60. This came about as the hauler crew was working at the head of Maori Redoubt in wind-throw and the ground based crew after completing the road lining of a skid in Boiler Gully spent the last 10 days also harvesting wind-thrown logs from the ridge top of Kilometre.

To demonstrate the effect of the log standard, we can compare the average out-turn of May, June and July last year with the actual for July this year.

Month/year	Sawlog %	Rough %	Pulp/firewood %
May 2008	69.54	20.73	9.73
June 2008	66.94	27.30	5.77
July 2008	63.65	29.76	6.59
Average	66.71	25.93	7.36
July 2009	51.5	24.7	23.8

Domestic logs: demand into Featherston remains only steady at levels below traditional volumes and Masterton will still take all M22 grade, which is their traditional purchase, but have ceased to take the small S grade log they introduced to attract more volume.

As demonstrated in the table above, there have been large volumes of low grade rough logs, which are sold as pulp or firewood. While there have been good numbers of firewood gatherers on the weekends and “commercial” firewood merchants have increased from two or three to nearer 10, we have not really been able to sell reasonable volumes by the truckload. An amount of \$30 per tonne appears to be too high for the local market. (For an on-truck delivery, the merchant needs room for 30 tonnes at a time and some means of unloading the truck, and preferably reloading the trailer).

Log 36 continued to harvest the northern end of Maori Redoubt, including the isolated area beyond the Farm Forestry Block. This harvesting ended against Valley View Road where we anticipated that the trees would be sufficiently wind-firm not to be affected by the wind. Alas, with the rain earlier in the winter and some reasonable winds, at least 50 trees were wind-thrown. A number of these were on the road edge and when they fell their root balls left a metre deep hole in the road. Log 6 has since

gone back to recover these trees while they are still merchantable and a new block boundary will be set further west in the block. Log 36 then moved to Waterpoint Road and hauled a section of wind-throw at the head of Boiler Gully. Log 6 completed the road lining at Beech Spur and moved to prepare a hauler skid off Lindsay's Road in Boiler Gully. The medium-term plan is to operate haulers from both the north and south of the block. These will be traditional settings with haul distances approaching 900 m and the crews being on the same skid for a number of weeks.

1.2 Silviculture Contract

A total of 37.74 hectares of silviculture was completed in July. The greater part of this was the high prune and thin of the Rifle Range Block that could only be done while the range was closed. As the timing coincided with planting in the Wairarapa, the crew was unable to concentrate on either task and tried to co-ordinate both jobs to the best advantage. In addition to planting 87,000 trees in June, a further 45,500 trees were planted in July. Planting will continue into September while the weather remains suitable.

1.3 Plantation Forestry operations

With fewer daylight hours and all logging trucks now operating over the first 7.5 km of Valley View Road, there has been a need for regular maintenance to clear water tables, remove potholes and spread metal to provide traction. The section from Airstrip Drive turnoff to 7.5 km, where there are trees on both sides, has remained wet all winter, with higher wear than the area from 5.5 km to the gate where all adjacent trees have been felled. We now use a bobcat for minor maintenance, as it can work effectively between the logging trucks.

The balance of the road to Puketiro is in good order and shows the wisdom of moving the harvest activity back to Valley View over the depth of winter.

There has been no progress on the Raupo Swamp Road upgrade this month.

Staff members have continued to supervise the silvicultural contractors and monitor the quality control plots.

1.4 Forest Access

The lack of access into Maungakotukutuku remains. We were approached by an adjoining forest owner wishing to log a section of their forest through Maungakotukutuku. We have agreed and, as a result, there will be an upgrade of the road and an opportunity to upgrade the security of the block.

All main roads are in good order.

1.5 Market trends

Domestic markets are maintaining current levels of demand and suggestions are that there could be an improvement as the weather improves towards spring and summer. There is no further progress with Eurocell.

Demand has held with exports and it is now believed that the demand is real rather than

being fed by a desire to reinstate the inventory rundown earlier in the year. Prices are still rising at destination but, until more shipping is available to force down shipping prices and the New Zealand dollar weakens, prices to the grower are likely to stay around current levels.

1.6 Bio-energy

The only activity on the bio-energy front is a tender released by Kapiti Coast District Council for a supply of residues to feed their kiln at Otaihanga. The distance from Totara Park to Paraparaumu makes it unlikely we will be part of this project.

The trade magazines are full of possibilities and we hope it is only a matter of time before a concrete proposal comes to light in this area.

1.7 2010-2014 Forest Harvest Contract

Planning has commenced for this contract, which takes effect from 1 March 2010.

Alan Bell and Associates has commenced the necessary MARVL analyses to go out with the Request for Tender, which it is hoped to release in September.

2. Reserve Forests (Wairarapa)

2.1 Tauanui logging

July was another good production month with 1,569 tonnes being produced.

As with the previous month, trees of good form and volume were harvested from lower slopes.

Prices and, therefore, returns have fallen back largely as a result of the high New Zealand dollar.

This month was the transition month between Skyline Logging and Ultra Logging, with more of the equipment being purchased by part of the existing crew as Skyline Loggers have moved to the Nelson area to pursue woodlot harvesting in that area. Ultra Logging (which already owned the Forwarder) is in the process of purchasing the excavator and a static delimeter.

This will allow the three worker crew, in conjunction with manual felling and log making, to process the logs in a similar manner to that achieved with the Skyline processor.

2.2 Tauanui road maintenance

Grading has been carried out to reduce the size and number of potholes on the Tauanui access road.

The road has stood up well to the wet weather and continual logging traffic during the winter. There has been a requirement for minimal slip clearance, despite the wet conditions until towards the end of July.

2.3 Honey

Payment of \$4,733.15 has been received from beekeepers for the 252 hives on Stoney Creek and Rough Hill.

These hives produced 3,859 kg of manuka honey. Analysis showed that it was non-active (UMF <8.2), so the royalty payment at 90 cents per kg was much lower than last year.

Results are part of an ongoing analysis to determine the reasons for variations in UMF activity. It was observed that the manuka flowering season was very short this year and the rain at the time has an impact on the quality of the honey.

2.4 Goats

Helicopter shooting in conjunction with the Department of Conservation work in the area accounted for a further 37 goats on Stoney Creek and Rough Hill. These are in addition to those shot by permitted hunters in the area. This number is higher than in recent years and more ground shooting will be carried out this summer in areas where goats congregate.

2.5 Manuka Street Reserve

The Senior Conservation Forester has been co-opted to provide Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) liaison on a committee formed by Masterton District Council to help implement the management plan for the Manuka Street Reserve.

This 1.7 ha reserve - originally bare land around a drainage control scheme in an urban subdivision in Lansdowne - has been revegetated with funding primarily from the Take Care programme.

Most of the plantings were low growing shrub species. However, some taller tree species have caused friction by blocking views and causing shading. In addition, flooding of some neighbours generated a dispute at the end of last year.

A management plan was developed after a public submission process. This supersedes the loose arrangement by which a group of enthusiasts carried out extensive plantings based on a concept plan originally provided by GWRC.