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Committee Environmental Wellbeing  
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## Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative Annual Report 2011

### 1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of progress with the Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative (WRECI) for the 2010/11 year.

### 2. Significance of the decision

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

### 3. Background

Soil erosion is a major problem that has been identified for the Greater Wellington region. The most significant erosion occurs in the eastern Wairarapa hill country. Greater Wellington (GW) helps landowners to manage soil erosion on their properties, primarily through producing farm plans, and providing advice and financial assistance for on-farm works.

Recent government funding allows GW to prepare more plans and to offer higher grant rates than previously available. This new programme is known as the Wellington Regional Erosion Control Initiative (WRECI) and was approved in 2008.

The WRECI programme focuses on five selected catchments and isolated hotspots. These areas are located in the Wairarapa hill country and have been selected on the basis of rates of sediment discharge and percentage of erosion prone land in the catchment.

The first two years of the WRECI programme have been successfully completed. The programme so far has involved two years of plan preparation and one year of planting. This report provides information on the results of the first two years of the programme

#### 4. Progress to Date

		Target	Actual
<b>Farm Planning</b>			
Plans completed	Number	25	25
<b>Works (from first 10 Plans)</b>			
Poles	Number	2,500	3,550
	Area planted (ha)	36	51.6
Afforestation	Area planted (ha)	25	21.5
Total area under erosion control	Hectares	61	73.1
<b>Financial</b>			
Greater Wellington	\$	176,250	144,402
Hill Country Erosion Fund	\$	176,250	144,402
Farmer contribution	\$ and in-kind	51,500	54,769
Total	\$	404,000	343,573

Significant cost savings were made by completing in-house a large proportion of the plan preparation for year two of the WRECI programme. These cost savings allowed an additional 1,400 poles to be planted in June 2011 on top of the 2010 winter plantings. This took the total number of poles planted in the 2010/2011 financial year to 3,550, 42% above the original target.

In total there are approximately 28,400 hectares of land covered by WRECI farm plans. In the first year of planting 51.6 hectares has been planted with poplars and willows. 49.3 hectares (95%) of space planted poplars and willows have been planted on Land Use Capability (LUC) classes 6 and 7. 22.3 hectares (43%) of plantings occurred on LUC class 7e1.

Farmers have generally received the WRECI programme very favourably. One of the original 15 farms selected for having a plan prepared this year pulled out of the programme in May, because they were uncomfortable with the amount of information that was collected about the property. A replacement property was selected and has had a plan completed.

#### 5. Whareama Catchment

The Whareama Catchment was one of five catchments selected for the programme and was a major focus in the first two years. The first 10 plans were prepared for farms in the Whareama catchment in 2009/10. A further 5 plans were prepared in the second year of the programme.

<b>WRECI programme in the Whareama catchment</b>	
Area of catchment (ha)	<b>53,231</b>
Area of land within catchment with WRECI farm plan (ha)	<b>16,118</b>
Percentage of catchment with WRECI farm plan	<b>30.2%</b>
Seven year target # of plans	<b>45</b>
Plans completed to date	<b>15</b>
<b>Completed works (1<sup>st</sup> year)</b>	
• Number of poles planted	<b>2,150</b>
• Area of poles planted (ha)	<b>30.7</b>
• Afforestation (ha)	<b>21.5</b>

A map of the coverage of WRECI Plans in the Whareama catchment is attached to the report.

One of the aims of the WRECI programme was to increase the rate of plantings on farm and to reduce the time to provide erosion control to eastern Wairarapa hill country. Although there is only data for one year of the planting programme, the following table presents a comparison of the number of poles planted in the first year of the programme with to the 5 year rolling average for the first 10 properties in the Whareama catchment.

<b>Whareama Pole Programme</b>	<b>5yr Average (2005-2009)</b>	<b>2010 planting</b>
<b>Number properties participating</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Average poles / property</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>215</b>

## **6. Communications**

The progress being made with the WRECI programme provides a number of communication opportunities. The next issue of Dominion Post's Farming Scene contains an article charting the uptake and interest in the WRECI programme. This is scheduled for late September 2011.

Individual catchment data and information on future developments will be communicated through the next editions of Rural Focus and Our Region.

## 7. Recommendation

*That the Committee:*

- (1) **Receives** the report.
- (2) **Notes** the content of the report.

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Report approved by:



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