



greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Pane Matua Taiao

Attachment 2

Northern Wairarapa Ruamahanga Rivers Environmental Monitoring Report

Graeme Burnett

For more information, contact Greater Wellington:

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www.gw.govt.nz
info@gw.govt.nz

1. Introduction

In November 2011, a variation was granted to the existing global resource consents for the Waipoua, Waiohine, Waingawa and all three Upper Ruamahanga schemes. This variation allowed for increased quantities of in-stream work. The increase of annual in-stream river maintenance works was necessary so that the Flood Protection Department can deliver the maintenance objectives of the river management schemes proactively rather than on a reactive basis following flood events and to provide for the necessary works following flood events. In 2011/12 efforts were made to minimise the extent of in-stream works and for most activities the quantum of works undertaken was less than the amount permitted by consent limits.

Prior to lodging the application for variation to the consents, an agreement (*The Northern Wairarapa River Agreement*) was developed between Flood Protection and key stakeholders. In the *River Agreement* Flood Protection committed that, as part of its annual Asset Maintenance reporting to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee, will include:

- Monitoring results and research undertaken including any outcomes
- A summary of actions undertaken to meet cultural, habitat and recreational objectives in the relevant financial year. Examples include development of hard spots with native planting, training and monitoring of contractors, enhancement of recreational access or values, avoidance of wahi tapu sites.
- Comment on the status of, and progress with, existing scheme recreational and aquatic habitat objectives.

(The full report can be found in Hummingbird Doc.ref # 1062588).

This reporting provides for both trend and summary comments on meeting both flood protection objectives and looking after “the river” – habitat, recreational and cultural values.

2. Monitoring and research

A contract has recently been developed with Massey University. Dr Russell Death will be leading a Massey team through a four stage monitoring and research programme over the next two years. The focus of this research is:

- Data collection of existing knowledge of aquatic habitat values and identifying information gaps. Expected completion – September 2012.
- Data collection and survey design. Re-colonisation Survey following river maintenance works. Expected completion –September 2012.
- Fish survey following identification of information gaps. Expected completion – April 2013.

- Re-colonisation surveys including assessment of the effects of sedimentation following river maintenance works. Expected completion – July 2013.

3. GIS – Aerial photography

Since 2011, files of completed works records have been maintained in GIS aerial photography. These files allow for a record of river works being undertaken and will benefit a detailed effects based assessment upon the renewal of global consents in 2015.

4. Habitat Assessment

Since February 2012, prior to undertaking consented work, Flood Protection assesses and records information about the habitat characteristics of the site. This is achieved by the completion of Habitat Assessment template worksheets for each consented work site. These records also will benefit the effects based assessments in the future.

5. River works methodology best practice

The Flood Protection Department maintains a record of any alterations to typical river works methodology resulting from the habitat assessments. These records are noted on the habitat assessment forms under ‘Best Practice method notes’.

This provides a valuable recording practice to capture any alterations to typical river works methodology, which have been utilised to avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse effects on the environment.

6. River Agreement outcomes

A meeting was held on 27 July 2012 with all parties to the *River Agreement*. In general, good collaboration of resources is being achieved across organisations. For example, local iwi are working towards developing a recreation-based register of valuable pool sites, Fish and Game will include these pool sites (as many as possible) in their summer drift diving programme, and Fish and Game will also collect data on residual pools including records of the deepest/shallowest extent of residual pools.

Recreation access in the rivers continues to be a challenging aspect to manage. Vandalism and pollution are rampant in many areas with easy access. Establishing access to the rivers is only the first step in managing an access site. Ongoing maintenance and funding is nearly always a requirement to responsibly managing any sites with easy access.