

Catchment Management Group

Departmental Managers' update for period ending 26 February 2010

Biosecurity (Davor Bejakovich, Manager)

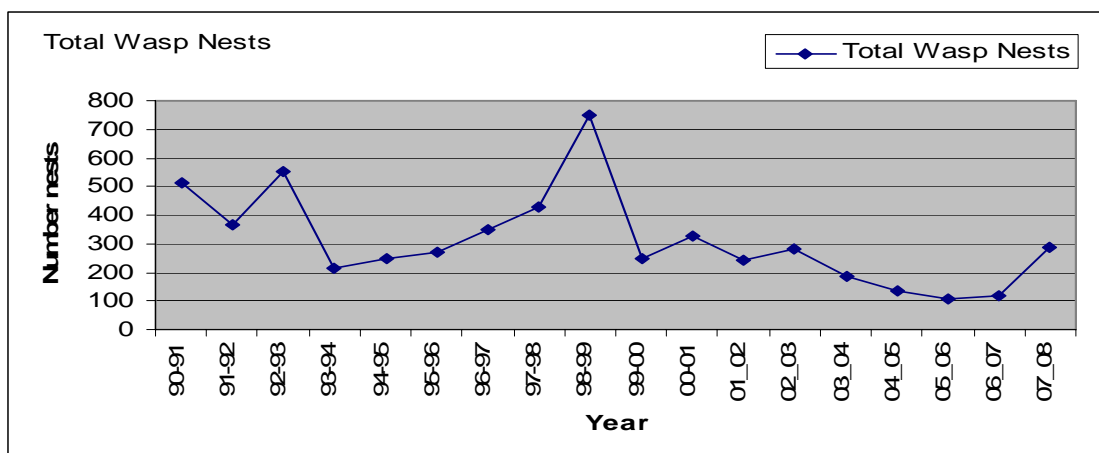
1. Pest Animals: (Ray Clarey)

1.1 Memorandums of Understanding with Territorial Local Authorities

Meetings have concluded with the five territorial local authorities in the Western Zone to agree the jointly funded pest management programmes for 2010-2011. The memorandums of understanding (MOU) recognise the joint ventures by sharing operational costs, gathering and sharing information, appointing contractors and annually reviewing the maintenance programmes. The agreed budgets and work programmes are similar to last year. No new works will be undertaken unless they are funded in full by the local authority. Wellington City Council, Kapiti Coast District Council and Upper Hutt City Council indicated they wish to move to a three-year term for the MOU with the work schedules reviewed annually.

1.2 Wasps

Early indications are that the Wairarapa may experience a bigger wasp nuisance than in recent years. In contrast the Upper Hutt office has only registered five calls for advice. This is the time of year when wasps are more obvious and it may just coincide with the fine spell of weather when people are more likely to be enjoying the outdoors. Peak months for wasp nuisance calls are traditionally in March although last year it was April. Many calls to the Masterton office are due to referrals from the Wairarapa district councils. Clients are offered advice on how they might undertake their own control and/or referred to professional insect pest controllers. Territorial local authorities, Department of Conservation field centres and GW maintain registers of wasp nuisance calls and this data (nest type if known, location and date) is used to collate an annual report. This report has been published for 18 years in succession. Understanding the seasonal influences on wasp populations is useful in the event of another national attempt at biological control. A wasp parasitoid programme was initiated throughout New Zealand in 1989 by the then NZ Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Release sites included the Wairarapa, Hutt Valley and Horowhenua. The parasitoid larvae feed on and kill wasp larvae within nests. The programme was abandoned in 1991 after investigations found that the parasitoid had failed to establish in sufficient densities to create meaningful control. In 1996 another parasitoid was trialled but failed to provide satisfactory level of control. Research is currently underway on utilising some of the naturally occurring wasp pathogens as biocontrol agents.



1.3 Removal of unauthorised toxin from Wellington City Council land

In mid February Biosecurity staff removed a suspected cyanide application from Wellington City Council land located to the west of Mt Kaukau in Johnsonville. Over 30 homemade poison stations had been installed along access tracks on the Kilmister Block. They appeared to be installed to poison possums for skin recovery. The operation was unauthorised, with bait stations openly placed on access tracks with no warning signage or contact details. The substance in the stations appeared to be cyanide paste lured with flour. A sample has been sent to a Landcare Research laboratory for identification. Cyanide is an acute and deadly poison, and poses a potential risk to humans and domestic animals when applied incorrectly. WCC and GW staff removed the stations and destroyed them. WCC are leading the investigation into who might be responsible.

1.4 New tools for pest control

GW Biosecurity has recently made submissions to ERMA in support of applications to gain approval for the use of a new vertebrate toxic agent and a new herbicide in New Zealand. The vertebrate toxic agent, para-aminopropiophenone or PAPP, is a toxin for the control of mustelids (weasels, stoats and ferrets) and feral cats. There are currently no toxins registered for these species that are suitable for wide scale use in the Wellington region, meaning our current control is restricted to more expensive and less efficient trapping regimes. PAPP has a relatively low cost antidote, methylene blue, reducing the risk to domestic pets. The successful registration of this toxin for use in New Zealand would provide a valuable new tool for the control of these predators within the region.

The herbicide, Taskforce, is currently registered in Australia for the control of problem grass and tussock species. Marlborough District Council has applied for Taskforce to be registered for use in New Zealand for the control of nasella tussock and Chilean needlegrass. Taskforce allows the spraying of these species without killing valuable pasture species such as ryegrass, allowing easier control on pastoral farmland. Both nasella tussock and Chilean needlegrass are Surveillance species in the Wellington Regional Pest Management Strategy, and are a problem for our regional neighbours to the north and south. Any new control tool for these highly invasive weed species will help stop their establishment in the Wellington region.

1.5 Rodent Monitoring

A rodent monitoring network of 40 tunnels has been established in Parkway Reserve at Wainuiomata. This site replaces the network at Haywards Reserve at Waiwhetu which is now under Bovine Tb control and gets a different treatment regime. The first formal monitor has just been concluded and the data has yet to be analysed. However, rat numbers are low due to the fact that this reserve has had ongoing rodent control in conjunction with possum control since November 2004.

Rodent monitoring is conducted at eight Key Native Ecosystem sites throughout the region. Having knowledge of the relative rodent densities (particularly ship rats) assists with the ability to design proficient control regimes. As a rule, cyclic servicing cannot be left longer than three months as rat numbers quickly increase and compete with possums for available bait. Ship rats are mostly nocturnal, can readily climb trees and predate the smaller forest birds, native lizards, native snails, invertebrates (such as weta) and seeds.

2. Pest Plants (Richard Grimmett)

2.1 Regional Surveillance

Staff continued to undertake surveys of properties in the region as part of the delimiting surveillance programme. A total of 517 properties were inspected. This effort reduced the total number of sites to delimit from 18 to 14. Two new Total Control species sites were found over the period.

2.2 Total Control species

The annual inspection program progressed well through this period. Pasture cover in rural sites has been much denser this year which has reduced germination of target species. The continued effort to undertake multiple visits at sites during the year is showing a pleasing downward trend in numbers of mature plants found and also some sites with no targeted plants found.

2.3 Containment species

One new site of Hornwort was discovered in drainage channels feeding the Waitohu Stream north of Otaki. DOC is surveying Boggy Pond as a follow up to last year's control work on Hornwort. The survey will extend into the full area surrounding the pond to assess continued control planning.

Biological Control release sites of Boneseed leaf roller within Wellington and Porirua cities were assessed with Landcare Research. The establishment of the biocontrol agents was confirmed, but wasp predation on the moth was also high.

2.4 Site Led and Boundary Control species

Staff have responded to all boundary complaints received for the period and issued one Notice of Direction, extended the time for control on one notice and completed five boundary clearances. Staff completed inspections and controlled the problem pest

species in the early establishment stage. Owners were left information to ensure ongoing control.

2.5 Key Native Ecosystems and TA Reserves

Many contracts that backlogged during unstable weather have now been completed. Staff worked in 26 KNE sites during this period on a range of activities.

2.6 Community Max

The Community Max field workers commenced employment from the Hutt Depot on 11 January 2010 and Masterton office on 1 February. New staff received GW induction packages and First Aid and Grow Safe training. For the last six weeks Hutt teams worked on a number of projects:

- Forest Lakes, Otaki (Forest Lakes camp). Four days completed on weed control in preparation for forest restoration.
- Battle Hill Farm Park, Pauatahanui (GW). Worked on weed control programme as a part of the forest restoration.
- Tinakori Hill, Wellington (WCC). Twelve days completed on wilding pine control in regenerating native forest. The project was finished and is currently awaiting final inspection by WCC prior to invoicing.
- Waikanae River, Waikanae (GW). Seven days work completed to date on riparian forest restoration.
- Mt Kau Kau, Wellington (WCC). Two days work completed on Darwin's barberry and wilding pine control in regenerating native bush.
- Blue Mountains, Whiteman's Valley (HCC). Nine days work completed to date on Darwin's barberry control in regenerating native bush.
- Belmont Regional Park, Belmont (GW). Worked on weed control in regenerating native bush.
- Otaki River, Otaki (GW). Four days work completed on vine control in riparian margins.
- Tarakena Bay, Wellington (WCC). Two days work completed on coastal escarpment weed sweep.
- Riparian Strip, Mangaroa Valley (GW). Worked on weed control prior to riparian planting.

The Masterton crew worked for DOC as hut wardens in the Tararua Ranges.

2.7 Biological Control

Officers have been actively surveying and harvesting biocontrol agents for further distribution. Surveying for gorse thrips, *Sericothrips staphylinus*, was frustrating with numbers varying from site to site.

Staff harvested enough ragwort flea beetle, *Longitarsus jacobaeae*, from Wairarapa for two releases in the western zone. Also, one release of cinnabar moth, *Tyria jacobaeae*, has been made in the western zone.

The green thistle beetle, *Cassida rubiginosa*, release site was inspected at Rangitumau. A number of adults and juveniles were seen along with a fair amount of damage. A release of a new biocontrol agent of Californian thistle was made on 21 January. There are now big hopes for the control of this plant as the Green thistle Beetle appears to have established.

The presence of boneseed leafroller, *Tortix* s.l. “*chrisanthemoides*”, have been confirmed at the Miramar release site but in low numbers. There seems to be a parasite problem with this agent. Some samples were taken to confirm the presence of mist flower fungus, *Entyloma ageratinae*, at the release site on Tinakori road.

Chris Winks from Landcare Research trained staff in methods and processes of site inspections during his February field trip in our region.

2.8 Communication

Ben Winder (Biosecurity Officer, Plants) was interviewed by the Wairarapa Times Age about Bathurst bur and saffron thistle. Ben was also interviewed by a reporter from the Straight Furrow newspaper on the same topic. The article resulted in the public report of one new saffron thistle site.

Staff submitted articles on Riversdale dunes for Wairarapa Lifestyle magazine, Asiatic knotweed for Our Region and provided information about the Weedy Wellington workshop that was held before Christmas for Protect.

Biosecurity team manned displays at Zealandia (Karori Sanctuary) in January and at the Masterton A&P show in February.

3. Bovine Tb Vector Management (Graeme Butcher)

3.1 2009/10 Vector Control Programme

Table 1: Summary of the projects let as at 26 February for the 2009/10 year.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GW BioWorks	67,646	35,583	0	103,229
Professional Guiding Services	97,577	23,843	0	121,420
Central Districts Pest Control	18,462	0	0	18,462
J McCaslin	11,565	0	0	11,565
T Oakly	0	0	249,039	249,039
Totals	195,250	59,426	249,039	503,715

Contractors have completed 26 possum control projects and have commenced control activities within a further 14 projects (Table 2). To date, 38.7% of the possum control programme has been completed and assessed by performance monitor or audit.

Contractors estimate that they have completed a further 21,502 ha of possum control but these areas are not yet ready for monitoring. Contractors estimate they have actually completed approximately 50% of the possum control programme.

Table 2: Areas of the 2009/10 control programme which have been completed as at 26 February 2010.

	Possum Control (ha)	Ferret & Possum Surveys (ha)	Pig Survey (ha)	Total
GW BioWorks	25,981	6,160	0	32,141
Professional Guiding Services	49,552	13,321	0	62,873
Central Districts Pest Control	0	0	0	0
J McCaslin	0	0	0	0
T Oakly	0	0	47,910	47,910
Totals	75,533	19,481	47,910	142,924

3.2 2009/10 Monitoring

To date, 26 performance monitors have been completed. Professional Guiding Services and BioWorks have completed 15 and 11 projects respectively (Table 2).

Fifty five trend monitors have been completed to date. Trend RTC results are as follows:

- 0.0% to 2.9% 25 projects (80,825 ha)
- 3.0% to 4.9% 23 projects (57,828 ha)
- 5.0% plus 7 projects (16,847 ha)

3.3 2009/10 Possum and Ferret surveys

The following table details possum and ferret surveys for the 2009/10 year. Eight surveys (19,481 ha) have been completed.

Project	Strata	Area (ha)	Progress (% completed)	Required Estimated Samples		Samples received to date		Suspicious Tb samples
				Possums	Ferrets	Possums	Ferrets	
Bideford	HMR 3	4824	100	N/A	5	N/A	3	0
Bideford	HR 1	2641		N/A	5	N/A		
Bideford	MR 1	3494	100	N/A	5	N/A	5	0
Bideford	MR 7	3173	100	N/A	5	N/A	5	0
Castlehill	HR 1	2017	100	45	N/A	76	N/A	0
Masterton Flats	HR 1	1482		40	3			
Masterton Flats	MR 1	3546		60	4			
Mt Bruce Waipoua	HMR 4	418	100	25	N/A	14	N/A	0
Mt Bruce Waipoua	HMR 5	642	100	25	N/A	30	N/A	0
Mt Bruce Waipoua	HR 1	3083	100	185	5	25	2	0
Mt Bruce Waipoua	HR 3	1799		100	3			
Mt Bruce Waipoua	HR 4	1816		50	3			
Mt Bruce Waipoua	MR 1	4266		100	5			
Mt Bruce Waipoua	MR 2	3301	95	150	5	28		0
Otaki Buffer	HMR 1	3023		150	5			
Otaki Buffer	HMR 2	1587		80	N/A		N/A	
Otaki Buffer	HR 1	2404		130	5			
Pakowhai	HR 1	1829	100	100	N/A	28	N/A	0
Whangaehu	HR 1	4583		250	5			
Whangaehu	HR 3	2375		50	3			
Whangaehu	MR 3	7123		40	5			
Totals		59426		1580	71	201	15	0

3.4 2009/10 pig survey

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

Project	Area (ha)	Progress	Estimated Samples	Samples received to date	Suspicious Tb samples	Positive Tb samples
Akatarawa	20,538	Commenced	30	37	2	3
Bideford	39,023	Commenced	40	22	2	0
Castle Hill	4,500	Commenced	30	26	0	0
East Alfredton	4,900	Commenced	20	5	0	0
Featherston	5,325	Completed	30	13	0	0
Homewood Riversdale	25,789	Commenced	120	86	0	0
Kapiti	22,486	Commenced	50	2	0	0
Mataikona	6,779	Commenced	40	50	0	1
Moonshine	6,250	Commenced	20	10	0	0
Otaki Crown	3,552	Commenced	15	11	0	0
Pakowai	6,910	Completed	60	61	0	0
Stronvar	25,976	Commenced	85	52	0	0
Te Wharau	13,995	Commenced	100	57	0	0
Tinui	35,675	Completed	120	154	2	0
Wellington	29,640	Commenced	50	24	0	0
Totals			810	610	6	4

3.5 Feral Deer Survey

A feral deer survey is currently underway within the Tararua Forest Park over approximately 88,500 hectares. This survey is being undertaken in conjunction with the normal activities of the contracted helicopter company.

To date 77 samples have been autopsied. None have yet been positively identified with bovine tuberculosis.

3.6 Feral Cattle Control

Feral cattle control has commenced in the South East Wairarapa operational areas for the 2009/10 year. Landowners destroyed three feral cattle in the Timbrel – Te Munga properties prior to Christmas. A further 2 feral cattle were shot on Timbrel from a helicopter on 17 February.

3.7 2009/10 Tender Rounds

Two of the 2009/10 projects will not be allocated this financial year. They are Moonshine HR 2 (930 ha) and HR 5 (1,108 ha) possum control projects. These projects were not allocated following AHB tender rounds. Even after the re-issue of the tender to a number of contractors who undertake vector control within the Southern North Island no interest was received by AHB.

3.8 Infected herds 2009/10

		I Herds @ June 2008	I Herds @ end of January 2010 (one clear test in brackets)	Target I Herds @ June 2010
VFA	Cattle	0	0	8
	Deer	0	0	
VRA	Cattle	5	4 (2)	
	Deer	0	0	

3.9 2010/11 Programme

In conjunction with AHB, Greater Wellington staff have provided a proposed vector control schedule for the 2010/11 year which includes

- 207,557 ha possum control
- 46,302 ha possum and ferret surveys
- 319,442 ha pig surveys
- 49 performance monitors
- 79 trend monitors

The proposed programme has an estimated cost of \$4.0m

AHB has completed a Registration of Interest for suitably qualified contractors to undertake vector control within the 2010/11 year.

Tender Round One has been let and closes 7 April 2010. It is envisaged these contracts will be awarded in May ready for contractors to commence work 1 June 2010. This parcel includes 52,000 ha of work from within the Wellington Region.

3.10 Holdsworth Woodside Crown

The Holdsworth Woodside Crown operation (7,300 ha) is proposed to be treated with aerial 1080 pellets within the 2010/11 year. This project was last treated in October 2003.

The project is split into three blocks and trend monitoring from 2008/09 indicated the following RTC results 11.58%, 7.94% and 9.46%

It is the intention to undertake this project in conjunction with the Department of Conservation's Project Kaka (22,000ha).

Graeme Butcher will project manage the AHB project with assistance from Elizabeth Howard (AHB).

AHB has advised that the Holdsworth Woodside Crown operation is to be open tendered and that activities are to be undertaken in compliance with the AHB standard operation procedures for aerial control.

Flood Protection (Graeme Campbell)

1. Manager's comments

The heavy workload being undertaken by the department has continued into the New Year with a major focus on the Waiwhetu project and the Boulcott stopbank.

In addition to the focus on these two major capital works staff have been working with the TA's to distribute flood hazard information for the Mangaroa, Waiwhetu, Hutt, Wainuiomata and Waiohine Rivers.

The distribution of the information has generated a considerable increase in requests for further information which is taking up staff time. These requests need to be responded to promptly and are taking effort away from other investigations work such as the Waingawa, Waikanae and Otaki scheme reviews and the Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan investigation. Staff are still progressing these investigations but the completion dates are likely to need extending.

The revised timetables will be reported as part of the normal progress reports for the respective projects.

More detail on the specific projects is given below.

2. Western Floodplain Management Plans [Daya Atapattu]

2.1 Ava to Ewen project

The Ava to Ewen project is now complete. The maintenance works including the tidying up of environmental plantings along the Opahu Stream and in Strand Park will continue to June 2010. The installation of lighting along the footpath from Wakefield Street to Ava Rail Bridge will commence in March 2010.

2.2 Boulcott/Hutt stopbank project

The 'merger Board' of the two golf clubs, with the help of the golf course consultant, is currently developing intermediate and final play sequence layouts for the merged course. The layout plans will help us to finalise the construction methodology and also to assess the extent of golf course features needing to be reinstated following stopbank construction. The two clubs are expecting to form a single entity by the end of March 2010.

On a request from Safeway Storage, staff are currently investigating a floodwall/stopbank alternative for the Safeway section of the stopbank. A meeting will be held with Safeway once the outcomes from these investigations are known.

We are currently updating the Notice of Requirement document with comments received from stakeholders and expect to lodge the applications during the first week of March 2010.

2.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank

Whirinaki Crescent stopbank construction works are now complete. Environmental plantings will be completed in March/April 2010 and maintenance works to establish a good grass cover will continue to June 2010.

2.4 Maoribank and Ebdentown works

Rock supply for Maoribank urgent works is slower than expected. However, work can still be completed before the end of May, prior to the commencement of the fish spawning season. A site visit with NZTA engineers was held on 22 February as part of our discussions with them for the renewal of the River Works Agreement and cost sharing for the Ebdentown works. Work will continue on renewing this agreement.

2.5 Kapiti floodplain management

2.5.1 Waikanae Floodplain Management Plan

The 10 year review of Waikanae Floodplain Management Plan has progressed to the stage where the detailed evaluation of the performance of the Plan has been completed and staff are currently finalising the summary document. Following completion of this document staff will be consulting with KCDC, affected parties and the wider community. The matter is covered in a separate report in this order paper.

2.5.2 Otaki Floodplain Management Plan

A tender was awarded to Infracon Aggregates for the supply of 1900 tonnes of rock for three rock groynes on the right bank of the Otaki River just upstream of the railway bridge. This project is part of the ongoing capital expenditure under the Otaki Floodplain Management Plan. It will provide permanent erosion flood protection to GW flood defences and the Otaki township at this vulnerable location.

It is also proposed that a further 1800 tonnes of rock be installed along the river edges around of the SH1 bridge piers. This work will be undertaken by the Flood Protection team under their existing consent and will be paid by NZTA.

Plans have been drawn up for a walkway between the car park behind the Flood Protection depot and the Chrystalls walkway entrance. This will provide a safer public walkway along side the haul road beneath the SH1 and rail bridges. The work is part of the environmental enhancement works associated with the Chrystalls Extended Stopbank.

2.5.3 Friends of the Waikanae River (FWR)

The group is consolidating restoration work this year with a major planting project to be started at the Oxbow opposite Otaihangā Domain in wintertime. The Friends have been nominated to receive Honda Treefund funding for restoration work on the Waikanae River corridor this year.

2.5.4 Friends of the Otaki River (FOTOR)

The Friends have completed their third milestone for Sustainable Management Funding from the Ministry for the Environment on 30th January. In 2010 work is continuing down at the Otaki Estuary in preparation for restoration planting over winter. The Friends have also been nominated to receive Honda Treefund funding for restoration work on the Otaki River corridor this year.

3. Western Operations – Jeff Evans

3.1 Hutt River

Work is running to programme. Rock is currently being delivered to a number of sites in preparation for rock line maintenance. Stock piles of excess fill have been removed from Barber Grove and this material has been used to fill low lying areas below the Ewen Bridge to help improve flood flows and prevent debris build up on the berm after flood events.

3.2 Hutt River ranging services

The “Great Gravel Grab” days on both the Hutt and Otaki Rivers had great turn outs and members of the public were very appreciative of getting the opportunity to get their cars and trailers loaded with gravel. It also gave staff the opportunity to promote flood protection and benefits the community gets from the work done in the region.

The river trail continues to get good usage over the summer period and swimmers have been out in force on the warmer days. Graffiti removal has been undertaken in the Ewen Bridge and Ava rail bridge areas by the Hutt City Probation Services. This is a free service to GW and the paint is supplied free by the Resenes Paint-wise Programme. GW provides brushes and other equipment for the work.

3.3 Otaki River

Programmes are running well. Rock rip rap has been delivered for a new groyne at Taylors, and an ongoing programme is still underway on the left bank stopbank to remove trees from the stopbank face.

3.4 Waikanae River

Rock has been delivered for the extension of the Otaihanga rock line. Work will also be done at the same time to remove trees and scrub from the small stopbank adjacent to the rock line and this will then be raised slightly and re-shaped for better maintenance.

3.5 Western watercourses

Maintenance on watercourses is progressing well. Waitohu Stream still requires work after the recent floods and there has been an increase in the number of enquiries from landowners requiring advice in rural areas in both Kapiti and Wellington.

4. Wairarapa Operations [Mike Longworth]

4.1 Wairarapa River Schemes

General

The work programmes in the Wairarapa rivers for 2009/10 are progressing with spraying under way as well as rock protection work construction. The new work programmes for 2010/11 are being developed for discussion at the annual scheme meetings in April.

Gravel

The gravel extraction returns for last year were 25% less than the previous year. The number of gravel licences issued so far this year is similar to previous years.

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

The land purchase for the gravel deposition area at the Tauanui delta is near completion and the stopbank construction has commenced. The stopbank will contain the gravel deposition from the Tauanui and the material to build the stopbank is being excavated from the Ruamahanga River channel where it was beginning to obstruct the channel.

4.2 Investigations and Technical Advice

Waingawa River Scheme Review

The next work involves 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.

River Management Consents

The existing global consents for carrying out the 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. Geoff Dick has been engaged to help with the process of varying the conditions of the existing consents. A successful work shop was held in early December 2009 with all the stakeholders to work through issues associated with the consents. The response to the workshop was positive so now a number of the workshop participants are working with Geoff to prepare suitable conditions for a variation to the consents.

In addition, there have been a number of site inspections of river protection works with Iwi and fishing interest representatives. This has been beneficial in understanding their specific concerns and providing an explanation of why the work is required and how future works can accommodate environmental habitat and recreational activities for the community.

Tawaha Catchment Diversion

The issue of the Tawaha drainage into the Whaka drain is being revisited again following a request made by John Barton to Geoff Dick when he was Divisional Manager. An initial report was submitted to the Committee last year. Further investigation and consultation with the LWVDS Advisory Committee is underway. A report to the Catchment Management Committee will be presented once investigations are completed.

Private Stopbanks around Lake Wairarapa Study

The study to investigate the state of private stopbanks and other private structures associated with preventing flooding around Lake Wairarapa has now been compiled into a report for Council information. The local community is being consulted on the study findings and possible options associated with the private structures. The results of the consultation will be brought back to the Council with recommendations for their consideration.

Waiohine Floodplain Management Plan

Work has progressed on the Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) for the Waiohine River floodplain. The hydraulic modelling has been finalised which has enabled new flood hazard maps to be prepared. These flood hazard maps will allow the remaining items in phase one of the FMP process to be completed. The new Waiohine Floodplain Management Advisory Committee elected Bruce Slater as chair at the inaugural meeting in late November. This meeting was also briefed on the work to date including the new flood extent maps from the river modelling. These have now been circulated to the community in a newsletter.

4.3 Drainage Schemes

A series of unplanned electrical and mechanical maintenance problems at three of the pump stations have meant that the overall budgets for the drainage schemes have been over expended. A report outlining the maintenance requirements into the future and the rate income to meet these costs was presented to meetings held with the five pump scheme committees in December 2009. The scheme committees agreed to significant rate increases in 2010/11 to repay scheme deficits build adequate reserves to cope with unplanned maintenance items.

5. Investigations and Assets [John Eyles]

5.1 Waiwhetu cleanup project

The excavation and removal of contaminated ooze continues from outside Hutt Park towards the Seaview Road Bridge. Additional bypass pumping resources have been applied to increase the number of cells that can be dewatered. This should allow for work on the critical path, such as the duplication of the Seaview treatment plant rising main duplication and other sewer infrastructure work to proceed faster. The current programme to complete the clean up is about 8 weeks behind, due to bad weather from October 2009, additional contaminated volumes and unforeseen services work.

Widening and deepening of the stream channel has been completed down to the Hutt Park Road Bridge.

The piling work in the U channel has been completed with the last hard pile installed on 3 February. Altogether some 1500 soft and hard piles have been installed along the walls of the U channel. The precast facing panels have been installed up to 200m.

The minutes from the Waiwhetu Stream Advisory Subcommittee meetings held on 10 November 2009 and 3 February are included in a separate paper.

5.2 Pinehaven flood hazard assessment

Stage one of the project, to deliver flood hazard maps for the Pinehaven Stream, is complete. A draft report has been delivered and officers from both councils will meet shortly to discuss the next stages. A project scope for the next stage (options identification) will be developed in the first quarter 2010.

5.3 Asset management

As at January 2010, 167 notifications have been lodged within SAP for work, 645 works orders have been created to a total value of \$2,063,768, with total planned costs for the year at \$4,553,364.

Over the next few months, staff will continue to optimise business and operational processes within SAP to identify better ways of working with SAP as a Department.

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 5 January – 18 February 2010. These include information requests from the public, local authorities and also Flood Protection comment on resource consent applications to GWRC.

	5 January – 18 February 2010	YTD
Requests brought forward	0	6
Additional requests received	46	212
Responses provided	39	210
Outstanding requests	7	8

Over this period, the Strategy and Technical Support team have been working with Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) officers with the consultation letters and maps for the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan District Plan Change. These have gone out, and staff are now dealing with requests for information from those affected by the changes.

A letter with attached maps of the Draft Mangaroa River Flood and Erosion Hazard Mapping and Design River Channel Alignment Plans has been sent out to property owners at the beginning of January 2010. Staff are now setting up working groups with interested community members to work with the information in setting a floodplain management plan for the Mangaroa River.

The information sheets sent out in January with Hutt City Council regarding flood and erosion hazard from the Wainuiomata River, Hutt River and Waiwhetu/Awamutu Streams has received considerable public response. This is also generating a considerable volume of further requests for information from people wishing for more detail regarding the specific flood effects on their property.

Additionally, we have assisted Greater Wellington Environmental Policy in the submission on New Zealand Standard DZ 4404: Land development and subdivision and presenting evidence at the hearing for Wellington City Council Plan Change 70 - Earthworks.

Land Management (Dave Cameron)

1. Manager's comments

1.1 Access Agreement – Akura stopbank

In 2002 an Access Agreement was signed between Greater Wellington and Michael Daniell who owned a dairy farm along the eastern boundary of Akura nursery. The Agreement allowed Mr Daniell to use the stopbank at the northern end of Akura to move dairy cows from the home block to the Edmonds lease on the western side of Akura. This Agreement has functioned reasonably well over the years except for the odd escape into the nursery.

The frequency of these escapes heightened in early 2009 and since March 2009 there have been three documented escapes, the last of which caused damage to newly planted seedlings. A number of conversations were held with Mr Daniell each requesting an upgrade of the laneway fence and some other additional fence improvements. On 23rd December Mr Daniell was issued with a notice seeking the agreed improvements to be in place by 8 January 2010. An inspection on 15 January 2010 revealed minimal work had taken place.

A site visit was arranged for 5 February 2010 issuing notice that the Agreement would be terminated on 5 March 2010 (20 working days) if the agreed fence improvements were not in place and/or were not of an appropriate standard. At the time of writing good progress was being made.

1.2 Ballance Farm Environment Awards

The Farm Environment Awards (FEA) are entering their ninth season. As with previous years it takes a large amount of time to gather a relatively small number of entries. This year a total of 12 entries have been received which is in line with the number of entries received in the last 4/5 years. There is a good spread of entries across all categories including the dairy sector. It is often difficult to get one entry in this category.

Final judging has been completed and results will be announced at the Awards ceremony to be held on 22 April 2010. A field day will be arranged for the winning property in late May.

1.3 Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) and Envirolink Applications

At this time of year a number of SFF and Envirolink applications are nearing completion of the Stage II information requirements. Land Management is looking to support two applications at this stage. Both will be supported with in-kind contributions which generally require assistance with field days, information sharing, farmer group meetings or identification of trial sites.

“Making sense of farmer observations and climate science to improve on-farm decision making” seeks support in sharing climatic data from GW's rainfall sites and ensuring

that consistent terminology is used by providers of climate information. Additionally we would support information sharing with the various farmer groups that will be set up to provide practical input into the decision making tools.

“*Soil hydrophobicity*” is a term used to describe a soil if it repels water. Under drought conditions soils can become hydrophobic which leads to a reduction in soil moisture, poor pasture growth, increased runoff, and delays in soils becoming wet in the autumn. Under predicted climate change and a higher frequency of droughts in the east coast of both islands, soil hydrophobicity could have major economic implications. The study will focus on increased understanding of the phenomenon and mitigation techniques to reduce its effects.

1.4 Issues for the next period

- WRECI strategy completed and a start on WRECI Sustainability Plan preparation
- Completion of summer works programme for Catchment schemes
- Publicise and promote next AGS closing date (31 March 2010)

2. Farm Plans (Don Bell)

2.1 Delegated approvals - New Plans, Reviews and Annual Programmes

Approvals to Date 2010/11	Approved to Date	Annual Plan Targets	Budget Estimates	Expenditure to date
WRECI Plans	-	10	\$80,000	-
New Sustainability Plans	-	3	\$15,000	-
New Conservation Plans	2	2	\$4,000	\$3,680
Ten Year Reviews	9	20	\$60,000	\$29,167
Annual Programmes	72	130	\$195,000	\$73,797
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 	145	130	\$399,200	\$565,000
Isolated works	5	10	\$2,700	\$10,000

2.2 Highlights

Plan preparation and programming

Preparation of reviews and annual programmes continues to be the focus of activity for this time of year. Letters to ascertain interest in pole and seedling planting have gone out to all Plan holders. Helicopter operators have received letters requesting their registration of interest in pole spreading and willow spraying contracts for this coming season.

The favourable growing season has resulted in new native plantings in our riparian and other biodiversity projects requiring additional treatment to release them from long grass.

Willow and blackberry spraying in the Papawai Stream has been scheduled over the 450 metre reach cleared of willows last year, with the intention that it will be ready for planting this winter if funds are available.

Promotion and education

Land Management staff shared duties on the Greater Wellington display at the Masterton A&P show.

International visitors from the Montreal Process (Sustainable Management of NZ Forests) were hosted at Akura Conservation Centre and taken to Peter Gawith's property at Longbush to view the integration of trees into a farmed landscape.

Coastal dune reclamation programmes

Angela Stead (Land Management Officer) has organised eco-sourced seed collection for the Riversdale and Whangamoana sites, including spinifex, knobby clubrush and pingao.

WRECI (Andrew Stewart)

The WRECI implementation strategy was presented to the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee (WHCAC) on 1 February 2010, and received very good feedback. The first community meeting in the Whareama catchment is to be held on 4th March 2010 to allow more time to adjust the strategy and the draft WRECI Plan after comments from the WHCAC committee.

Plan preparation by our consultant has commenced following confirmation of the Plan format. The first 10 properties have been selected through a scoring system which assesses various criteria to provide a ranking order within the Whareama catchment.

The student working on the poplar and willow pole stands mapping project has completed the summer work with 38 properties being mapped. The full programme is intended to be completed during the next university break in April. This information will feed directly into individual WRECI plans, and will be used to monitor progress with the WRECI programme.

3. Akura Conservation Centre (Stan Braaksma)

3.1 Nursery operations

There has been a very active phase of growth in poplars and willows since the beginning of February with adequate soil moistures and warmer daily temperatures. New cuttings have advanced to well above 1 metre after a slow start and higher weed infestation.

The Wairarapa College climate site recorded 52.4mm, 205.4mm and 24.0mm rainfall for December, January and February (to date) respectively. Soil moisture percentages dropped to 21% in early January, which coincided with moisture stress to poplars and willows and early leaf senescence. By the final week in January soil moistures had risen to 62% which is near field capacity for this soil (Tauherenikau shallow silt loam). The current soil moisture reading at Wairarapa College is 32%. Akura is situated on Carterton shallow silt loams, a soil with greater moisture holding capacity.

3.2 Poplar and willow rusts

Last report it was noted that there were heavy poplar rust infestations in the Tyler block on the north-west corner of Akura and the evidence of rust in Toa poplar at Mangapakeha. The climatic conditions since have been very variable with good summer rainfalls and extraordinary high humidity.

Poplar Rust has spread through most of Akura, and is assessed as light to moderate in Veronese blocks and Tasman poplar shelterbelts, with a heavy infestation on Toa poplar. In addition the willow rusts have arrived at Akura. Mangapakeha poplar rust is rated as light to moderate at present. A regular three weekly rust spray programme has been maintained, although it has been difficult to apply consistently during the recent wet weather.

3.3 Pruning and general maintenance

Mowing of headlands and inter-row mowing has been of necessity and very time consuming. Similarly control of rampant growth of weeds such as Elderberry, Blackberry, Convolvulus and Wandering Willy has required a regular spray programme.

Contractors have completed leader pruning on new cuttings, and stump pruning is being delayed until less humid conditions prevail.

The irrigator has been repaired after straddling a poplar row and destroying a short section of poles. It has become evident that to operate with maximum confidence a row of parent stock needs to be removed to allow a five metre wide path for irrigator travel along. To complete this now would compromise 1500 three metre poles of this winter's production. Removal of these rows will take place only where pole production is not compromised. Those rows that have saleable poles will be removed after harvest.

Three blocks at Mangapakeha are still struggling to recover from metsulfuron spray drift from an adjacent forestry spraying operation last October. The helicopter company involved has accepted liability. Some remedial work is required to ensure that the form and shape of the new growth will not compromise future pole production. Recovery of the affected trees has been very slow.

3.4 Trading

A number of AGS (Afforestation Grant Scheme) applicants are being approached to confirm GW as their agents for tree establishment. Once final confirmations are obtained there will be a need to review current seedling orders. It is likely that these will be increased as a result of AGS applications.

Budget Plastics Ltd from Palmerston North is expected to pick up the first batch of recycled Dynex sleeves this week. This is a major breakthrough as the nursery will receive payment and not have to account for the cartage costs.

Native seed collection is well underway with 50% of the species on the list collected and forwarded to Morgan's Road Nursery for propagation.

3.5 Budget

The Akura Business Unit has an operating surplus at the end of January 2010 of \$64,800 against a budgeted annual surplus of \$28,600. The end of year forecast has been revised as part of the Six Month review to show a surplus of \$2,100.

The Nursery unit is exhibiting a surplus of \$3,400 after seven months. The forecast position at year end will be a loss of \$17,300 (c.f budgeted loss of \$11,500). This forecast adjustment is the result of additional rust spraying and mowing costs associated with the very wet summer. Additionally there are increased financial costs associated with the cost overrun on the irrigation upgrade.

The January result for Trading is shows a surplus of \$61,400 which is slightly below budget. The forecasted end of year result is a surplus of \$19,400 (c.f budgeted surplus \$40,100). This shift of some \$20,000 is a result of reduced gate sales, probably as a result of reduced income for dairy farmers and a noticeable absence of lifestyle block owners.

Activity	Operating Surplus – Annual Budget 2009/10	Operating Surplus - Actual January 2010
Nurseries	(14,300)	3,400
Trading	42,900	61,400
Total	28,600	64,800

4. Biodiversity (Jacki Byrd)

4.1 Ongoing works

Budgeted environmental weed control and release spraying is complete on the 70 active Streams Alive sites, primarily in the Waitohu and Mangaroa catchments. Additional environmental weed control is being done by Upper Hutt Community Max staff on various Mangaroa properties.

A number of site visits with landowners have been carried out to assess new planting sites for this winter. Most of these continue to be in the Mangaroa catchment, where demand for riparian plantings is high from new landowners of lifestyle blocks.

4.2 Community Max

Planning meetings have been attended with Kapiti Coast District Council to discuss a Community Max team operating on the Mangapouri Stream in Otaki. At the time of writing, funding for this team has not been confirmed by Work and Income New Zealand. If the team is funded, they will carry out environmental weed control on the stream for around 90 days.

4.3 Expenditure to date

	Budget 2009/10	Expenditure to January 2010	% of Budget
Riparian Management	\$196,200	\$162,400	82.8%
Streams Alive	\$100,000	\$85,885	85.9%

5. Operations (Kevin Burdan)

5.1 Silviculture

Activity	Completed	\$	Annual Plan Target (hectares)	Year to date	\$
Thinning	38.3ha	12,262	100	67.7ha	41,020
Pruning	13.0ha	8,794	100	34.1ha	33,532
Total	51.3ha	21,056	200	101.8ha	74,552

- Silviculture was carried out on four properties during the last four weeks.
- Silviculture has been completed on ten properties this financial year.

- A number of willow piles in the Whareama catchment have been burned using the forestry pumps to control the blazes.

5.2 Forestry

- A further thirty kilometres of track spraying on the forestry roads has been completed, along with four kilometres of fence repair at Stoney Creek.
- Gorse and blackberry spraying has taken place at Stoney Creek.

BioWorks (Richard Grimmett)

The business unit completed re-registration with the AHB during December. BioWorks has now been reassessed and scored at 100% of contract requirements. Regular communication with AHB has resulted in delivery of the proposed 2010/11 Preferred Supplier programme for discussion and planning. This is a much improved position and will allow labour resource planning and assessment of open tenders to be completed with knowledge of capacity already committed to the preferred supplier contracts.

The new target of completing preferred supplier contract negotiations during March each year and having the first open tender completed in May is on track. The key part that BioWorks will play is to be proactive and offer work plans ahead of deadlines and actively negotiate project costs to hasten delivery of contract offers. This will allow the unit to respond to labour resource demands and be at operational capacity for the full year from July.

During early February, BioWorks reviewed and attended a meeting to submit comments on the AHB Aerial Operations Procedure document. This is a weighty document and has required a lot of input. We received an offer to submit a evidence to qualify for aerial tenders. This is over and above the original application to be accepted as a contractor for AHB contracts

The crews are focused on surveys at present with late March completion deadlines. Areas being worked at present are Western and Northern Wairarapa, Hutt Valley and Otaki. Many of the operations at present require control and concurrent surveys (possum & ferret) within the same strata area. Once set up in an area they can concentrate on the multiple tasks.

Contract Operations Progress				
AHB	In Progress	Await Monitor	Completed for Payment	Overall %
2008/09 Reworks 2 Strata 1846 Ha			2 Strata 1846 Ha	100%
2008/09 Aerial carry over 2 Strata 5952 Ha			2 Strata 5952 Ha	100%
2009/10 13 Projects 47 Strata 134,149Ha	6 Strata 13,496Ha 10.1%	2 Strata 4,147 Ha 3.1%	17 Strata 38,608 Ha 28.78%	41.98%
Re-Works	0	0	0	0%
Biosecurity Mt Bruce Pukaha 50 man days			33 man days	66%

Integrated Catchment (Ian Gunn)

The supercatchments document has been edited and the natural hazards section has been updated.

A database has been compiled as the basis of the engagement strategy for Te Upoko Taio. The engagement strategy has a number of elements including pre-engagement, a listening phase and a focus group phase. The listening phase at the present time will involve at least 15 meetings within the region based on a combination of location and catchment.

Research continues on the development of a grazing policy for public land within the Wairarapa Moana boundary. The Department of Conservation are currently reviewing their grazing leases/licences. They have made the decision to require the lessee to keep stock out of waterways as a condition of the lease. This will also require the lessee to develop water sources for their animals. The rationale behind the development of this policy is to show that the partners in the project are serious about improving the water quality within the Wairarapa Moana environment. Land held by Greater Wellington is grazed under licence. Land associated with stopbanks is required to be fenced on the riverside of the stopbank. On the lakeshore the focus is protecting vegetation. The lakeshore licences will expire in 2014.

Greater Wellington, along with four other regional councils, is working to develop a set of benchmarks for flood protection activities. There are likely to be between three and five benchmarks. The principles being used in their development focus on simplicity and taking the opportunity to highlight the wide variety of benefits which accrue from flood management works, eg the importance of planning and flood warning systems. A first draft has been prepared and is open for discussion at the present time.

Forestry (Barry Leonard)

Review of operations for the period ended 31 January 2010

1. Plantation Forests (Wellington)

1.1 Log Harvest Contract

Prices gained some ground in January, with shipping and the exchange rate remaining substantially the same as December. Normally Rayonier New Zealand Ltd sets its "At Wharf Gate" price at the beginning of the month and does not amend it until the following month. There was a surprise when the January prices increased over December only to advance further mid-month. I presume this change was related to the Christmas break.

	\$ Grade price at wharf gate				
	AO	A	K	KI	KX
July 2009	73.84	67.65	61.46	55.26	42.88
August	82.32	76.27	71.73	65.67	52.05
September	82.96	77.12	72.75	66.91	56.70
October	82.98	77.41	73.22	67.65	57.89
November	83.40	77.90	73.78	68.29	58.67
December	91.78	86.16	81.94	76.32	66.49
(Korea)	85.35	83.94	81.13	72.70	54.44
January 2010	91.66	86.09	81.91	76.34	66.58
February	114.92	109.22	104.95	92.12	89.26

Domestic prices have now fallen behind the equivalent export grades and are anticipated to fall further behind this month. Domestic prices are renegotiated each quarter and are due for renegotiation prior to April 2010. In the meantime we are attempting to meet our traditional orders.

With Eurocell back in business and good demand from Davis and Kiwi Masterton, we are struggling to source sufficient sawlogs to supply all their orders. The two Tuckey crews are in Ragwort Hill and Maori Redoubt, both of which would have been expected to provide good volumes of S grade (sawlogs). To date (18 February) we have supplied 14 loads to Davis and 17 loads to Kiwi against orders of 23 loads to Davis and 21 to Kiwi. Unfortunately Rayonier New Zealand Ltd is finding difficulty sourcing sawlog from its other harvesting operations. Log 5, the ground based crew, is working in Centre South but are unfortunately just off the main ridge, with very little sawlog due to the effects of the prevailing winds.

Earlier this month we harvested the Farm Forestry Block on behalf of the Wellington Branch of the Farm Forestry Association. This body leases approximately 5 hectares within Valley View for use as a demonstration plot for their members. Within this block was a small stand of pruned trees, which produced a stumpage of \$34,700. In

the terms of our agreement, 50 percent of this sum was paid to Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC).

Log 36, the hauler crew, harvested 2,161 tonnes for \$88,695 from Boiler Gully. Log 6, as a ground based crew, harvested 1,115 tonnes for \$42,716 wind-throw from Ragwort Hill and Log 5 1,801 tonnes for \$63,448. The respective average returns were \$41.04, \$31.30 and \$35.22 per tonne. A further 41.4 tonnes at \$1,855 were uplifted from the previous Log 6 skid in Maori Redoubt. In total, January returned \$197,367 from 5,119 tonnes with the contribution from the Farm Forestry increasing returns to \$214,707.

Year to date we have harvested a total of 38,333 tonnes for \$855,712 at an average of \$22.32.

1.2 Silviculture Contract

In January 17.55 hectares of silviculture were completed at a cost of \$17,301.

To date 36 percent of the 2009/10 contract silviculture has been completed.

1.3 Plantation forestry operations

The weather improved in January and the higher temperatures minimised the effects of the rain we did have.

With Log 5 returning, tonnages were improved which enhanced the benefits from improving prices.

The Valley View roads still required regular maintenance, which was carried out without disruption to logging trucks. A short length of new track was constructed into Maori Redoubt and the road through Grattons upgraded and hydra-mown to allow the harvest of the wind-throw at Ragwort Hill.

We have traditionally had about one truck in 20 stall at about the 8.7 km in Valley View on the hill out of the Farm Forestry Block and the bottom of Maori Redoubt. This has appeared to be driver miscalculation but it still caused disruption while the truck was towed. We were fortunate to acquire about 20 plus loads of millings, so we have "paved" the worst part of the hill in the hope it will overcome this problem. So far so good.

It is now proposed to harvest the eucalypts at Raupo Saddle and load them out through Grattons. We can export the eucalypt at the same grade structure and price as radiata. It is necessary to upgrade the road through Raupo Saddle to enable logging trucks to access the two Lindsays Blocks. This would have required about 20 of the eucalypts to be sacrificed. It made better sense to take the lot while we have a market.

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. The proposal to log the neighbour's forest through Maungakotukutuku has been delayed and no progress has been made. All main roads are in good order.

1.5 Market trends

Demand seems to be unending and prices continue to rise each month with predictions of this trend holding for some time. This increased demand is reflected with more frequent congestion at the Port of Wellington delaying trucks.

Domestic markets continue to improve, with increasing orders from Kiwi Masterton and Davis at Featherston. Eurocell has now reopened and is taking all available sawlog after Davis' orders have been filled. Two issues have arisen - firstly, we are having a problem filling our traditional orders from Davis and Kiwi, so there is little product left for Eurocell. Secondly, we have now reached the stage where the "At Wharf Gate" prices exceed the domestic prices for a higher grade log.

The New Zealand dollar dropped a little in January and appeared to be trending in the right direction. Unfortunately just recently it has started to firm again. Shipping rates remain in the mid-forties but are expected to ease over the year.

1.6 2010-2014 Forest Harvest and Marketing Contracts

Progress is being made on negotiating the two new Forestry Harvesting and Marketing Contracts.

2. Reserve Forests

2.1 Tauanui logging

Despite abnormally wet conditions, the logging crew worked through some difficult terrain to produce 906 tonnes of logs for the month.

Their target had been 1,000 tonnes for the holiday shortened month and this would have been achieved if more trucks had been available at the end of the month. Trucks were diverted to other logging operations around the Wairarapa to clear stockpiles that had developed as a result of trucks being unable to access the sites during rainy periods.

The buoyant export market (particularly to China) helped generate a net \$33.30 per tonne for the month (\$26.22 for the previous month).

The area logged required more individual log winching than usual, as it was above an area that had been logged to its limits from below and could not be reached from above by the digger grapple.

2.2 Roadside spraying

Spraying in Tauanui and Hiwinui to remove encroaching gorse was completed during January.

Gorse mite activity was noted near the rain gauge site in Tauanui.

2.3 Fence maintenance

Repairs were required on the Stoney Creek/Manahau Station boundary fence to extend the life of the existing fence by increasing stock proofing in the interim.

Manahau Station is seeking replacement of a large part of this boundary fence, which we have supplemented with an electric outrigger over the last 20 years. They had not been prepared to contribute to any maintenance since GWRC has owned the Stoney Creek property. We are looking to renew (50 percent share basis) part of this fence next financial year.

2.4 Fire danger

Periodic rainfall to a total of 145 mm for the month has created a sustained period of lower than seasonally normal fire danger. The restricted fire season on the Wairarapa coastal margin has recently been removed. This is a marked difference to the prohibited fire season normally in place at this time of the year.