

Flood Protection Manager's report for period ending 7 November 2003

1. Manager's comments

1.1 Flood event of 3 October 2003

On Friday, 3 October 2003 an active front preceded by strong northerly winds brought widespread rain to the Hutt and other western region catchments. In the 16 hours from 8.00am to midnight on 3 October 2003, 100-150mm of rain fell in the higher ranges of the Hutt catchment. A concentrated rain band extended across the region from Paekakariki to Mangaroa.

The rain did lead to flood events in the Hutt, Otaki or Waikanae Rivers (details later in the report), however, it was not widespread enough to cause concern in these systems. Paekakariki however, was badly hit and the Whakatikei and Mangaroa Rivers had flood peaks of 60 and 11 years respectively. The event also caused significant flooding in the Horokiri and Moonshine Streams, leading to a number of calls from landowners for advice on flood and erosion repairs.

Overall damage to the Western river and stream systems managed by Council was light and repairs can be managed from within existing maintenance budgets.

1.2 Ohariu/Makara Community Board meeting

Sharyn Westlake and I attended a Makara/Ohariu Community Board meeting on 16 October 2003. We had been invited to discuss flooding and stream management issues for the Makara and Ohariu Streams. Recent flooding in the area had prompted the Committee Chair to issue the invite.

Currently we have little presence in the Makara/Ohariu area. Under the Administration of Watercourse Agreement with Wellington City Council (WCC) we remain responsible for "administration" of the Makara and Ohariu Streams, being a rural area. This responsibility is largely discharged through occasional flooding and erosion advice to landowners. Greater Wellington has also historically been responsible for cutting the Makara Stream mouth and we have also helped WCC remove dumped cars from the Stream.

The meeting ended with an offer to set up a site visit with the Community Board members to inspect the streams, and review current arrangements such as the Makara Stream mouth cutting.

1.3 Hutt River planting

Following the discussion at the last meeting about the need to retain views of the river, I checked the Hutt River Environmental Strategy to see what this document had to say. The Strategy provides for a mix of open and planted areas, and where necessary the opening up of views to the river by introducing gaps or pruning. I have reminded the Flood Protection team to keep this in mind when planning any planting, construction or maintenance work.

2. Waikanae River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]

2.1 Friends of the Waikanae River

The main Friends activity over the last month was the walkover on 22 October 2004. Approximately 30 people attended. No major issues arose out of the walkover but there is certainly a strong desire within the group to continue the restoration work, and an acknowledgement that the development in the Waikanae area is increasing the pressure for recreational use on the river.

2.2 Capital works

Work is progressing on the two major activities for the year as follows:

Otaihanga floodwall

The tenders for the Otaihanga domain floodwall have been received and are within budget. An appointment was made on 6 November 2003. Precasting of the wall panels will be done prior to Christmas with onsite construction programmed to start in February 2004. Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) have provided their approval of the works. A landowner agreement has also been signed by Greater Wellington and KCDC.

Jim Cooke Park realignment

Negotiations with the major landowner affected by the works are continuing.

3. Otaki River floodplain management [Graeme Campbell]

3.1 Friends of the Otaki River

The annual walkover was held on 15 October 2003 and the AGM on 29 October 2003. Both meetings were well attended. The key focus for the Friends over the next year will be an open day at Chrystalls Bend, the opening of the Winstones walkway and continuing with the Care Group Project. The same Executive Committee was re-elected and the organisation of the group is expected to continue as usual. Kim Wall, our new Environmental Planner will be our facilitator and point of contact for the Group from here forward (Kim takes over from Trecia Smith).

3.2 Flood hazard mapping

Hydraulic modelling of a revised haul road stopbank breach is now substantially complete. Following a public meeting in Otaki to discuss our draft flood hazard maps, we critically reassessed the most likely breach location along the Chrystalls extended reach and have now modelled this. New maps are now being prepared which we consider provide a better representation of the current flood hazard to Otaki township.

The Waikanae flood hazard map is expected to remain largely the same. The Mangaone Stream flood hazard map is being corrected to ensure that the mapping of the hydraulic model results more closely follows the actual ground contours.

Draft responses to the consultation submissions are now being prepared for handing to KCDC to issue the formal responses. This work should be completed by December 2003.

Our current thoughts are to provide the Landcare Committee with an update report on the revised flood hazard maps for the Kapiti Coast at the February 2004 meeting. We then expect to be in a position to recommend revised maps to the Landcare Committee at the March meeting. Once approved, the draft maps will then be forwarded to KCDC for notifying the District Plan change in April 2004.

3.3 Rock protection works

Planning for the design and construction of 100m of new rock wall downstream from the existing Chrystalls Bend works is well underway. The annual plan provides for further strengthening works between the SH1 bridge and the mouth but the erosion occurring at Chrystalls is considered to be of a much higher priority and we have therefore allocated the spending to this reach.

4. Hutt River floodplain management [Daya Atapattu]

4.1 Ava to Ewen project

We are pleased to advise that the Strand Park land transfer is now complete. Settlement occurred on 23 October 2003 and Greater Wellington now holds the land.

A marginal strip has been created, where the Strand Park land joins the river, following the transfer of the land from the Crown (Ministry of Education). To ensure access to the marginal strip we have been required to submit an application for a concession with the Department of Conservation (DOC). This application was lodged with the DOC on 3 October 2003 and a decision is expected in November 2003. Rob Forlong and Geoff Dick made a presentation to the Wellington Conservation Board on 10 October 2003 in support of the application.

We expect to appoint the contractor for the Strand Park river realignment by late November 2003. Council approved the tender of Cashmore Contracting Limited in February 2003. A number of items have to be attended to including contract works insurance, new completion dates, and cost adjustments, before we can formally appoint the contractor.

The contract completion dates for the river realignment and planting are May 2005 and August 2005 respectively.

4.2 Belmont improvements

The contractor for the Belmont edge protection improvements was appointed on 15 October 2003. Work will commence in early November 2003. Once the contractor's programme is approved, we will prepare and distribute an information sheet to Belmont residents advising them of the timing for the various components of the improvement project.

Environmental and restoration planting will be carried out separately by Flood Protection staff. We will seek community involvement with the environmental planting.

Design of the stopbank at the southern end of Norfolk Street is largely complete with construction planned for February/March 2004. We aim to complete all Belmont improvement works by June 2004.

4.3 Whirinaki Crescent stopbank upgrade

Topographical survey and geo-technical field investigations for the preliminary upgrade design are complete. While we were not able to enter St. Patrick's College land to survey, we now have sufficient information to proceed with the preliminary design.

We plan to meet Wellington Golf Club, Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) officers and the Silverstream College Board of Proprietors in November 2003 to discuss the proposed upgrade and associated flood protection issues.

4.4 Port Road improvements

Hutt City Council's (HCC) consultants have prepared a draft vision for the Seaview area including the adjacent section of the eastern Hutt River bank. Once the HCC approves the vision, we plan to meet with HCC's landscape designers to jointly develop an edge protection and landscape design for the section of riverbank from the Waiwhetu Stream mouth to the Estuary.

Investigations to date suggest that the existing river bank protections works from the Estuary Bridge to the Waiwhetu Stream mouth will need to be totally rebuilt. Most likely this will involve capping the existing demolition concrete with rock.

We have allowed \$30,000 per year in the Hutt River maintenance budget to gradually repair the existing Port Road demolition works. However, given that the repairs in the Estuary Bridge to Waiwhetu Stream reach, are now more likely to take the form of a total rebuild we will need to consider whether it may be more appropriate to implement the proposed works through the capital works programme.

4.5 Non-structural implementation

HCC and UHCC officers are progressing with their respective plan change processes.

Debbie Cunningham is co-ordinating the six emergency management projects scheduled for 2003/04. A good start has been made by all three councils to get these projects underway.

Work has also begun on producing a flooding hazard fact sheet for the Hutt floodplain. We expect to complete a draft by February 2004.

4.6 Hutt River bed level survey

Connell Wagner Limited have been appointed to undertake the Hutt River bed level re-survey. This five-yearly survey will provide information for monitoring gravel bed movement for gravel extraction and general river management purposes. It will also provide river channel profiles for monitoring the hydraulic capacity of the river.

The survey will be followed by a gravel analysis to be completed by June 2004.

5. Planning and development services [Phillip Purves]

The following summarises the formal, written requests for information or advice attended to during September and October 2003:

	September 2003	YTD
Requests brought forward	18	29
Additional requests received	21	41
Responses provided	20	51
Outstanding requests	19	19

The major planning issue at present remains the proposed changes to the flood hazard maps in the KCDC District Plan. Progress with this project is reported in Section 3, Otaki River floodplain management.

The Flood Protection Department has had the gold status of its Environmental Management System confirmed by Enviro-Mark©, following the September 2003 audit.

6. Investigations [Phillip Purves]

6.1 Waitohu flood hazard assessment

The hydraulic model is now largely complete, except for some calibration adjustments. The model results will allow new draft flood hazard maps to be produced for community consultation purposes. Field work for the river morphology and sedimentation investigations is now complete and the analysis is underway.

Following discussion with officers from the Environment Division we are now looking to expand the consultation phase of the project to include water quality and ecological health issues. This joint initiative with the Environment Division, still being finalised, will enable a more holistic approach to be taken in our discussions with the community.

7. Operations

7.1 Wellington [Jeff Evans]

Hutt River

The heavy rain on the evening of 3 October 2003 was, thankfully, not concentrated on all the main tributaries. While the main Hutt River recorded a four-year return period event, the Whakatikei River experienced a 60-year event and the Mangaroa a 12-15 year event.

It was pleasing to note that the protection works on the Hutt River came through relatively unscathed by the flood event. Damage to protection works was largely limited to minor damage of several of the rock groynes. This is a major change from similar floods as little as five years ago when much more significant damage would have been expected.

Our asset management systems and capital works programmes seem to be paying off. There was some superficial damage to many of the river access tracks and plenty of flood debris left to clear from the river berms. This kept the firewood hunters happy for several weeks. Repair costs can be accommodated within the existing budgets.

The willow layering programme has now been completed, and many of the willows layered are already starting to take root along the exposed bank edges.

The Marsden bend rock lining has been topped up and reshaped. 420 tonnes of rock was placed to repair holes and reinforce the eroded toe of the rock line.

The design of new signage for the Hutt River has now been approved. Replacement signs have a new look with the new council logo and international visual information symbols, and will be larger. The upgrade is a significant investment.

Hutt River Trail

Weed spraying on the trail was completed over the period, and work has now started on repair of the recent flood damage.

Hutt River ranging service

Patrolling and ranging services continue. With the warmer weather people are coming out in larger numbers to enjoy the river.

We liaised closely with Biosecurity over the 1080 poison control programme in the Hutt catchment. After heavy rain activated the alarm, signs had to be installed along the length of the river warning dog owners about the dangers of possible poisoning. Most dog owners were responsible and accepted what was happening, but there were some negative comments from some of the public. After a month the all clear was given and the signs have now been removed.

Seven bird monitoring transects have been established along the river, with eight separate readings to be completed by mid November.

A raft race was held from Totara Park to Moonshine by the combined Upper Hutt secondary schools and supported by UHCC. There have also been a number of less formal events happening on most fine weekends, with picnics, church cycle rides along the river trail, and harrier and walking groups also keeping active.

Watercourses

Numerous fallen trees have been removed from various streams in the region after the recent spate of bad weather. A stream run has now been completed in the Pinehaven Stream, and tethering work and channel shaping completed in the Wainuiomata River.

A 20-metre section of stream edge retaining wall has also been replaced in the Porirua Stream at Glenside, after it failed in a recent flood event.

Work for other departments

We recently completed repair works to the Pukehinau cableway for NIWA and also replaced the solar panels at the Te Marua river station, for Resource Investigations, after they were stolen.

We have also assisted the Harbours Department in the servicing of their oil spill response equipment – the Flood Protection team based at Mabey Road form part of the tier-two oil spill response plan.

7.2 Kapiti [Garry Baker]

General

The Otaki and Waikanae Rivers were lucky to miss the worst of the heavy rain that fell on 3 October 2003. The Otaki and Waikanae Rivers had peak flows of <2 and 4–5 year return periods respectively.

The storm however, heavily hit Paekakariki resulting in flooding of the township and a major gravel build-up upstream of the State Highway. The storm also caused several slips on the Paekakariki Hill Road and closed State Highway 1 at the Service Station, causing major disruptions to travel plans. Cleaning up of private properties and public roads and facilities is still being carried out.

Flood Protection assisted a landowner immediately north of Paekakariki to re-establish a short length of Smiths Creek adjacent to his farm house and implement shed. The storm brought down a large amount of gravel filling the old creek bed and flooding the adjacent sheds.

Otaki River

Two further “trial bays” of alternative species of alder, flax, poplars, wattle and willows were planted by Wairarapa and Otaki-based staff at the Lutz’ debris fences, Upper Rahui.

Over 700 native trees and plants were planted by staff at Chrystalls Lagoon and along the banks of the Waimanu Stream. Species included totara, matai, rimu, maire, hebe, flax, cabbage trees, coprosmas, etc.

Watercourses

Following approaches made by property owners the Waimeha Stream was realigned on Friday, 10 October 2003. We are always reluctant to carry out any river or stream mouth activities during the whitebait season (and especially when this season is proving to be a bumper one). Extensive advertising through the local radio and news media, along with hand-delivered notices to whitebaiters during the previous week kept the number of complaints to only two. These were more of a “grumble”, rather than a genuine or serious complaint, once the threat to households and foreshore re-vegetation was explained.

We have also cut the Waitohu Stream mouth. The major landowner at the mouth was concerned at the damage being sustained to the dunes to the north. Following a site check, that showed that two of the “trigger points” in the Regional Coastal Plan were met, we realigned the stream mouth on Wednesday, 5 November 2003. Again, extensive advertising through the local radio and news media, along with hand-delivered notices to whitebaiters was undertaken to warn everybody of the work.

7.3 Operations support [Steve Murphy]

Waiwhetu Stream – flooding Hayward Terrace

The investigation into the feasibility of works to reduce the flood risk at the end of Hayward Terrace is well underway. The area has been surveyed allowing the hydraulic investigation to proceed. Initial discussions have also been held with a consultant on preparing some preliminary designs and estimates for the civil works required to protect the area.

Native plant trials

It is now one year since a joint trial was established with the Wellington Botanical Society to evaluate the effectiveness of native plants as river edge protection. The four Hutt River trial sites (three locations) were recently inspected to evaluate the performance of a variety of native plants. Briefly:

Maoribank site: 95% survival with healthy plants and average growth

Old nursery site: 80% survival with the front row almost entirely lost

Avalon site 1: 0% survival with the entire planting eroded out

Avalon site 2: 90% survival with growth poor to less than average.

It is worth noting that one week prior to the measure up, a four year flood event occurred in the Hutt. This event destroyed the Avalon 1 site. The plants were mostly planted in raw river gravels, with varying amounts of silt, and it is to be expected that plants will probably sit still for a while as their roots establish.

Erosion advice

The flooding that occurred on the night of 3 October 2003, caused considerable damage to rural property in some areas. Flood Protection staff have been busy visiting affected landowners who have phoned seeking advice on erosion repair methods.

One of the worst areas appears to be properties on Paekakariki Hill Road hit by flooding from the Horokiri Stream. It is estimated that a 60-year event occurred in this watercourse. A large number of fences were lost due to debris accumulation and overland flows. There was considerable gravel movement, with the event leaving some paddocks strewn with boulders. We are not aware of water entering any houses, but two properties lost their bridge approaches.

Similar damage has also prompted visits to Moonshine, the Akatarawa River, and to a lesser extent the Mangaroa Valley.

Gravel extraction

Gravel extraction figures to the end of September 2003 are set out below.

River	Area	Contractor	Year 2003/2004 (cubic metres)		Year 2002/2003 (cubic metres)
			Period	Year	Full Year
Hutt	Estuary	Winstones	3,822	10,290	40,362
	River	Horokiwi	1,297	4,858	13,364
Otaki	River	Winstones	3,070	3,070	54,004
Waikanae	Above Greenaway Road	Various	0	0	7,472
	Below Greenaway Road	Various	0	0	2,617
TOTALS			8,189	18,218	117,819

Geoff Dick
Manager, Flood Protection

Parks and Forests Manager's report for period ending 31 October 2003

1. Manager's comments [Murray Waititi]

1.1 Flood damage

You will be aware of the damage sustained at Paekakariki township, which lies on the western side of Mt Wainui. The eastern slopes of Mt Wainui drain into the Akatarawa Forest, and the southern slopes into Battle Hill Farm Forest Park.

1.1.1 Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

Battle Hill sustained significant damage as a result of the floods. Staff have been busy cleaning and reinstating infrastructure to try and get the Park ship-shape again in time for the spring season. The bush reserve suffered worst with all but one bridge swept away and large parts of the track taken out along some sections. On the farm all floodgates were damaged and track erosion has occurred throughout the Park.

1.1.2 Akatarawa Forest

Moderate damage has occurred to the roading network in the Hydro Valley and also around the Orange Hut area. Fortunately, our asset maintenance programme carried out on these tracks ensured that the damage we sustained was not severe. The majority of the damage was caused by debris being carried down through the waterways and being deposited on several fords and open creek crossings in the area. As we already had a digger in the block doing regular routine road maintenance, we have been able to address the damage quickly. We have also contacted Transpower and they have agreed to assist us with the repair costs on shared roads that they require for access to the three main power lines. The roading network was again fully operational on 24 October 2003. The damage has not impeded recreational access to any great degree.

The Cannon Point walkway also received significant volumes of water. This has caused erosion of one small section of track and also surface scouring of several other sections. These have been addressed.

1.1.3 Pakuratahi Forest

In contrast to the damage received in the Akatarawa Forest, the Pakuratahi Forest did not receive the same volumes of water, so therefore the damage was minor. The damage included scouring to the ford on the Rimutaka Incline walkway and also large amounts of debris deposited in the watertables and culverts in the Rimutaka Rail Trail and the Tunnel Gully reserve. The damage has been addressed using our own staff and machinery. This work was completed within a week of the storm.

1.1.4 Queen Elizabeth Park

Compared with the Paekakariki township, the Park was spared from major damage. Our clean-up operation has been centred on the Wainui Stream, which flows through the Paekakariki end of the Park. The Stream coped relatively well with the extreme amount of water. However, small parts of the streamside track were washed out, trees were broken and silt and debris were strewn throughout the flooded areas. The fences alongside the northern end of the stream were buried in silt and debris and have had to be removed.

1.1.5 Belmont Regional Park

Minor storm damage was repaired by staff which included slips and debris mainly in the Korokoro Valley. Belmont Regional Park escaped relatively lightly in this storm. Interestingly, snow followed on 5 October with flurries setting on Belmont Trig, which is extremely unusual.

1.2 New Environmental Ranger

Jaap Knegtmans began work as the new Environmental Ranger in mid-October. Jaap's most recent position was with the Department of Conservation (DOC) in Whangarei. He has a background in ecology and pest control and has worked in a number of locations throughout New Zealand, including Kapiti Island and Pureora Forest.

1.3 Management plan updates

Since the Council approved the Regional Parks Network Management Plan in September, we have been awaiting DOC approval of the plan. DOC advised in late October that they do not need to approve the plan and Council can release it. We have been working with the Chair of the Landcare Committee to prepare the plan for public release.

We have also begun consultation with the community regarding the Belmont Regional Park management plan review with stakeholders. A full update is included in report 03.627 on this order paper.

1.4 Launch of the ranger service at East Harbour Regional Park

Planning is all but complete for the launch of the ranger service at East Harbour Regional Park, due to take place on Saturday 22 November. The day will start at 9am with a ceremony involving Greater Wellington (GW), Hutt City Council (HCC) and DOC.

The general public will then be invited to take part in a series of guided walks that explore special features of East Harbour Regional Park, and cater to various levels of fitness. These include the three hour main Ridge Track, Pencarrow Head, and the rata forest and MIRO restoration area. Those looking for an easier time will be invited on a shorter walk in the environs of Williams Park and the lower reaches of East Harbour.

On an administrative note, the transfer of management and control from both DOC and HCC is yet to be completed. We anticipate this will occur in mid 2004 to allow time for HCC and DOC to comply with the requirements of the Reserves Act regarding public consultation and gazetting.

HCC, DOC and GW are recommending that the land within East Harbour Regional Park, to have management and control transferred to GW, be designated Scenic Reserve under the Reserves Act. HCC land within Belmont Regional Park that is due to have management and control transferred to GW (Kilmister, Sweet Acres and Korokoro) is likely to be designated Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act.

2. Planning and policy [Dr Philippa Crisp]

2.1 Capital works projects [Graham Laws]

2.1.1 Queen Elizabeth Park toilets progressing

The contractor started work in September on the Whareroa Beach and MacKays Crossing toilets at Queen Elizabeth Park. Work is proceeding to programme with foundations and underground services installed in October. We expect the buildings will be completed and ready for the peak summer visitors in December.

3. Marketing and design [Amanda Cox]

3.1 Information boards and brochures

Kaitoke Regional Park will be the next park to receive new information boards and brochures. A photographer, Jessica Dewsnap, has produced some wonderful images of the parks, and visitors enjoying them, and we expect to produce some excellent results with her work. This relationship has been very beneficial for both parties, as we have also been able to help her with her major exhibition of the Rimutaka Rail Trail that was on display in the former BAM space at Wellington Library during late October/early November.

3.2 Wellington regional tourism

Amanda Cox escorted Christine Weatherall from Positively Wellington Tourism (PWT) around parts of Belmont Regional Park, the Hutt River Trail, Kaitoke Regional Park, the Rimutaka Rail Trail and Battle Hill Farm Forest Park on 16 October.

We are now in regular contact with PWT. They are being particularly helpful in establishing a profile within the tourism industry and increasing our awareness of the relationships between the various agencies and operators.

3.3 Events

3.3.1 125th Anniversary of the Rimutaka Railway

We have received numerous messages of thanks and congratulations for our running of the 125th anniversary of the Rimutaka Railway on 18 October. Around 110 people attended the event, many of whom could recall travelling on the original line. The bus trips up the incline enabled those who would not normally be able to access the trail by foot or bike to view it, and inspect the recently restored structures.

Speakers at the Summit ceremony included Chair Margaret Shields, Rob Aspden of IPENZ, Allan Ross (DOC), Euan McQueen, and Graeme Jupp, from the Friends of the Fell Museum. Graeme entertained us with the story of the “Clayton’s” opening of the line 125 years ago (impassable through a number of slips). The speeches were followed by the unveiling of the IPENZ plaque, recognising the engineering feats of the railway.

Roughly three quarters of the attendees completed the walk from Summit to Cross Creek, several of whom were over seventy years of age. That the walk took over two hours was more due to avid discussions and reminiscences than age-induced infirmities!

3.3.2 Return to Rivendell

We have joined forces with Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) to run a guided bus tour around four Lord of the Rings film sites in the Upper Hutt Valley on Sunday 30 November – the day before the world premiere on Monday 1 December.

Catering for a maximum 250 people (including accredited media), the buses will collect participants from Upper Hutt Station and travel to Dry Creek, Poets Park on the Hutt River, Harcourt Park and Rivendell at Kaitoke Regional Park. Attendees will be invited to stroll the new Pakuratahi River Walk, then be taken back to the campsite BBQ area for a catered BBQ lunch.

The event will be promoted through the Jasons What’s On guide (distributed 10 November internationally), Visitor Information Centres, local backpackers and other hotels, and on key websites. At a price of \$35 per person we anticipate many visitors taking the opportunity to escape the city and experience the local landscapes during this very busy weekend. Early indications are that the event will be a sell-out.

3.3.3 Regional outdoors programme

We have almost finalised the substance of the programme, ready for publication in the December issue of Elements. Running from 3 January to 28 March, it involves both the proven draw cards and some new recreational events, including horse trail riding, a beginners’ mountain biking day, 4WD trip in the Akatarawa Forest and helicopter rides from Totara Park. We have been pleased to involve some of our concessionaires and neighbours, as well as HCC, UHCC, and a number of volunteer groups, in developing the programme.

3.4 Community meetings

Over the past six weeks Ross Jackson has attended, addressed and/or facilitated a variety of meetings. Some have been very lively due to issues such as the wind farm investigation for Belmont Regional Park and a suggested motorsport facility at Queen Elizabeth Park. Participants also enjoy a regular update on activities around the park from the ranger.

3.4.1 Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park

Two meetings of the establishment committee have been held since 12 September. At the most recent meeting Councillor Turver and Rob Forlong attended to address recent comments and speculation regarding a motorsport facility.

While often the venue for heated discussion, the meetings have also seen good progress on developing a draft Terms of Reference for the Friends. The plan is to complete this and hold the first AGM of the Friends early in the New Year.

3.4.2 Friends of Belmont Regional Park

The Friends committee has also held two meetings over the past four weeks including participating in a workshop for the new management plan. The windfarm proposals have dominated discussions at recent meetings of the Friends and they have surveyed the 146 financial members to gauge their views. They are also hoping to organise a bus trip to view the Tararua wind farm on 15 November.

3.4.3 Rotary clubs visited

Presentations on regional parks and specifically on the Hutt River Trail/Rimutaka Rail Trail were given to the Pencarrow Rotary Club and the Petone Rotary Club. Robin Maud also attended the meeting with the Pencarrow club to give some background to the proposal for Rotary to be involved in the Rail Trail/River Trail link as part of the organisation's centennial celebrations.

3.5 Landscape architect

Annabel Riley developed a paper, presented to the Biodiversity in the Urban Environment Conference on encouraging birds into local gardens while using design elements, with Eric Dorfman, Principal Regional Scientist of the Department of Conservation.

Annabel has also been working on the aboretum proposal.

4. Environmental asset management [Dr Philippa Crisp]

4.1 Hutt 1080 operation

A flood event on the Hutt River on 28 September prompted a search for possum carcasses along the river and on Petone and Eastbourne foreshores. Three carcasses containing bait were found. A news release was issued and signs installed along the Hutt River to warn the public of the risks to dogs. A further flood event occurred a week later and one toxic carcass was found. Biosecurity staff will continue to check the river after any future flood events.

4.2 Pest plant control operations

An abseiling weed control contractor has completed the control of boneseed along a section of the escarpment on the East Harbour coast road. This advancing boneseed front poses a threat to the ecological integrity of the Lakes Block and is the easternmost boneseed infestation on the Wellington Coast. No further infestations of this weed are found along the coastline until Ngawi at Palliser Bay. Boneseed is also being tackled intensively at Queen Elizabeth Park.

Other pest plant operations underway in the parks and forests include:

- cotoneaster, old man's beard, buddleia, tradescantia, selaginella, Japanese honeysuckle and holly in Akatarawa Forest
- tradescantia and ivy in Pakuratahi Forest
- Italian buckthorn in Queen Elizabeth Park
- eleagnus, bamboo, cotoneaster, German ivy, tradescantia, old man's beard and Japanese honeysuckle in Belmont Regional Park.

4.3 Monitoring

Bird surveys are now being conducted in many of the parks and forests. We were pleased to note the large numbers of tui and wood pigeon being recorded in the new Belmont Regional Park survey area. New bird survey lines are now in place on the Hutt River Trail and the Hutt River Ranger has been involved in completing these recordings. Owen Spearpoint has been assisting Mainland Island Restoration Organisation (MIRO) members with the MIRO fruitfall plots in East Harbour Regional Park.

4.4 Environmental management system

Parks and Forests have achieved Enviro-Mark's© Gold certification for the second year running for their Environmental Management System. Projects planned for this year include an investigation of the use of recycled materials in construction activities, production of a herbicide best practice guide and the use of the Fonterra fencing guidelines to prioritise fencing requirements.

5. Western sector [Matt Ballantine]

5.1 Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

5.1.1 Camping becoming more popular

Bookings are flowing in for education programmes and camp sites. A number of schools are opting to stay on at the Park for several nights rather than just coming for a day visit.

Camp sites are also in demand and sites are booked during the weekends by organised groups such as guides and scouts. Closer to Christmas the bookings change to family and social groups.

5.1.2 Salvation Army to the rescue

The Salvation Army Conservation Corps have just completed work on Battle Hill. They took part in a number of environmental projects, which included pest control and re-vegetation. Their last week was the one following the floods and the team put in a great effort alongside Parks and Forests staff to get the Park cleaned up and back on its feet.

5.1.3 Events popular over summer

A large number of events have now been booked, ranging from the usual equestrian events to the now popular food and farm festival. It is looking like being another busy summer season for the ranger with an event being held on the Park nearly every weekend.

5.2 Belmont Regional Park

5.2.1 New tracks

We are planning several new “tracks” within the Park which add up to over 5km of new access ways for the public within the Park. They aren’t flash (just a set of markers on farm lane) but the new tracks will guide fit people across some of the land which will shortly be transferred to GW.

At Cannons Creek staff have opened an old farm track and built a new footbridge across Cannons Creek. This track is 1.2km long and links Cannons Creek with Takapu Road. It will be formally opened in February 2004 in conjunction with Friends of Maara Roa.

Another track planned from Takapu Road will give access along a main farm ridge towards Belmont Trig and Cannons Head. This track will be 2km long.

On the Kilmister Block a track linking Boulder Hill and Hill Road will add a further 2.2km of track. Again, this track follows a major farm ridge which runs roughly parallel with Speedys Stream, Kelson, and allows splendid views and experiences of the open space and hill tops within the block.

5.2.2 Planting day

Korokoro Environmental Group held a planting day in the Korokoro Valley. They are extending riparian plantings on the valley floor. GW staff assisted with shifting plants on site and providing weed matting.

Staff also provided assistance to Friends of Maara Roa with rabbit control, shifting plants and provision of weed matting for the continued plantings the group has been doing at Cannons Creek.

5.3 Queen Elizabeth Park

The last two community participation days for the year have recently been held. They were both successful and enjoyable days. At the kahikatea 'potting-up' day we managed to pot 1,500 trees. These trees will eventually be planted in wetland areas to restore the kahikatea forests.

The last of our planting days took place in the newly constructed wetlands where the munitions cache was discovered during its construction. Over 1400 trees were planted by 60 people. Electronics company NEC sponsored the BBQ after the planting. The only downside to the day was that our regular volunteers now expect a fantastic meal after all plantings.

Publicity from this event generated an enquiry from Victoria University's School of Biological Science as to whether they could use this wetland to study manuka growth. They will contribute a further 200 plants, another boost to the re-vegetation of the area. We are encouraging this project, which will be facilitated through the Parks and Forests' environmental management programme.

6. Eastern sector [Fraser Oliver]

6.1 Akatarawa Forest

This period has been busy with a large range of recreational events including proposed car rallies, 4WD club events, etc. Liaison has been required between internal departments adjoining landowners and other affected parties.

A number of events have occurred ranging from four 4WD club events, one trip by the Upper Hutt Adventure School Picnic for under 7's.

The Akatarawa Recreation access committee has also had a working bee on the Orange Hut to repair graffiti vandalism sustained early in October.

6.2 Pakuratahi Forest

Events held during October included an endurance horse riding event in the Tunnel Gully reserve, Station Drive area. This was held by Wellington Area Trail Riding Group. The Wellington Adventure Education group continues to have navigation and map reading training in the Mt Climie area and we have also had two Scout Groups camping in the Summit Yards of the Rimutaka Rail Trail walkway.

6.3 Kaitoke Regional Park

The Pakuratahi River walk is now completed and is open to the public.

An automated gate has been installed at the Te Marua entrance to the Park. The gate will be used as a trial to see if it will work in other areas of the Parks and Forests network. Evening patrols will still be undertaken over the summer months to make sure that the Park is vacated after closing.

The warmer weather has seen a rise in park users and with that a rise in vandalism. Patrolling of the Park has been increased. A group of youths were caught doing 'donuts' in their vehicles and along with being given heavy fines by the Police they were given rakes and shovels and made to repair the damage.

Approximately 30 pupils from Plateau Primary School planted over 100 trees and shrubs at "Rivendell." This is the third year the school has potted plants in the autumn and then planted them on this site in the early spring. This has resulted in the children and their parents having a closer association with the Park.

6.4 Wainuiomata

The first programmed section of the boundary fence has now been completed. Ground preparation for further fencing along the entire northern boundary has also been completed and now makes for much easier patrolling access. A short video was made recording the historical progress of the work. I think that it is hard to underestimate the value of the fence and the foresight of the Water Group to construct it.

A bbq was also held at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park to thank the Wainui volunteer guides for their year's contribution. A good crowd attended despite the poor weather.

The new season of tours kicked off on 12 October with 40+ people visiting the in the catchment. Lance Harrison from the Water Group gave some excellent interpretation regarding the water collection and treatment process.

A team of seven staff carried out annual maintenance work on the historically important Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Pack Track. All intended works on the 6km crossing was completed and the track looks in good shape. The work was done in preparation for the new season of Orongorongo catchment tours starting in November.

A joint Landcare/Environment Division organised planting day took place at the Wainui recreation area during late September. Fifteen pupils from Pukeatua School, Wainuiomata, enthusiastically carried out the work. They will be returning in the near future for another planting day at the wetland site.

Murray Waititi
Manager, Parks and Forests

Landcare Support, Divisional Accountant's report for period ending 7 November 2003

Direct expenditure

The year to date variance of \$62,000 (or 3.1%) in direct expenditure is made up of the following items:

- Savings in personnel costs in both Parks and Forests and Flood Protection largely as a result of staff vacancies.
- Some timing fluctuations are appearing although these variances are much lower than the position at same time last year. A lot of effort was put into the cashflowing of the budget for 2003/04 to eliminate as much timing variance as possible. Some variation will always occur though, with much of Landcare's work programme being weather dependent.

Landcare Division				
Financial Summary Statement				
For the 3 months ending 30 September 2003				
\$000				
	Year to Date			Full Year
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Budget
External Revenue	3,456	3,457	(1) U	13,862
Internal Revenue	233	269	(35) U	1,075
TOTAL REVENUE	3,689	3,725	(36) U	14,937
Direct Expenditure	1,910	1,972	62 F	9,087
Indirect Expenditure	926	987	61 F	3,877
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE	2,837	2,960	123 F	12,964
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	852	765	87 F	1,973
Net Asset Acquisitions	4	331	327 F	612
Capital Projects	78	178	100 F	2,335

Indirect expenditure

The year to date variance of \$61,000 (or 6.2%) in indirect expenditure is made up as follows:

- Depreciation is currently running \$17,000 below budget. This variance will continue to grow throughout the year. The variance is due to both the asset revaluation exercises undertaken for Flood Protection in 2002 and Parks and Forests in 2003, and a lower than anticipated capital spend in 2002/03.

- Gain on asset sales is showing a favourable variance of \$23,000. This is due to a disposal of a Parks and Forests vehicle early in the 2003/04 which was planned to occur in 2002/03, and the earlier than planned disposals of a vehicle and quad bikes this year.
- Financial costs are \$19,000 favourable at this point, largely as a result of the lower than planned capital spend in Flood Protection in 2002/03.

Net asset acquisitions

There is favourable variance of \$327,000 at the end of the first quarter. This is predominantly due to the delay in the vehicle purchasing round which was planned to occur in September 2003, and the early disposal of the vehicles mentioned above.

Capital projects

The year to date favourable variance of \$100,000 in capital projects is largely timing related, with most capital projects still expected to be completed by year end. The exceptions to this are:

- Baring Head Access bridge – we had planned to spend \$78,000 this financial year as our part in a major bridge upgrade. However, a “work around” solution was found at a cost of \$2,000 which will defer the cost of repairing the bridge for a few more years.
- The two toilet blocks being constructed in Queen Elizabeth Park are currently behind schedule due to the delays in letting the tender. However, these toilet blocks are still on target to be completed by year-end.

Tina Walker

Divisional Accountant, Landcare