

Environment Management Division update

For period ending 31 August 2007

1. Environmental Monitoring and Investigations (Ted Taylor)

1.1 Groundwater

Groundwater levels in the Wairarapa through July were generally low reflecting lower than average rain and river recharge through this period. If lower than average recharge continues through the coming months, we would expect to see low groundwater levels through the next irrigation season.

At our monitoring bore in the deep, confined Parkvale aquifer levels were below the long-term median in July, but tracking just above the long-term minimum. This is a reflection of below average rainfall recharge and on-going groundwater abstraction pressures.

In the mixed rainfall/river recharged Te Ore Ore aquifer, the levels at our monitoring bore were significantly below long term minimum and have been at this level for most of the summer. This is a reflection of high irrigation demand, low rainfall recharge and a lack of major river flows for the period.

We have been advised by local property owners that during summer the Poterau Spring system dried up further than it ever has previously.

What are we doing about this? The system is currently 100% allocated so in the short term no further abstractions will be allowed. In the longer term safe yields will be reviewed following the completion of the Wairarapa Groundwater Study. This area will be a 'case study area' in the modelling project. One or two shallow wells will be drilled this coming summer along the Poterau Spring system to better understand this groundwater system.

Water levels in our monitoring bore in the rainfall recharged, semi confined Martinborough aquifer were just above average in July. This is a reflection of good recharge during the 2006 winter months, plus some rainfall recharge through the year.

Groundwater levels at our monitoring bore in Te Horo on the Kapiti Coast were below the long-term minimum in July. Levels in Te Horo have been below the long-term average for almost two years. This could be a reflection of reduced recharge to the system from drier than average winters or the effect of increased groundwater abstraction in the system. Field and desk top investigations will be carried out through the coming year to outline the cause of dropping groundwater levels in the Te Horo area.

Groundwater levels in our deep confined monitoring bore in Waikanae had recovered to average by late July.

1.2 Air Quality

The limits set in the National Environmental Standards for Air Quality were not exceeded in July in the Wairarapa airsheds.

1.3 Rainfall

July 2007 was an unsettled month with frequent low pressure systems affecting the region and more north easterly winds than usual for the time of the year. As a result, the Kapiti Coast and inland parts of the region had below average rainfall. The Wairarapa plains, and the Pakuratahi, Mangaroa, Wainuiomata, Orongorongo catchments had rainfall totals between 60 and 80% of the long-term average for July. In contrast, Wellington city, north eastern Wairarapa and northern Tararua Ranges received normal to above normal rainfall for the month.

The autumn drought continued to be eased by regular rainfall throughout July. The above-average July rainfall experienced in north eastern Wairarapa was primarily due to heavy rainfall over 16-18th July; this was the same storm event that caused severe flooding in parts of the Hawkes Bay.

Despite this rain, the Wellington region has had below-average rainfall during 2007 to the end of July with some areas (e.g. Wairarapa plains and Wainuiomata catchment) having only about half the rainfall usually expected.

Rainfall at representative monitoring stations for July 2007 and 2007 to date, compared to average

	2007 to end-July (mm)	Average year to end July (mm)	Percentage of long-term average for year to date
Otaki Depot (Kapiti Coast)	353	570	62%
Karori Reservoir (Wellington)	568	729	78%
Wainuiomata Reservoir	585	1140	51%
Angle Knob (Tararua Range)	3252	3678	88%
Alloa (Featherston)	264	622	42%
Tanawa Hut (East Wairarapa)	591	792	75%

1.4 Rivers

River flows in some parts of the region remained below the long-term average for the month of July. However, in rivers with headwaters high in the Tararua Ranges (e.g. Waiohine and Otaki rivers) flows were above average, primarily due to a large 'fresh' at the beginning of the month. The north eastern Wairarapa rivers (e.g. Tauweru) had high flows following the rainfall on 16-18th July.

July 2007 river flows at selected monitoring stations

	Average flow July 2007	Long-term average for July	Percentage of long- term average
Waikanae River at Water Treatment	5.3 m ³ /s	6.3 m ³ /s	85%
Hutt River at Taita Gorge	29.1 m ³ /s	35.1 m ³ /s	83%
Wainuiomata River at Manuka Track	1.03 m ³ /s	1.52 m ³ /s	68%
Waiohine River at Gorge	39.4 m ³ /s	30.2 m ³ /s	131%
Ruamahanga River at Waihenga	126.3 m ³ /s	143.7 m ³ /s	88%

1.5 Flood warning

In early July there was a very short exceedance of the alarm level at the Waihenga monitoring site on the Ruamahanga River.

The outlet from Lake Onoke was blocked for 6 days in July. Water levels in Lake Wairarapa were above the target level for this time of year.

2. Environmental Regulation (AI Cross)

2.1 Consent Statistics

In the period from 7 May to 17 August we have received 37 Wairarapa-based applications, and processed 22 consents. Our median processing time (excluding 37 extensions) for Wairarapa non-notified consents is currently 14 working days.

Details of non-notified consents approved in the period have not been provided in this report, but can be viewed in Report 07.496 to the Environment Committee (16 August 2007).

2.2 Key Notified Consents Update

2.2.1 Fully Notified Applications

Stronvar Properties Ltd

These are applications for a 56-lot subdivision at Stronvar, Masterton involving applications for discharges of wastewater (from a community waste water scheme) and sediment from earthworks, taking water (for communal water supply), and erecting a dam to establish an amenity and stormwater treatment lake. There have been delays in receiving further information on a range of substantial matters including community wastewater treatment. The delay is reasonable given the complexity of the matters being considered.

Masterton District Council – Masterton Landfill

Applications for managing the closure of the Masterton Landfill and provide for ongoing waste management related activities have been placed on hold for further information. We understand that information requested is still pending, and once received we will then publicly notify the applications.

Webstar

This is a replacement application to discharge fine particle matter (PM₁₀) and other contaminants to air from printing and gas-fired boilers. The sole submitter and the applicant are currently keeping odour diaries to investigate odour concerns raised by the submitter. It is likely that meeting will be held between the parties in September to discuss information collected in the diaries. The processing of this application will consider air quality within the Masterton air shed, which sometimes exceeds NES for Air thresholds for PM₁₀ of 50 ug/m³.

Masterton District Council - Masterton Wastewater Treatment Plant

Applications for a long term upgrade of discharges and other activities associated with the Masterton Wastewater Treatment Plant at Homebush were lodged in early May and following preliminary assessment, the applications were notified on 4 July. Submissions closed on 1 August and 69 submissions in total were received, mainly opposing the applications.

2.2.2 Limited Notified Applications

M B & H F Herrick

These are replacement applications for two groundwater takes at Taumata Island, Carterton. Submissions were received from neighbouring landowners and organisations concerns about the effects on surrounding wetland areas. The applications have been placed on hold since October 2006. Further information based on monitoring undertaken over the past irrigation season will be submitted shortly.

K R & S M Shaw

This application is for diverting water from a small tributary of the Mangatarere Stream for the hydro-electricity generation purposes. One submission was received from a neighbouring landowner. A hearing has been set down to determine this application on Wednesday 29th August.

Kintyre Trust

This application is for setting up a small rendering plant at an existing abattoir at Gladstone. Two submissions were received from Rangitaane o Wairarapa and the neighbouring Hurunui-o-rangi marae. A pre hearing meeting was held with the applicant and two submitters on Thursday 9th August. As a result of the meeting, further information has been requested from the applicant on the potential effects of the discharge and operational matters with the proposed rendering plant.

2.3 Appeals and Objections

A E & S W Benton Partnership

This appeal relates to a declined application to take groundwater from the Kahutara aquifer, which is affected by a moratorium not to 'accept' further applications¹. Following extension consultation and mediation between a number of parties, a consent order was proposed which would allow for the groundwater take for long term pump testing of the aquifer for a period through to 2011. There have been further extensions requested by the applicant to sign a consent order, which all parties have agreed to in principle.

Greater Wellington: Land and River Operations Department (LARO) – Scadden's stopbank

No further progress has been made on A J Barton's appeal to the High Court on the Environment Court's decision to uphold GW's decision on LARO's proposal to upgrade an existing stopbank adjacent to the Ruamahanga River. The appeal relates to the status and use of a paper road and implications of the stopbank upgrade.

Masterton District Council – Castlepoint sea wall

This is an appeal by the applicant against a decision on applications for a coastal protection sea wall at Castlepoint. Stage 1 of the sea wall was approved subject to conditions, and the appeal against some aspects of this part of the project was resolved in 2005 and this part of the sea wall has now been constructed. Stage 2 of the sea wall was declined. Initially, Court mediation in 2005 determined a course of action where an Integrated Foreshore Management Plan (IFMP) would be developed by interested parties to look into coastal processes in the area where consent was declined. Following a long period where no progress was made, the Court initiated mediation on 30 April 2007 where the IFMP process was brought back on track. Following the circulation of agreed objectives for the IFMP process, the appellant has now submitted a revised timetable which requires a draft IFMP to be completed by 31 October 2007.

2.4 Compliance and Enforcement

2.4.1 General

Now that the inspection period for compliance monitoring for the 2006-2007 has passed, attention has now turned to undertaking compliance auditing of a number of consents where self-monitoring is required to be undertaken by consent holders e.g. submitting annual compliance reports.

¹ The moratorium highlights GW's intention to not approve further applications, unless applicant's can clearly demonstrate their activity to be sustainable.

2.4.2 Specific Compliance Issues

There are no specific compliance issues to report from this period.

2.4.3 Abatement Notices

Abatement notices were issued to an industrial premises east of Carterton, requiring the cessation of discharges from washdown water from the site entering a tributary of the Parkvale Stream.

An abatement was issued to a landowner in Longbush south-east of Carterton, requiring a stopbank to be either consented, removed, or modified in a manner which would ensure no potential flooding effects on any surrounding land.

2.4.4 Infringement notices

An infringement notice was issued to a dairy farmer east of Carterton for discharges from the farm's effluent management system entering a tributary of the Parkvale Stream.

2.4.5 Prosecution and Enforcement Orders

No prosecutions or enforcement orders have been issued in the period since the last Committee meeting.

2.5 Pollution Control

2.5.1 Incidents

Details of all Wairarapa based incidents have not been provided in this report, but can be viewed in Report 07.496 to the Environment Committee (16 August 2007).

Staff are currently investigating methods for measuring discharges of contaminants from an industrial premises in Bentley St, Masterton, which has attracted numerous complaints from residents in the area.

2.5.2 Prosecution and Enforcement Orders

No prosecutions or enforcement orders have been issued in the period since the last Committee meeting.

3. Environmental Policy (Nicola Shorten)

3.1 Policy and plans

3.1.1 Regional Policy Statement review

On 8 June 2007, Greater Wellington released the draft Regional Policy Statement provisions, noting that comment was sought up to 13 July 2007.

While the 'formal' consultation period closed on 13 July, it became apparent when visiting each city and district council that a number needed further time to respond. As key stakeholders in the review process, it was appropriate that additional time

was made available and this was communicated to all councils and others who contacted us requesting further time.

At the conclusion of the consultation period several key messages had emerged. This included requests for Greater Wellington to:

- Provide an assessment of the costs of compliance;
- Clarify whether Greater Wellington is to take a leadership role in research and investigation where issues are of regional significance;
- Carry out wider community consultation; and, most significantly
- Prepare and consult on a fully integrated draft Regional Policy Statement.

In addition some council's specifically requested that we do not notify a proposed Regional Policy Statement in October this year.

Greater Wellington considered these issues at a Policy, Finance and Strategy meeting on 14 August, and resolved that further time to address and/or respond to these requests was appropriate. A full integrated draft document will now be released for consultation in February 2008, prior to notifying a proposed document in June/July.

3.1.2 Plan Change 3 to the Regional Freshwater Plan

Plan change 3 to the Regional Freshwater Plan was publicly notified on 26 May 2007. This plan change limits the taking of additional water from three groundwater zones and eight streams in the Wairarapa. The closing date for submissions was 27 June 2007 and four submissions were received. The Resource Management Act now requires submissions to be summarised, the availability of the summary publicly notified and further submissions called for. A public notice will be placed in newspapers on 1 September.

3.2 Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan

Hearings have continued for the combined Wairarapa District Plan, and staff have presented evidence at a further three hearings since the last report. Topics have included subdivision, land development, general amenity, environmental zones, planning maps and general matters. The evidence for indigenous biodiversity included amendments to the vegetation clearance rules which were agreed between the major submitters. The hearings committee were very appreciative of the effort and collaboration which has resulted in a practicable solution until such time as a biodiversity strategy is in place.

3.3 Resource consent submissions

Resource consent applications received by territorial authorities and Greater Wellington's responses are set out below:

3.3.1 Carterton District Council

Notified	Action
G Tulloch	10 lot rural subdivision, Cornwall Road. No submission made.
I R Banfield	20 lot residential subdivision, Costley Street. No submission.
Upper Hutt Developments No. 6 Ltd	102 lot residential subdivision, Armstrong Avenue, Plimsoll Street & Feist Street. Submission on stormwater and transport issues.
Non Notified	Action
B & S Richdale	2 lot rural subdivision, Norfolk Road. In progress.
J & M Dennistoun-Wood	2 lot rural subdivision, Cnr Dalefield Road & Watersons Line. Letter with comments.
P Watkinson	8 lot rural subdivision, Chester Road. In progress.
R Saywell	2 lot rural subdivision, Josephs Road. No comments made.

3.3.2 Masterton District Council

Notified	Action
Ardsley Park Limited	20 lot rural subdivision, Manuka Street. Submission on wastewater disposal issues.
Bideford Ventures Limited	9 lot subdivision, Balfour Crescent. Submission on site stability and investigations, stormwater and planting plans.

3.3.3 South Wairarapa District Council

Notified	Action
K Turley	13 lot residential subdivision, Fox Street. No submission made.
Tranzit NZ Ltd	Land use (to widen State Highway 2), State Highway 2 south of the Tauherenikau River. No comment.
University College of Learning (UCOL)	Land use (to construct, operate and maintain an education, accommodation and restaurant facility), Kitchener Street. Submission on wastewater disposal issue.

Non Notified

G & L Stephenson

I Feast

Telfer Properties Martinborough
Limited

UHD Wairarapa Limited

Action

2 lot rural subdivision, Hinakura Road. Letter with comments on wastewater disposal and flooding potential and mitigation.

2 lot rural subdivision, State Highway 2 south of Greytown. In progress.

Land use (to construct, operate and maintain a Wellness Centre), Awhea Road. In progress.

13 lot residential subdivision, East Street. No comment made.