

# Notes of the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Whakatāne office, on Wednesday 11 September 2019, commencing at 10am

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**Chair:** Councillor Norm Bruning

**Advisory Group:** Alan Law, Linda Virbickas, Peter Askey, Shona Pedersen, Jim Finlay (Whakatāne District Council), Councillor Alison Silcock (Whakatāne District Council)

**BOPRC Councillors:** Councillor Bill Clark, Councillor Tiipene Marr

**BOPRC Staff:** Kirsty Brown (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Jo Heath (Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Andrew Pawson (Area Engineer), Tony Dunlop (Flood Repair Project Engineer), Paula Chapman (Flood Repair Project Manager), Peter Hay (Engineering Team Leader), Chris Ingle (General Manager Integrated Catchments), Charles Harley (Team Leader Eastern Catchments)

**Apologies:** Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Shona Pedersen for lateness

## 1 Welcome

Councillor Bruning welcomed everyone to the meeting and Councillor Marr open the meeting with a karakia.

Chris Ingle advised that Kirsty Brown had been appointed as Assets Manager and introduced Charles Harley (Team Leader Eastern Catchments) and Andrew Pawson (Area Engineer – Rangitāiki-Tarawera).

## 2 Apologies

Apologies were received as recorded above.

## 3 Notes of previous meeting held 20 March 2019

### Resolved

**That the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:**

- 1 Confirm the notes of the meeting held 20 March 2019 as a true and correct record.

**Bruning/Clark  
CARRIED**

#### 4 **Matters arising from previous meeting**

Kirsty Brown ran through the actions from the previous meeting.

- Positive feedback from members about the weekly work notifications.
- Flowchart of key planning input points for advisory groups was tabled.
- Water testing subsidy for farmers had been investigated and the suggestion forwarded to the policy team looking after the freshwater programme for consideration. Good to see that landowners want to be better informed about the status of water on their properties. The Upper Rangitāiki catchment (from the headwaters in Lochinver Station east of Taupō to the Wheao River confluence in Kāingaroa forest) and the Awakaponga catchment are going to be having focused water testing over summer.
- LAWA website useful site for water quality information <https://www.lawa.org.nz/>
- Rangitāiki river cross-section information (from the Galatea area) will be covered in General Business under the gravel management item.

*Attendance: Shona Pederson joined the meeting at 10:16 am.*

#### 5 **Kopuriki Road flooding issues**

Kirsty Brown gave a verbal update on the Kopuriki Road flooding issues.

**Key points included:**

- A meeting was held 7 August, including representatives from Pioneer Energy and J Swaps, to discuss the issues at Kopuriki and the suggestion that the scheme obtain a resource consent for the ongoing commercial gravel extraction at the Aniwaniwa delta.
- The report from Swaps was not as commercially positive as initially advised and a decision about obtaining consent could not be made
- Since the meeting staff have:
  - Requested a written estimate from Mike Swaps of the different options he presented at the meeting.
  - Sought advice from Consents as to whether a one-off, large scale, extraction (about 20,000 cubic metres) could be undertaken under the Rivers and Drainage section's Resource Consent 64684 for out-of-scheme works. Initial feedback is that this is a possibility and when further information is available (like methodology and timing) it is recommended that the proposal be discussed further with the Consents section.
- An alternative option is to extract the gravel and store nearby for localised use on a cost recovery basis.

#### 6 **Review of the Floodway and Drainage Bylaw 2008**

Kirsty Brown spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack.

**Key points included:**

- The Floodway and Drainage Bylaw is the key tool Council has to protect its flood protection and drainage assets from damage and misuse.
- Staff are currently reviewing the bylaw rules and assessing what changes will need to be made to ensure the rules, and supporting science and technical information, are still relevant and fit-for-purpose.
- Workshops with advisory group members will be organised for October/November, and proposed variations to the bylaw will be presented in detail.

- Two potential controversial changes will be: the possible extension of the bylaw applicable areas to ensure specific geotechnical issues are managed appropriately; and restrictions on ploughing, cropping and fencing in close proximity to stopbanks.

## 7 Operations update

### 7.1 Work programme update

Andrew Pawson delivered a presentation showing a range of operational and scheme maintenance work.

#### Key points included:

- Using an excavator with a tree grab and shear to maintain willows provides a number of benefits – cut and stack quickly (no need to strop and drag), reduces health and safety risks associated with chainsaw use, easy to trim to a height that makes the regrowth out of the reach of stock, trees and debris don't fall into the river.
- Willow aphid damage not as visible this year, perhaps because it has been wet.
- Trialling geobags at three sites as an alternative to rock rip rap. These are cheaper than rock and use material from the site. Suitable for streams with low velocities. Trial sites performed well during the July flood event.

Bruce Crabbe spoke to the Works Programme report provided in the agenda pack.

#### Key points included:

- There has been a couple of decent annual flood events this year and the annual flood damage budget is already almost fully committed.
- Drainage scheme work has been routine and is on budget.
- Discussed weed cutting versus weed spraying. Method used really depends on the waterway and the weed being targeted.

## 8 Flood Repair Project update

Paula Chapman and Tony Dunlop spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack and delivered a presentation showing progress with the April 2017 Flood Repair Project.

#### Key points included:

- Two years through the four year project and 50% of sites across the region have been completed.
- Work in the Rangitāiki and Tarawera rivers is expected to take the full four years of the project. Completion by June 2021.
- 72 from a total of 224 sites in the Rangitāiki-Tarawera rivers scheme have been completed (32%). 78 sites planned for repair in 2019-2020, leaving 74 sites to be repaired in 2020-2021.
- Progress in this scheme has been delayed due to constrained rock supply in the Eastern Bay of Plenty.
- Programme's budget is on track. Expenditure at end of 2017-2018 was overspent and the programme was ahead of programme. Expenditure at end of 2018-2010 was underspent due to rock supply constraints.
- Cost recoveries are on track with \$9m recovered to date from Whakatāne District Council, NZTA, Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, and insurance progress payments. The repair work is being undertaken in a way that optimises

recoveries to off-set cost to the schemes and ratepayers. Expecting to recover approximately \$16m of the \$45m project.

- Regional Council has started a strategic sustainable rock supply project to ensure a secure and long-term rock supply is available.
- Working with the Edgcombe community and Whakatāne District Council to develop a reserve (Papa Taonga) on the College Road red listed properties. The land is owned by Regional Council, and Whakatāne District Council have a license to occupy. District Council is leading the project and a passive open space has been designed and approved by the community board. Development work is to start in October with an opening by Christmas.

## 9 Engineering update

Peter Hay took the agenda report as read and delivered a presentation focusing on the Rangitāiki Floodway Project.

### Key points included:

- There has been on-going community engagement to keep the community informed during the investigation and planning stages for the last stages of the floodway upgrade. At a recent open day most attendees gauged their level of support in the range of 'support with reservations' through to 'fully support'.
- Council has purchased 266 Hydro Road – the property directly in front of the spillway.
- The current spillway will be replaced with a lower fixed crest weir with contingency radial gates. In the April 2017 flood event the spillway should have activated sooner, by incorporating radial gates into the spillway design flood managers can manually activate the gates if required.
- NorConsult NZ Ltd are currently modelling the spillway to determine how many radial gates will be required.
- The cost estimate for the spillway (including a 20% contingency) is \$2.8m and construction is planned for November 2020 to May 2021.
- Incorporating a ponding area, along East Bank Road, into the floodway design is no longer being considered and affected landowners have been advised of this.
- Stopbanks in the section from SH2 to McLean Road will be raised by 600-700mm.
- Council has approved additional capital expenditure of \$4.34m for the floodway in 2019-2020 (funded through loans). This money will be used to complete Stage 5 (channel bifurcation, bridge and wetland), start Stage 7 (channel widening and stopbank raising Hydro Road to SH2/Awakeri Road and spillway design), scope and cost Stage 6 (channel widening and stopbank raising SH2/Awakeri Road to McLean Road).
- Once preliminary designs are completed Council staff will meet with each affected landowner and work through any property specific issues and considerations.
- Stage 5 work is progressing well. Working on completing the bridge and approaches and then opening up the cut to the river. Wetland has been created and planted, and already a lot of bird and aquatic life present.

## 10 Finance report

Kirsty Brown spoke to the finance report provided in the agenda pack and gave an overview of the scheme's revenue and expenditure for the 2018-2019 financial year, noting that the figures are draft until approved by Audit New Zealand and adopted by Council at their meeting on 26 September.

**Key points included:**

- Total revenue was \$4,374,000 - \$489,000 lower than budget due to no operational insurance recoveries being received.
- Total operating expenditure was \$3,431,000 - \$235,000 higher than budget.
- Capital revenue - made up of Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management claim for flood repairs and a portion of insurance recoveries – was \$2.9m lower than budget as a result of delays with the April 2017 Flood Repair Project works.
- Capital expenditure was \$1.2m lower than budget. This is due to the April 2017 Flood Repair Project completing fewer repair sites than planned because of constraints with rock supply. The unspent budget will be transferred to 2019-2020.
- The scheme's flood damage reserve has been fully allocated.
- The scheme's works reserve has \$161,000 available.
- Outstanding loans of \$35m at the beginning of the year have been reduced by \$2m to \$33m.
- Asset valuation increased by \$20m, from \$77m to \$98m, as a result of higher construction costs and additional assets being created by the April 2017 Flood Repair project.

## 11 General business

### 11.1 Gravel management update

Paula Chapman spoke to the update provided in the agenda pack and presented the Rangitāiki River cross-section survey information.

Graphs were presented of three river cross-section surveys, from Rabbit Bridge up to the Horomanga River, showing data from 1992 to 2019. All cross-sections showed significant aggradation.

*Attendance: Bill Clark left the meeting at 12:30 pm.*

### 11.2 Stopbank damage from grazing

Kirsty Brown delivered a presentation on damage to stopbanks over winter. Several examples were shown of stopbanks that had been overgrazed to the extent that there was no grass cover, and the stopbank and batters were muddy, pugged and rutted from stock and vehicle movement.

**Key points included:**

- This year has been particularly bad with stock and vehicle damage to some of our stopbanks.
- Exposing the stopbank like this weakens its integrity, making it vulnerable to slumping and failure.
- Council relies on landowners to proactively manage stopbanks on their property and it is disappointing to see our community assets in this state.
- Damage to stopbanks is covered by the Floodway and Drainage Bylaw 2008.
- Remediation of the cases shown was paid for by the landowners and was achieved by immediately removing the stock, blading the ruts, re-seeding the exposed areas and covering the area with hay.
- A brochure 'Stopbanks – a community asset' has been produced and copies were provided to advisory group members.

### 11.3 Essential Freshwater

- Chris Ingle advised that staff are currently working through the implications for river scheme management as a result of the government's Essential Freshwater package released on 5 September. Anticipating that there will be a greater focus on water quality management, habitat management and ecosystem health. The river schemes are not currently funded for these areas of work.
- Scope of package includes – setting and clarifying policy direction, raising the bar for ecosystem health, supporting delivery of safe drinking water, better managing stormwater and wastewater, and improving farming practices.
- There will be funding implications for Regional Council and ratepayers.
- Tight submission timeframe with submissions closing 31 October. Regional Council will be making a submission.

### 11.4 Focus Catchments

Charles Harley spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack.

The Focus Catchments Programme is about focusing support and funding on water quality issues in the catchments that need our attention the most. Currently 12 catchments identified across the region with two within the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme area – Upper Rangitāiki, Taupō (focusing on halting the increasing nitrate trend) and Awakaponga, Matatā (focusing on reducing N, P, sediment and *E. coli*). Land Management staff are in the process of developing monitoring plans for each of the focus catchments, detailing the monitoring required to measure changes in water quality. Monitoring will inform catchment management plans with the aim of bringing people together to collectively work on catchment issues. This process has already been used in the Waiōtahe Catchment with excellent results.

Charles also promoted the Ballance Farm Awards alumni symposium on 24 October in Te Puke. Symposium will cover issues like farm planning and the government's recently released Essential Freshwater package. Speakers include Members of Parliament, and staff from Ministry of Primary Industries and Ministry for the Environment.

### 11.5 Other general business

#### 11.5.1 Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project

At the request of members Bruce Crabbe provided an update on the Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project.

#### **Key points included:**

- Dredging work has been completed and the flood protection and drainage systems are fully operational again. Observed that day-to-day drainage and flood conveyance has improved and that drainage levels are lower. This is a result of the amount of sediment removed.
- Work on 5.1km of canal was completed on 9 July 2019, and all tests were validated to remediation target by 12 July 2019.
- Topsoil capping of the containment cells still to be completed and the bioremediation phase started. Bioremediation enhances the natural degradation process using a combination of fungi, bacteria and plants that help speed up the natural degradation of the dioxins.
- There is still some contamination in the canal to the west of SH30. This area will be investigated, the extent of contamination determined, and best options for remediation presented to Council for consideration.

### 11.5.2 Rangitāiki River Forum

The group discussed the role and focus of the Rangitāiki River Forum. Focus is currently on dam management and fish passage, water quality, and pest management. The meetings are open to the public and meeting dates and agenda details are available on the website - <https://www.boprc.govt.nz/your-council/council-and-region/committees/rangitaiki-river-forum/>.

Alison Silcock is the Whakatāne District Council representative on the Forum and Councillors Bruning and Clark attend on behalf of Regional Council.

**ACTION:**

***Future advisory group meeting agendas to have a standing item of Rangitāiki River Forum update.***

Councillor Marr closed the meeting with a karakia.

**Meeting closed at 1:16pm**