



## LAND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY TO 31 OCTOBER 2019

### 1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Council on the Land Management activity within the Sustainable Land Use Initiative (SLUI), Regional and Coast, and Nursery activities carried out under the Annual Plan, the Te Uru Rakau (TUR) contract, and Operational Plan for the year to date. The report is presented in five sections:
1. Activity over the last reporting period and upcoming activity;
  2. Report on progress against the Annual Plan, and contract outputs;
  3. SLUI activity by Whole Farm Plan production, work completed life to date and year to date, and against operational plan targets;
  4. Regional and Coast work completed against year-to-date and Operational Plan targets; and
  5. Nursery activity.
- 1.1.2 The Land Management programme's primary activity is to reduce hill country erosion to increase the resilience of the region to storm events and improve water quality. The Sustainable Land Use Initiative (SLUI) is the main component of the programme and has over 550,000 ha of farm plans across over 745 farms and aims to complete approximately 3,440 ha of erosion control works and 22,500 ha of new farm plans in the 2019-20 year.
- 1.1.3 Beyond hill country erosion control, the land programme also supports industry partnerships, including the Ballance Farm Environment Awards and events that enable discussion among industry professionals and farmers around land management activity. The Land Management team also provides support to the regulatory teams around the implementation of the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry and the implementation of the One Plan policies and rules around land disturbance and vegetation clearance.
- 1.1.4 The final component of the land activity is the management of poplar and willow nurseries in order to provide the necessary materials for the hill country erosion work. In 2019-20 the upgrades to Horizons' Woodville nursery will continue. The programme aims to produce and plant over 30,000 poplar poles

- 1.1.5 The Annual Plan and contract targets are agreed, with the latest MPI contract signed in August 2019. This commits MPI funding of over \$6.4 million over four years until 30 June 2023. The overall budget for this programme exceeds \$30 million, consisting of funding from Horizons, MPI and landowners.
- 1.1.6 Operational Plan targets for 2019-20 were approved by Council at Strategy & Policy Committee meeting on 10 September 2019. The Land Management activities link to the Council's Long-term Plan 2018-28 and to the non-regulatory methods of the One Plan (Chapter 5, Policies 5-1 and 5-5).

## 2 ACTIVITY

### 2.1 ACTIVITY DURING LAST REPORTING PERIOD

- 2.1.1 The activity report relates to the period 15 August – 31 October. This spring has been a mixed bag across the region, but generally wetter and cooler than normal. As at the end of October things are drying out a bit, docking is complete and landowners are getting crops in the ground. Winter and spring conditions have been ideal for the establishment of all tree species including poles. All winter tree planting programmes have now been completed, follow up weed control is well underway and for the most part landowners are now requesting staff to complete claims on works.
- 2.1.2 Staff have used this time to visit landowners for a variety of reasons; "selling" new farm plans and following up with those who have expressed an interest or have information sheets to be completed, delivery of new farm plans and discussing potential work, confirming 2019-20 work programmes (SLUI and environmental grant), and early claims. Staff are reporting contact with landowners during this period has taken extra time as landowners have been keen to discuss the potential implications of the proposed changes to freshwater policy.
- 2.1.3 Staff have attended a number of community meetings including three catchment groups (upper Rangitikei, Rangiwahia, and upper Manawatu), one Federated Farmers (Whanganui area) and two Beef and Lamb (Feilding and Mangaweka) on Governments Essential Freshwater packages.
- 2.1.4 There have been a number of training opportunities; internally new staff have undertaken Land Inventory and Land Use Capability mapping, three staff attended the New Zealand Association of Resource Management conference, one staff member attended an alternate trees seminar, and various health and safety upgrades were completed.
- 2.1.5 Four site visits have been completed by the Land Management Advisor (Forestry) and the local Land Management Advisor to assess on farm forestry proposals and provide landowners with a report covering roading, harvest, species choice, biodiversity and water quality, downstream risk, and a brief financial overview.
- 2.1.6 The Horizons "plantinourregion" campaign in June was followed by a SLUI newsletter which was sent electronically to SLUI landowners and is available [here](#). With these campaigns and the governments proposed freshwater reforms there has been a noticeable lift in interest in new WFP and SLUI work programmes for this year.

2.1.7 Georgia Hodgson has joined the Land team as LMA based out of Marton office. Georgia lives in Hunterville and will take over an area in the middle Rangitikei and upper Turakina Catchment areas.

## 2.2 ACTIVITY OVER THE NEXT THREE MONTHS

2.2.1 Over the next three months (November – January), staff will:

- Continue to keep in touch with landowners regarding grant work programmes. As most programmes are currently fully or over allocated, any cancellations or postponements will need to be known as early as possible;
- Work through the claim processing, visiting farms and inspecting works;
- Complete first and second Milestone reporting to TUR for the SLUI programme (November and December);
- Discuss work programmes for winter 2020, including on-farm inspections;
- Deliver completed farm plans;
- Complete finals judging for Ballance Farm Environment Awards, and prepare for awards evening in March;
- Liaise with Poplar and Willow Research Trust (PWRT) to update pole trial sites in our region;
- Begin monitoring/audit programme for SLUI plans;
- Complete spring soil monitoring programme and submit samples to lab for analysis;
- Begin silviculture programme in joint venture forests; and
- Work with River Management on possible joint funding of willow clearance and riparian retirement in the Tiraumea Sub-Catchment of the Manawatū.

## 3 REPORT ON PROGRESS

### 3.1 ANNUAL PLAN AND CONTRACT TARGETS (2019-20)

3.1.1 The Annual Plan and HCEF contract targets for 2019-20 are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Annual Plan and HCEF contract targets 2019-20

MEASURE	ANNUAL PLAN	HCEF CONTRACT	TARGET	YTD	PREDICTED RESULT
<b>Sustainable Land Use Initiative</b>					
Erosion reduction works programmes in targeted SLUI catchments (ha)	3,100	3,440	3,440	399	Will achieve target
Whole Farm Plan properties mapped per year (ha)	20,000	22,500	22,500	1,816	Will achieve target
Farm or paddock assessments mapped per year (ha)	-	1,000	1,000	0	Probably achieve target
Case study completed (number)	-	1	1	0	No action at this stage
Feasibility reports (number)	-	6	6	0	No action at this stage
<b>Regional and Coast</b>					
Manage grant programmes to deliver erosion reduction works (ha)	175	-	175	1	Will achieve target
Support industry initiative that promote sustainable land use (number)	5	-	5	underway	Will achieve target
<b>Nurseries</b>					
Operate council nurseries and source additional commercial pole material to deliver polar and willow poles to control erosion (number of poles)	30,000	28,000	30,000	31,732	Provisionally achieved, 31,732 poles sourced for farmers

#### COMMENT ON TARGETS

3.1.2 At this stage in the year it is likely all targets will be met.

3.1.3 SLUI work claims are progressing largely as expected for this time of year. The largest number of claims by work type has been 41 for riparian retirement, while the most hectares has been for afforestation with 247.9 ha claimed.

## 4 SLUI ACTIVITY

### 4.1 WHOLE FARM PLAN (WFP) PRODUCTION.

4.1.1 WFPs are a tool for bringing new land into the programme and for allocating grants to the various land types (priority land). An important part of maintaining the momentum of SLUI is the ability to bring new farms, new land and new work into the programme. This table shows the plans completed in SLUI's life-to-date (LTD) and progress with bringing new plans on board.

Table 2: WFP production (life-to-date)

No. of Plans	Hectares	Comments
745	552,067	WFPs completed in SLUI to 30 June 2019
0	0	<b>Plans completed in 2019-20 and delivered to landowners</b>
5	1,816	Plans/ha mapped in 2019-20 but yet to be delivered to landowners
38	19,160	<b>Plans on the list in 2019-20, and with the contractor to complete</b>
43	20,976	Equals (5 + 38) Plans on list to be mapped 2019-20 financial year
50	30,000	Information with landowner, yet to finally commit to a plan

4.1.2 There are still four plans from last years programme to deliver to landowners. These will be completed before the end of the year (two are for one landowner who lives outside of the region). At this stage 73% of the landowners completing plans last year have agreed to begin a work programme.

4.1.3 There are 31 (14,295 ha) plans allocated to the contractor in 2019-20, and another 12 (6,681 ha) awaiting allocation. This brings the total plans for this year to 43 (20,976 ha).

4.1.4 We are awaiting the return of information/documents from a further 50 farms and more than 30,000 ha. Those still with paperwork outstanding have been prioritised by: having existing plans; being on top and high priority land, in the Oroua Catchment; and the likelihood of doing works.

4.1.5 Staff have noticed an increase in interest from landowners in getting a farm plan following the freshwater announcements. It is clear we will be prioritising our WFP process for the rest of this year and early next year.

### 4.2 WHOLE FARM PLAN ACTIVITY

4.2.1 The contract targets focus on the number of plans completed. The activity of individual plans over the life of the programme and on an annual basis is another measure of SLUI activity. The number of plans active in any one year can and does change. Table 3 tracks the number of plans that have been active and those that have done no works at all. Table 4 looks at the active plans and the average work per plan.

Table 3: Trend of active vs. inactive plans over the life of SLUI

Age of Plan	Total Plans	Active	Inactive	% Active
<2 years	38	15	23	39%
2-5 years	109	83	26	76%
>5 years	599	528	71	88%
<b>Total</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>84%</b>

- 4.2.2 The data in Table 3 (626 active plans) shows six newly active plans since the last report to the Catchment Operations Committee in October 2019.
- 4.2.3 There are 23 inactive plans that are less than two years old. This includes the plans completed in 2019-20. We would expect the majority of these plans to become active over the next 12 months.
- 4.2.4 The continuing trend is for one to two plans older than two years to go from inactive to active every two months.

Table 4: WFP activity (life-to-date)

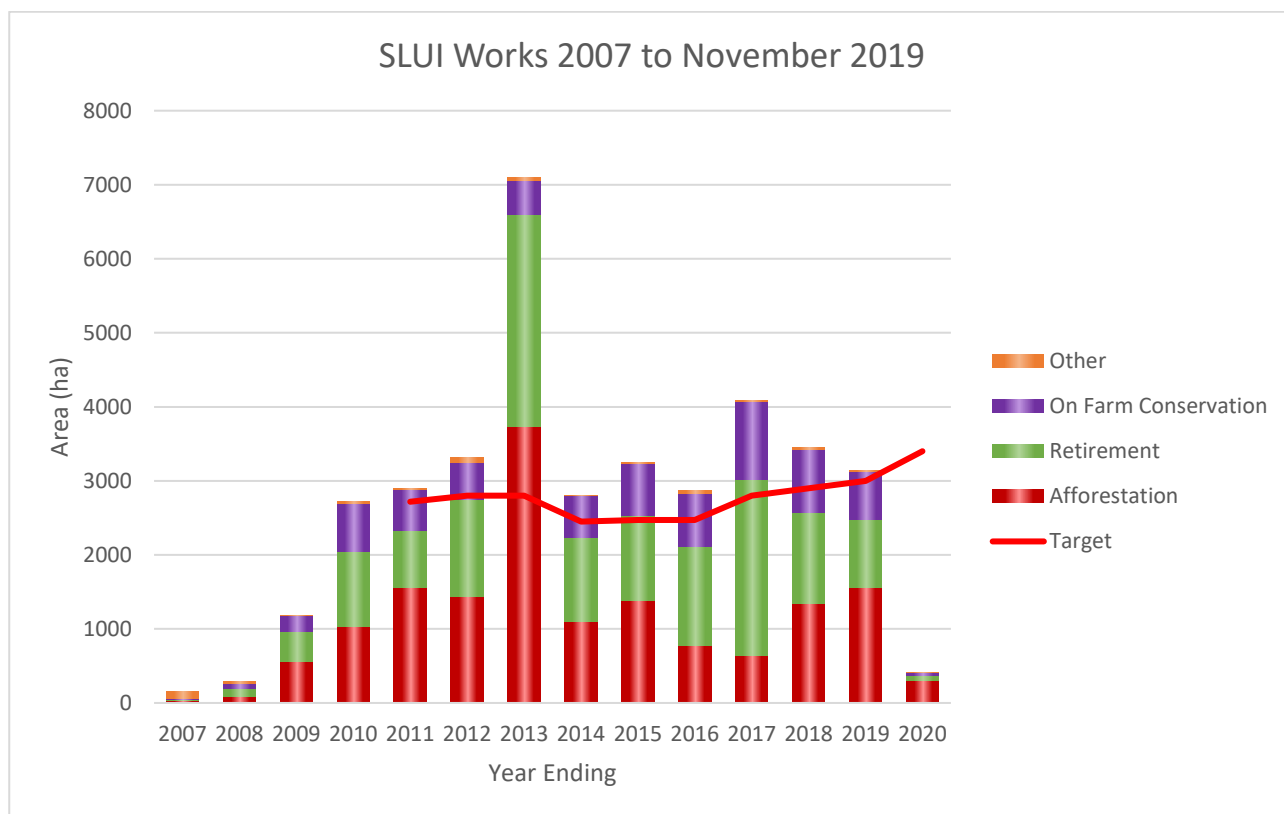
No. of Plans	Hectares	Comments
745	552,067	Landowners able to be engaged in SLUI WFP implementation
626	37,691	Active plans completed; 3,720 individual claims or an average of 5.94 claims per plan

- 4.2.5 At the time of this report there are 626 active plans involved in the work programme (Table 4) and this is increasing as more plans are completed and previously inactive plans have works carried out. There were 540 active plans at 30 June 2017 and 620 in June 2019.
- 4.2.6 The ratio of active to inactive plans has improved considerably. In 2010 there was approximately one active plan to one inactive plan, but by the end of June 2018 this had improved to more than four active plans for every inactive plan. At the end of June 2019 there were nearly five active plans for every inactive plan.
- 4.2.7 In the early part of every financial year we expect a slight rise in the number of inactive plans as the new plans are delivered and there is a lag before the work programmes commence.

## 4.3 WORK COMPLETED

### 4.3.1 SLUI Life-to-date

Graph 1: SLUI works completed by work type during the life of the programme against annual contract targets (red line)



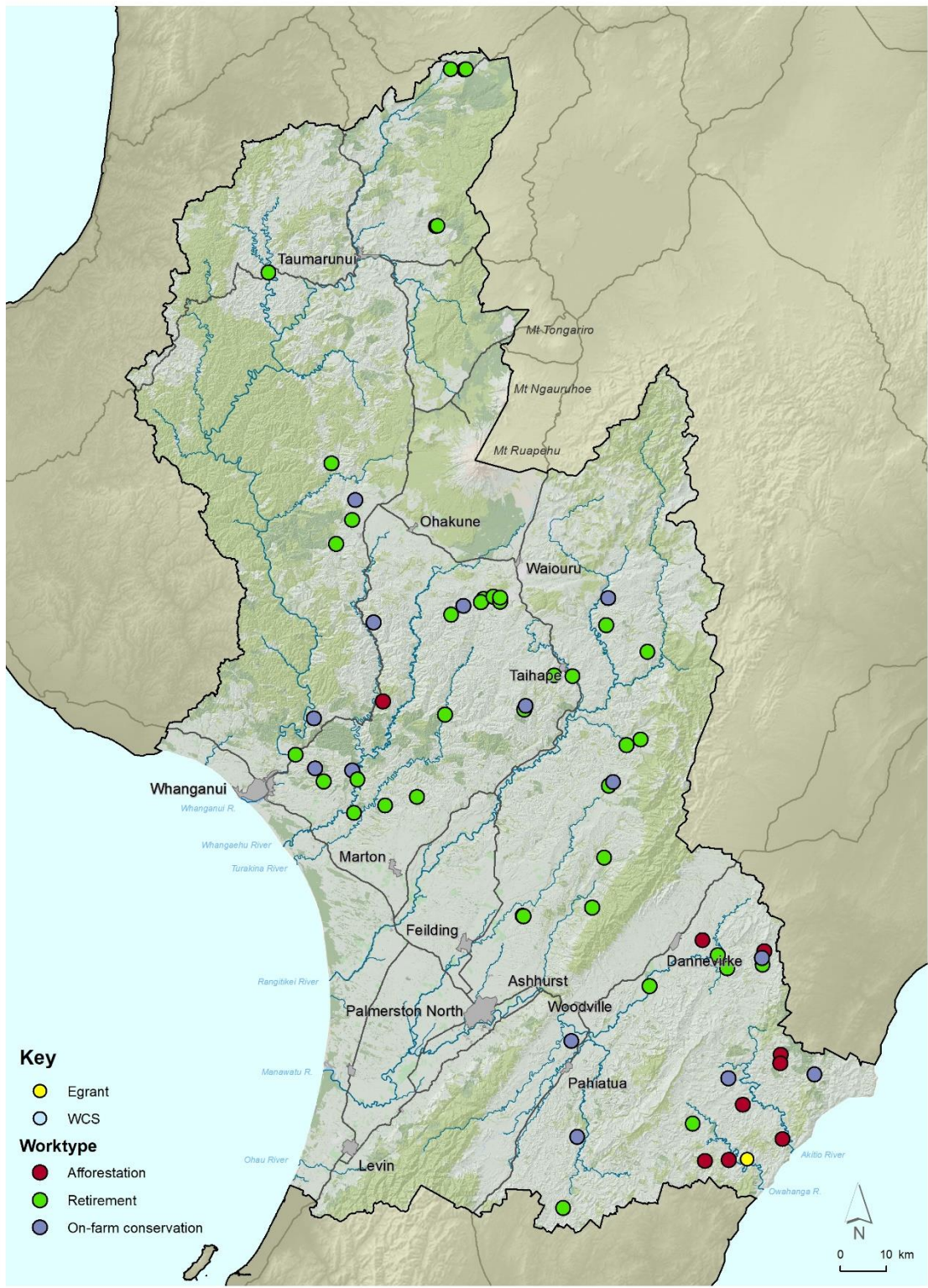
4.3.2 Each year since 2010 the contract target for hectares of works completed has been exceeded.

4.3.3 The amount of work completed was relatively stable from 2010 to 2016. However, 2013 was an exceptional year with 3,224 ha of afforestation. This was due to uptake of the Afforestation Grant Scheme and retirement projects in association with Ngā Whenua Rāhui.

4.3.4 The 2017-18 year was the third largest work year largely due to an increase in the afforestation category with an increase in mānuka planted.

4.3.5 Up until June 2019 afforestation (red) made up approximately 41 per cent (15,540 ha) of the work completed and retirement/riparian retirement (green) was 39 per cent (14,704 ha). These two work types account for the bulk of the hectares of work completed during the life of the programme.

4.3.6 The on-farm conservation (purple) is predominantly space planting and gully planting with poles but also includes structures and earthworks. It makes up 19 per cent (7,208 ha) of the work by area to 30 June 2019. In total, the programme has planted more than 218,000 poplars with 28,414 ha planted in 2018-19.



**2020 Worktype Locations**

Map prepared by W McKay, NRP Group on 14/11/2019

Map 1: Location of all grant works completed this financial year (SLUI and Regional and Coast).



## 4.4 YEAR-TO-DATE ACHIEVEMENTS

4.4.1 The table below shows the types of works completed and claimed this financial year.

Table 5: Works year-to-date (completed and claimed, by grant amount and land priority)

Work Type	2019-20				Priority Land Type (ha)			
	Claims	Farms	Grant \$	Total ha	Not Erodible	Erodible	High Priority	Top Priority
Afforestation	11	9	158,620	248				
Retirement	16	12	79,023	50				
Riparian Retirement	41	25	126,695	58				
Wetland Retirement	4	4	4,257	4				
Managed Retirement	3	3	17,698	13				
Space & Gully Planting	12	12	11,955	25				
Structures and Earth	1	1	8,652	1				
Other	3	3	3,507					
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>410,407</b>	<b>399</b>				

4.4.2 The 399 ha of works completed and claimed is 12% of the full year target.

4.4.3 The total cost of the works completed is \$976,915 (average grant rate 42%) and a landowner share of cost of \$566,508.

4.4.4 Hectares completed by land type has not been calculated as yet. The initial breakdown shows around 260 ha (65%) of work claimed as being on high and top priority land. A full breakdown will be available in future reports.



Photo 1: Wetland retirement completed in 2015. Photo courtesy of Libby Owen

## 4.5 FORECAST VS ACTUAL (TARGETS VS ACTUAL BY WORK TYPE)

4.5.1 Table 6 shows the forecast figures against target for 2019-20. The work programme is fluid and changes throughout the year. Some of the changes are due to postponements or cancellations and some are due to new plans coming on stream and bringing in new work programmes. The dollars shown in the table are the grant cost.

Table 6: Proposed work 2019-20 (contract vs forecast vs actual) and difference between forecast and contract

Work Type	Contract Target Ha	Forecast Ha	Actual Ha	Act vs Contract Ha	Dif %	Contract Target \$ x1,000	Forecast \$ x 1,000	Actual \$ X 1,000	Act. Vs contract \$ X 1,000
Afforestation	1,460	3,392	248	-1,212	17	1,097	1,486	159	-938
Retirement	850	2,068	50	-800	6	426	775	79	-347
Riparian Retirement <sup>*A</sup>	220	517	58	-162	26	358	1,447	127	-231
Wetland Retirement	See above	48	4	-	-		121	4	-
Managed Retirement	90	69	13	-77	14	26	46	18	-8
Space Planting & Gully Planting	810	491	25	-785	3	340	299	12	-328
Structures/Earthworks	10	2	1	-9	10	30	17	9	-8
Other (inc. blank)	-	14	0	-	-	60	39	3	-57
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,440</b>	<b>6,601</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>-3,041</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2,337</b>	<b>4,230</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>-1,927</b>

<sup>\*A</sup> – includes wetland

4.5.2 At this stage the work programme is well over allocated with \$4,230,310 worth of grant work proposed against a grant budget of \$2,337,000. The additional allocation of approximately \$1,893,310 of budget indicates a potential draw down of SLUI cash reserves as has been approved by Council, noting allocation is current more than the available reserves. The proposed work programme has allocated \$2,342,789 to fencing programmes (retirement, riparian and wetland). This is the most difficult work to accurately budget. In the last three years around 70% of allocated fencing programmes have actually been completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>. This suggests a potential saving in grant cost (compared to allocated levels) of \$700,000 which makes the projection for spend over the year to be within the approved budget.

4.5.3 Staff are regularly in contact with landowners, checking progress with works and will cancel or postpone works when it is clear they will not be completed.

4.5.4 Staff are informing landowners that we are fully allocated for grant funding this financial year. We have already allocated around \$700,000 of spending to the 2020-21 financial year.

4.5.5 A number of programmes proposed for the One Billion Trees programme have ended up back in the SLUI programme. Landowners are more comfortable working through the SLUI WFP programme than the 1BT application pathway. Examples include; on farm pine plantations

between 8 – 170 ha, large Manuka plantations where 1BT seem reluctant to fund large scale works, and 15 ha of reversion where the farmer didn't want to go through the application process.

## 4.6 JOINT VENTURE FORESTRY OPERATIONS

- 4.6.1 Horizons has interests in 10 joint venture forests (under a registered Forestry Right) with a net stocked area of 1,387 hectares. A report on these forests was provided to Council in April 2017 and another report is planned for this financial year. Work and expenditure in the forests includes; rates and insurance payments, maintenance of tracks and fences, pest control, audits and inspections, monitoring and measurements, arranging silviculture, valuations for external audit, maintaining Emission Trading Scheme registration and reporting, and liaising with the landowner.
- 4.6.2 Inventory stand assessments have been completed to inform timing of silviculture operations for this financial year. Waste thinning operations are proposed on three blocks.
- 4.6.3 Any track maintenance needed to allow access for silviculture crews has been assessed and organised.
- 4.6.4 A procurement process has been completed for silvicultural services over the next four years. A four year contract has been proposed in order to provide work certainty and continuity in an industry where experienced contractors are in very short supply.
- 4.6.5 At various times existing landowners or third parties express an interest in purchasing forests. If there is genuine interest the prospective purchaser is encouraged to put a proposal forward for Council to consider.

## 4.7 SLUI OPERATIONAL PLAN TARGETS

Table 7: Operational Plan targets 2019-20

<b>Contract Management</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete milestone reports to Te Uru Rakau as contracted. Reports due in November, March, May and June.</li> <li>▪ Provide shape files to Te Uru Rakau.</li> <li>▪ Invoice Te Uru Rakau upon satisfactory completion of targets.</li> </ul>
<b>Farm Plans</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase targeting of new farm plans and works (within catchments and within farms) to improve erosion control effectiveness, targeting "top" and "high" priority land.</li> <li>▪ Implement new tools including SLUI whole farm maps (WFM) and SLUI paddock maps (PM) to improve flexibility when targeting priority land and widen the pool of land available to SLUI funding.</li> <li>▪ Recognise Whanganui Catchment Strategy Plans as SLUI Plans and utilise SLUI funding on these farms, allowing more works to be funded. This will bring 40 farms and 22,000 ha into the SLUI programme.</li> <li>▪ Maintain high level of active plans through periodic reviews and customer contact.</li> </ul>
<b>Grant Administration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement new SLUI limits on funding for whole farm afforestation as approved by Council in June 2019.</li> <li>▪ Implement reclassification changes of some hill country riparian fencing projects to retirement projects, clarifying grant rates for the different types of plan (Whole Farm Plan, SLUI Whole Farm Map or SLUI Paddock Map).</li> <li>▪ Implement new work programmes for lifecycle management of poplars and willows on farm, including grants for poplar pruning and removal of "old man poplars". These programmes will be carried out within a set funding limit.</li> <li>▪ Review and increase auditing of works to deliver on contract targets and proof of establishment. Supply an annual report on this work.</li> </ul>

- Assist with landowner applications to the One Billion Trees (1BT) programme where they align with the goals of the SLUI programme. Look for complementary funding with 1BT and SLUI.
- Monitor grant programme for effective delivery and targeting, provide feedback to staff and council and look for continuous improvement.

#### Information Management and Forest Management Systems

- Upgrade information management to improve reporting processes and connectivity between the various sources of information in the programme, such as field information, SLUI database, financial reporting and Council/contract reporting and compliance.
- Maintain the work programme within the Joint Venture forests.
- Complete annual audit and valuation of Joint Venture forests.
- Effective management of SLUI reserves.
- Effective contractor management, including mapping contractors (let a new four year contract for WFP mapping).

#### Advice Services

- Increase provision of advice for forestry appraisals to ensure environmental requirements of right tree, right place.
- Promote best practice in forestry to minimise environmental concerns.
- Complete case studies and support the compliance function around forestry management (National Environmental Standard for Plantation forestry, forestry harvesting etc).
- Increase alignment with other Natural Resources and Partnerships (NRP) teams to deliver on integrated catchment management outcomes. This will include alignment with biodiversity and biosecurity (weed and pest) functions.

## COMMENTS ON OPERATIONAL PLAN TARGETS

- 4.7.1 Contract management is on track with the first Milestone report due to TUR at the end of November and first Milestone targets met.
- 4.7.2 Farm Plans are basically fully allocated for the year. Staff do have the ability to put any "Top Priority" farms forward and these will be added to the work programme for the year.
- 4.7.3 Grant administration is on track, staff have a new grant document for making grant allocations. Assisting with 1BT applications has taken time, especially where there are issues of potential overlap with SLUI works or where landowners have applied for grant where 1BT deem the areas to be ineligible (already have tree cover, give and take boundaries, paper roads etc).
- 4.7.4 Upgrading of the SLUI database will continue throughout the year. Other work programmes are underway.
- 4.7.5 Four forestry appraisal site visits have been completed with SLUI staff on smaller forest blocks. We still have funding for around 10 independent appraisals should they be required. Staff have met with the Biodiversity and River Management Teams regarding alignment of programmes.

## 5 REGIONAL AND COAST ACTIVITY

### 5.1 PROGRESS ON ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT AND ADVICE

5.1.1 Environmental Grant funding is in place to support landowners to undertake works that will reduce erosion and protect the environment. This funding is targeted slightly differently between the Regional Land and Coast (RL&C) environment grant and the WCS grant. Under the WCS, support from WRET enables a greater variety of work to be funded and at higher grant rates in some areas.

Table 8: Work area and budget expenditure for the year to date

Grant Type	WORK AREA (ha)				BUDGET (\$)			
	AP Target	Allocated	Complete	AP % Complete	AP Budget	Allocated	Complete	AP % Complete
WCS	75	32	0	0	113,000* <sup>1</sup>	47,749	0	
RL&C	100	138	1	1	80,000	114,590	449	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>193,000</b>	<b>162,339</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>0.2</b>

Note \*1 this is \$50,000 Horizons and \$63,000 WRET

- 5.1.2 A total of 107 projects have been allocated to date (71 in Land and 36 WCS). The Land grant budget is over allocated whilst the WCS has funds available. There is still some reallocation of projects possible between Land, WCS and SLUI and SLUI Paddock works as staff sort through the most suitable area for projects to be charged to.
- 5.1.3 Space planting accounts for 52 of the 107 projects, riparian retirement 22 and retirement 7.
- 5.1.4 WRET has signaled an increase in allocation from \$53,000 to \$63,000 with more funding available on further application. They have also allocated \$12,000 to demonstration projects.
- 5.1.5 Some of the projects may be re-allocated to SLUI paddock works. These will be assessed over the next month.
- 5.1.6 One Environmental Property Plan has been completed and one is in progress. These plans are a low priority, usually with small holdings and are completed as and when staff have time. They are a good way of training staff in land mapping and plan writing.
- 5.1.7 Staff have carried out some freshwater riparian projects with three fencing projects claimed. There has also been one SLUI retirement project forwarded to Biodiversity as the area is a Top 10 percent bush remnant.

### 5.2 INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

5.2.1 The first round of Ballance Farm Environment Awards judging has been completed, with the farms going through to the finalist round to be decided upon on 14<sup>th</sup> November. There was a good range of entries this year with four staff (three Land Management and one Freshwater) on the first round judging teams.

- 5.2.2 The BFEA committee held a soils workshop for farmers at the Feilding Golf Club on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October, around 80 people attended. Speakers were Alan Palmer from Massey University and Malcolm Todd, Horizons Land Information Coordinator.
- 5.2.3 Staff assisted Ian Mclvor from the Poplar and Willow Research Trust (PWRT) to plant poles at the Taihape demonstration site.
- 5.2.4 Horizons and other regional councils are supporting the PWRT and have pledged cash to a project to investigate the lifecycle of the newly arrived poplar sawfly. This pest is established in the Dunedin area and the initial evaluation to be carried out by SCION will try to establish some detail of the likely breeding and spread across New Zealand.
- 5.2.5 Staff spoke about sustainable land use and farm planning at a deer farmers field day at Utuwai.
- 5.2.6 Staff attended a Red Meat Profit Partnership workshop near Whanganui.
- 5.2.7 Horizons are supporting a project on reducing sediment losses through catch cropping. The project is primarily based in the Hawke Bay but has set up a trial site in the hill country north of Marton. This project is in year 2 of 3.
- 5.2.8 A number of funding projects have been proposed through the 1BT partnership programme. Various projects have sought our support either in cash or in kind. Many projects appear to overlap and it is difficult to offer support not knowing how many projects will end up getting approved. Two projects have got through to the final stages;
- A project being run by Tararua District Council looking at alternative tree species and how they may integrate into the farm (looking to support in kind)
  - A project being run by Perrin Ag Consultants looking at integrating farming with forestry for sustainable profitable land use with one area for a pilot case study being the Rangitikei/Taihape area (looking to support in cash and in kind).



Photo 2: Willow root strength trials at Ballantrae completed by Landcare Research and PWRT. Photo courtesy of Chris Phillips, MWLCR

## 5.3 SOIL HEALTH

- 5.3.1 The spring soil health monitoring programme has begun with four site visits in the Whanganui area. There is a push to get these sites completed and samples sent to the laboratory.
- 5.3.2 Letters for farmers where monitoring was carried out last autumn are being prepared. This tells them the results of the monitoring on their farm with recommendations for improving soil health if necessary.

## 5.4 WHANGANUI CATCHMENT STRAGETY AND WRET

- 5.4.1 Staff have been following up with landowners where marginal land use assessments were prepared over the last 18 months (funded by WRET).
- 5.4.2 Attended a field day on Te Uranga Station (SLUI WFP property) on farm and nature conservation run by the New Zealand Biological Heritage National Science Challenge.
- 5.4.3 Assisted in planting native trees in a wetland with Kaitieke School.
- 5.4.4 Provided support to the Freshwater team regarding riparian retirement programmes in the Ruapehu area.
- 5.4.5 Staff attended a Taumarunui Sustainable Land Management group meeting where the key topic of biodiversity was presented by Gerry Kessels, an ecologist from the Waikato.

5.4.6 Maintaining contact and relationships with TUR and iwi/hapū on the Whanganui River regarding land use change options (potentially non-traditional pastoral farming).

## 5.5 SUPPORT FOR CONSENTS AND COMPLIANCE

5.5.1 Attended a meeting with Horizons staff and NZTA regarding potential sites for biodiversity improvement in conjunction with the new Manawatu Gorge road, Te Ahu a Turanga and passed on landowner contact details to NZTA of potential landowners who might be interested.

5.5.2 Advice to landowners regarding the need for consent on a number of activities which may be permitted activity or require consent including:

- Three on willow clearance;
- Three on vegetation clearance;
- Two earth disturbance (one needing a consent);
- One maintain a drain in a wetland (passed on to biodiversity staff);
- One re contouring (earth disturbance on land less than 20 degree slope);
- One consent issue where the landowner needed to make contact with local iwi;
- One slope map provided to assist decision making around earth disturbance;
- One intensive land use (passed on to Rural Advice).

## 5.6 GENERAL

5.6.1 The Land Managers (LMG) and Land Monitoring (LMF) Special interest Groups (SIG) both held meetings in October. Both meetings were dominated by policies coming out of central government. For LMG the freshwater proposals were the main issue dealt with, a subgroup supported other SIGs inputting to the Local Government submission on freshwater reforms. LMG has also had input into the review of the National Environmental Standard for Production Forestry. For LMF the main policy input was a submission to the NES for versatile soils.

5.6.2 Discussions held with a consultant to investigate the feasibility of better coordination of pole supplies in the lower North Island. This includes the possibility for a centralised nursery producing for a number of Councils.

5.6.3 The Horizons Land Manager is currently the convener of the LMG, and in this role has had input into a number of other national projects including:

- Trustee of the PWRT, the trust is involved in finding extra funding and supporting an application to Ministry for Primary Industry (MPI), Sustainable Food and Fibres Future Fund to investigate poplar sawfly,
- A Ministry for Primary Industry project developing a national framework for integrated farm planning,
- Member of the Technical Advisory Group for the Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research soil erosion research project – Smarter Targeting of Erosion Control (STEC). Much of this work is based in the Horizons region and include our Science team and information from our hydrology network.
- An MPI lead project on helping farmers and growers transition to more sustainable land use practices,



- Working with other regional councils to develop a proposal to Te Uru Rākau to develop industry capability and capacity in the sustainable land use, afforestation, tree planting area,

## 5.7 REGIONAL AND COAST AND NURSERY OPERATIONAL PLAN TARGETS

5.7.1 The Land Management activities and projects during 2019-20 are set out below. These programmes may be modified in the final Operational Plan. At this stage of the year, only limited reporting is possible. The table is included to provide overview of the work programme.

Table 9: Operational Plan 2019-20 targets and progress for the year to date (YTD)

MEASURE	PROGRESS FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD				YTD	TARGET	% YTD	Predicted Result
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th				
<b>Regional Land and Coastal</b>								
Provide advice to ratepayers and support applications to Environmental Grant projects (# projects)	59	12			71	50	142	achieve
<b>Whanganui Catchment Strategy</b>								
Provide advice to ratepayers and support applications to Environmental Grant projects (# projects)	19	17			36	40	90	achieve
Maintain funding partnership with WRET; complete annual report (# reports)	0	0			0	1	0	achieve
WRET supported demonstration sites (3 sites)	0	0			0	3	0	?
Maintain relationship with Taumarunui Sustainable Land Management Group (# meetings)	0	1			1	2	50	achieve
<b>Soil Health</b>								
Promote and demonstrate soil health through Visual Soil Assessment (# demonstrations)	0	1			1	2	50	achieve
Maintain regional SOE soil quality monitoring and complete report (# reports)	0	begun			0	1	0	achieve
<b>Industry Partnerships</b>								
Support BFEA programme within our region, including entrants, judging, awards night and field day. Maintain Council presence on Horizons Region committee (# awards)	0	judge				1		achieve
Support PWRT in delivery of advice to regional councils and farmers through TAG, nursery managers and finance admin. (# annual reports received)	0	begun				1		achieve
<b>Nurseries</b>								

Support wider collaboration with other regional councils, farmers and commercial nurseries (# meetings with each supplier)	0	begun				1		achieve
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## 6 NURSERY

### 6.1 WORK PROGRAMME TO DATE

- 6.1.1 Post-harvest clean-up at both Bulls and Woodville nurseries.
- 6.1.2 Fertiliser and lime applied to all harvested and new planting areas at both nurseries.
- 6.1.3 New plantings have struck well with over 2,000 Tangoio (willow) stools at Woodville and 8,500 Veronese (poplar) at Bulls.
- 6.1.4 In both nurseries mowing and spraying programmes are continuing with David Murray (Contract Manager) and Ian Black (casual labourer). There are no contract workers on site at present.
- 6.1.5 A block of two-year old Veronese stools was damaged by wind at Woodville, this was compounded by being sited in a wetter area of the nursery. The poles are going to require 'standing up' when the ground is a bit drier in the next few weeks. At this stage it is proposed to ram the ground around the poles and erect wire along rows to keep poles upright. We will need to contract some labour in for this work.

### 6.2 WORK PROGRAMME OVER SUMMER

- 6.2.1 Continue maintenance programme of mowing and spraying and begin pruning programme.
- 6.2.2 Investigate alternative contract labour supply for summer and winter.
- 6.2.3 Investigate water supply options for irrigation at Woodville nursery.
- 6.2.4 Confirm pole supply from commercial growers.
- 6.2.5 Discuss possible sites for low input willow nursery on Rangitikei River with River Management.