



# LAND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY – 1 NOVEMBER 2019 TO 31 JANUARY 2020

## 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 the 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. It has more than 550,000 ha of farm plans across 748 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** (NES-PF) and the implementation of the One Plan policies and rules around land disturbance and vegetation clearance.
- 1.1.4 Management of poplar and willow nurseries in order to provide the necessary materials for the hill country erosion work is the final component of the Land activity. Upgrades to Horizons' Woodville nursery will continue this year. The programme aims to produce and plant more than 30,000 poplar poles

- 1.1.5 The Annual Plan and contract targets are agreed, with the latest **Ministry of Primary Industries** (MPI) contract signed in August 2019. This commits MPI funding of more than \$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 a 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 & 5-5).

## 2 ACTIVITY

### 2.1 ACTIVITY DURING LAST REPORTING PERIOD

- 2.1.1 This activity report relates to the period 1 November 2019 – 31 January 2020. While the previous report noted spring had been a mixed bag weather-wise, this report notes dry, windy and warm conditions. Most areas are in a closed fire season and farmers are reporting less feed as dry conditions start to bite. What was looking like being a very good season for farmers has gone downhill through the dry conditions, dropping schedule prices, lack of processing space at meat works, and concerns over the financial effects of Coronavirus.
- 2.1.2 In this reporting period we are still generally reporting good establishment of trees and poles, staff carrying out claims in February are beginning to report that poles especially are coming under stress from the dry, the winds and the effects of dry ground cracking open around poles.
- 2.1.3 Staff continue to visit landowners, mostly to carry out claim inspections. They are also following up on the currently allocated work programmes and checking in with farmers on progress with works. Most are still suggesting the work programmes will be completed; however, two potential avenues are opening up:
1. Drought, leading to lower process and concern about the future putting expenditure on hold; and
  2. Dry conditions are ideal for fencing and progress on some jobs is ahead of schedule.
- 2.1.4 Work with **Te Uru Rakau** (TUR) on the SLUI contract has included completion of two Milestone reports noting progress with the programme, and in a wider sense with the **One Billion Trees** programme (1BT). Horizons staff met with TUR in January with a view to agreeing on a "green lane" process for regional councils where councils could offer support to landowners in their 1BT applications. Other work with TUR has included putting together a proposal for staff support for some councils and an investment in capability and capacity (training programmes) for land management.
- 2.1.5 Seven 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 spring sampling round of soil health monitoring was completed and we are awaiting laboratory results. At this stage 75 out of the proposed 100 sites have been established.

## 2.2 ACTIVITY OVER THE NEXT THREE MONTHS

2.2.1 Over the next three months (February – April), 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 claim processing, visiting farms and inspecting works;
- Complete third Milestone reporting to TUR for the SLUI programme (March);
- Discuss work programmes for winter 2020, including on-farm inspections;
- Deliver completed farm plans;
- Complete the awards and final field day for Ballance Farm Environment Awards;
- Liaise with **Poplar and Willow Research Trust** (PWRT) to update pole trial sites in our region;
- Continue to liaise with **Ministry for the Environment** (MfE) over the government's Freshwater proposals, giving feedback to the proposed programme (meeting February);
- Continue to support regional and national land management and land monitoring **Special Interest Groups** (SIG), with meetings in late March;
- Continue monitoring/audit programme for SLUI plans, with the aim of having a report available to meet the TUR contract target of August 2020;
- Prepare for the autumn soil health sampling by contacting landowners;
- Continue silviculture programme in joint venture forests, noting this is weather dependent if the dry season and high fire risk continues; and
- Work with River Management on possible joint funding of willow clearance and riparian retirement in the Tiraumea Sub-Catchment of the Manawatū. This is continuing and one property may be completed this financial year.

### 3 REPORT ON PROGRESS

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

3.1.1 The Annual Plan and **Hill Country Erosion Fund** (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
Sustainable Land Use Initiative					
Erosion reduction works programmes in targeted SLUI catchments (ha)	3,100	3,440	3,440	862	Will achieve target
Whole Farm Plan properties mapped per year (ha)	20,000	22,500	22,500	2,732	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
Regional and Coast					
Manage grant programmes to deliver erosion reduction works (ha)	175	-	175	35	Will achieve target
Support industry initiatives that promote sustainable land use (number)	5	-	5	underway	Will achieve target
Nurseries					
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 with 226 claims completed and the largest number of claims by work type being for space planting (80 claims). The largest amount of work by work type has been afforestation with 500 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.

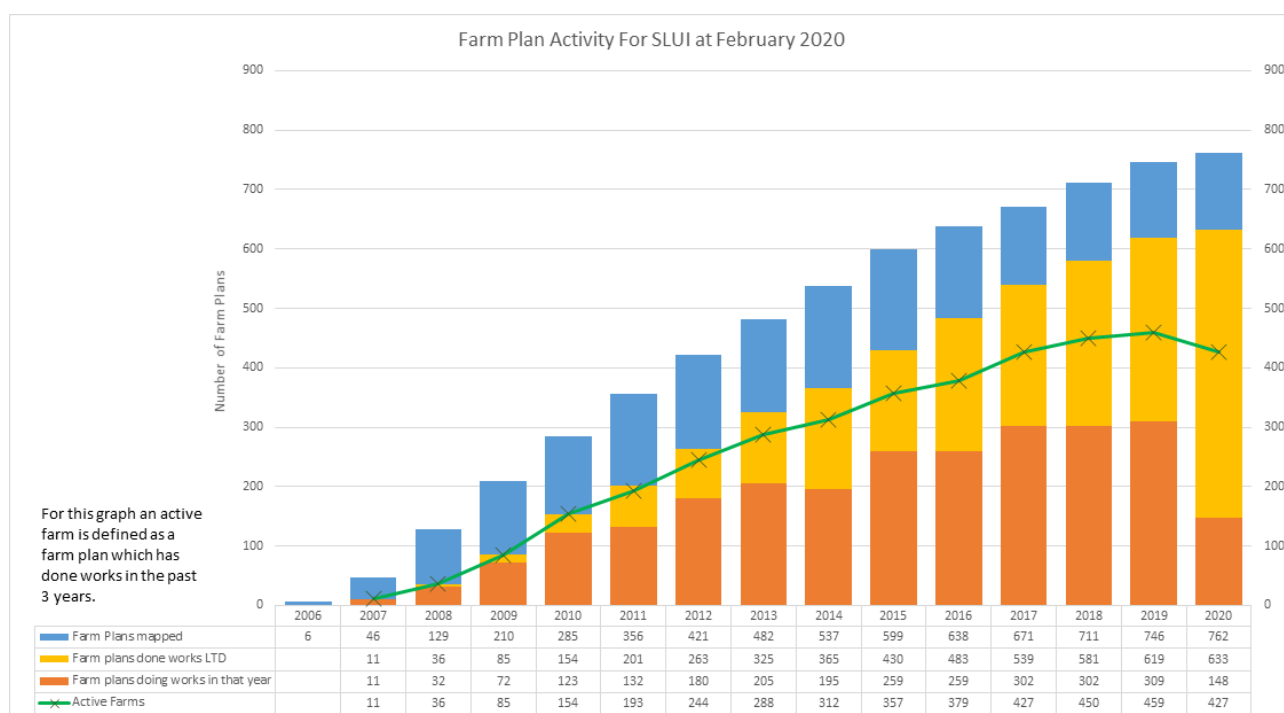
Table 2: WFP production (life-to-date)

No. of Plans	Hectares	Comments
745	552,067	WFPs completed in SLUI to 30 June 2019
2	537	<b>Plans completed in 2019-20 and delivered to landowners</b>
15	2,195	Plans/ha mapped in 2019-20 but yet to be delivered to landowners
39	22,091	<b>Plans on the list in 2019-20, and with the contractor to complete</b>
56	24,823	Equals (2 + 15 + 39) Plans on list to be mapped 2019-20 financial year
57	34,000	Information with landowner, yet to finally commit to a plan

- 4.1.2 All plans from last year's programme have been delivered to landowners.
- 4.1.3 There are 56 (24,823 ha) of plans allocated to the contractor in 2019-20. This exceeds the target for new WFP for the year. No new plans will be allocated unless they are deemed top priority, and this may be at the expense of a lower priority plan currently allocated.
- 4.1.4 We are awaiting the return of information/documents from a further 57 farms accounting for more than 34,000 ha. Those still with paperwork outstanding have been prioritised by: 1. having existing plans, 2. being on top priority and high priority land, 3. in the Oroua Catchment, and 4. the likelihood of doing works.

### 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.
- 4.2.2 Graph 3 is a new way of looking at the farm plan activity as a whole, and in any particular year. It is a "stacked column graph" where the orange, yellow and blue components of the column add up to the total number of plans in SLUI at the end of any given year. For example, in 2018-19 there were 746 plans completed over the life of SLUI, 619 plans had completed some works (83% active), 309 plans completed some work in that year (41% of plans active in 2018-19). The green line tracks "active" farm plans, where active is taken to be "has completed works in the last three years". In this instance the number of plans at the end of 2018-19 with some works completed in the last three years was 459 (62%). It is noted that the lower number of farms completing works in this year in the graph reflects the year only being partially completed at this stage.



Graph 1: Farm Plan Activity at February 2020.

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

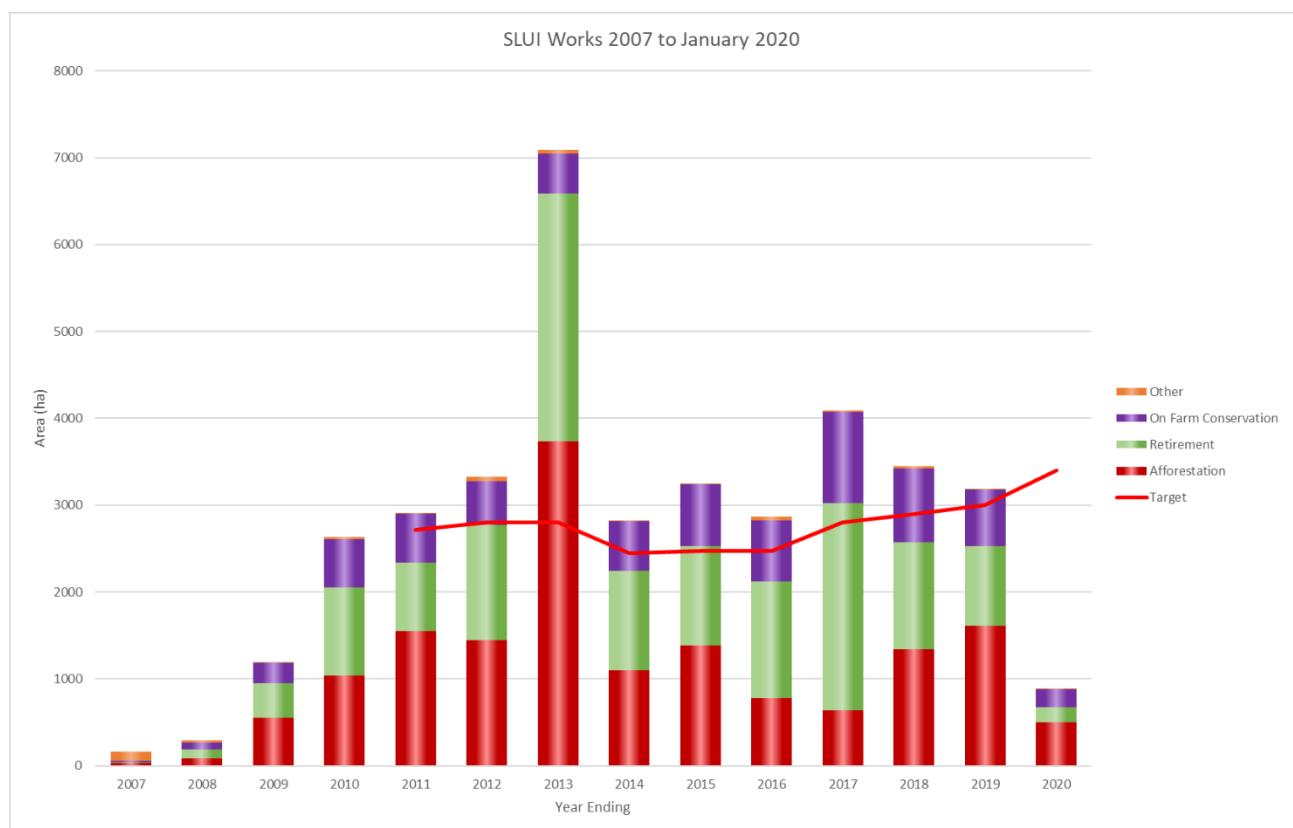
Age of Plan	Total Plans	Active	Inactive	% Active
<2 years	38	15	23	39%
2-5 years	109	85	24	78%
>5 years	599	529	70	88%
<b>Total</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>84%</b>

- 4.2.3 The data in Graph 1 shows a trend of more active plans (yellow stacked column) it also shows that the number of plans active in any given three-year period (green line) has grown, but has slowed over the last two years. There are a number of reasons for this e.g., older plans will have completed priority works and be less motivated, landowners with more than one plan will concentrate on one farm at a time and ownership changes or circumstances change and plan works are a lower priority. The green line also shows a decrease for 2020. This is expected as a number of claims are yet to come to charge, some of which will be new plans undertaking their first works.
- 4.2.4 Table 3 shows the trend of plan activity, where the activity rate for plans more than five years old is 88%. There are three newly active plans Table 3 (629 vs 626 active plans) since the last report to the Catchment Operations Committee in December 2019.
- 4.2.5 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.

- 4.2.6 The continuing trend is for one to two plans older than two years to go from inactive to active every two months.
- 4.2.7 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.
- 4.2.8 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 SLUI LIFE TO DATE AND OUTCOMES

### 4.3.1 SLUI Life-to-date



Graph2: 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.



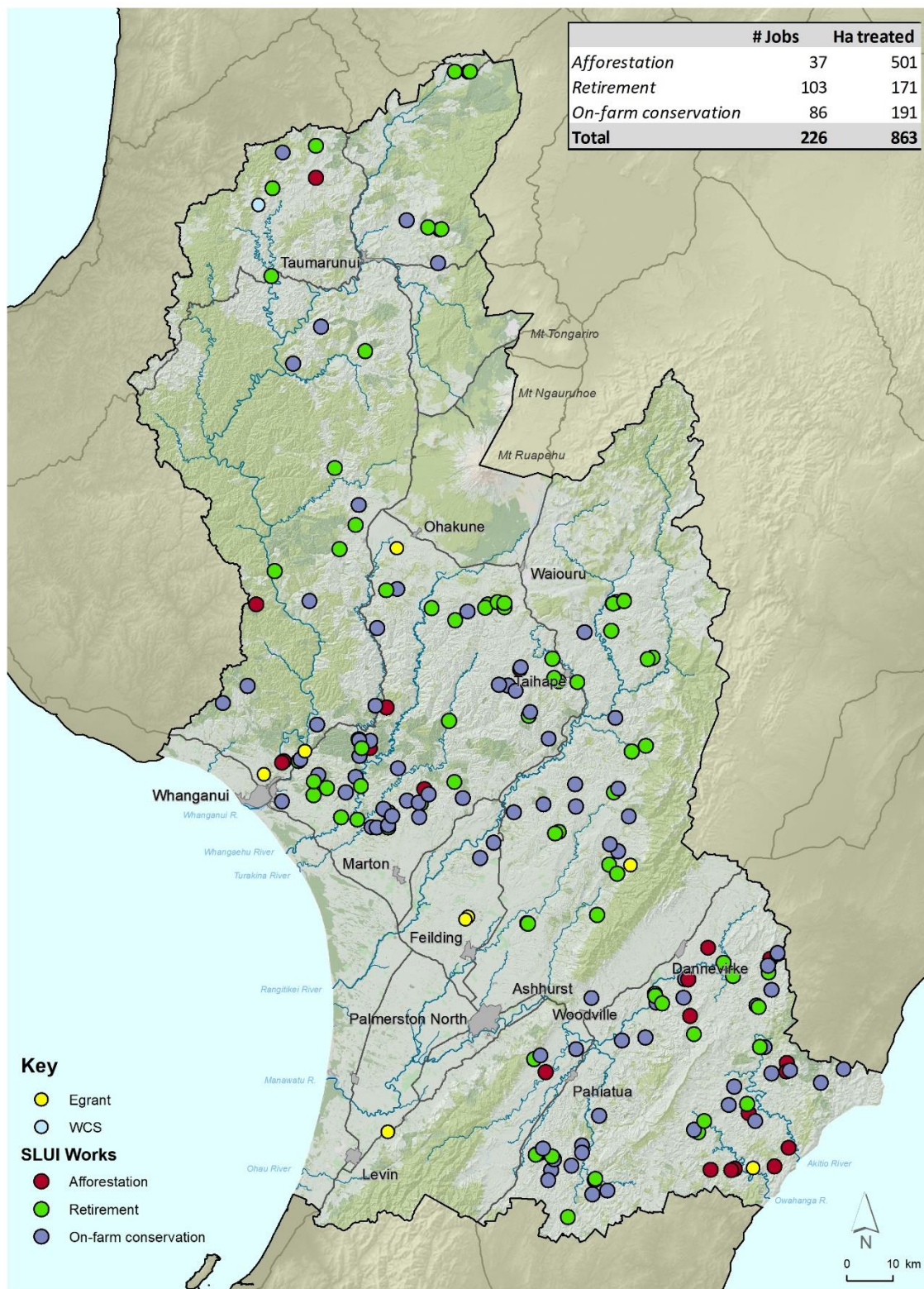
- 4.3.4 The 2017-18 year was the third largest work year, largely due to an increase in the afforestation category with more mānuka planted.
- 4.3.5 Until June 2019 afforestation (red) made up approximately 41 percent (15,540 ha) of the work completed and retirement/riparian retirement (green) was 39 percent (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 On-farm conservation (purple) is predominantly space planting and gully planting with poles but also includes structures and earthworks. It makes up 19 percent (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.
- 4.3.7 Until February 2020 the total cost of works completed under the SLUI programme has been \$40.577 million, with a grant cost (shared between Horizons and TUR) of \$18.881 million, and a landowner cost of \$21.969 million. Horizons and TUR have contributed 46% of the overall grant funding with landowners contributing the other 54%.
- 4.3.8 The total hectares of work completed is just over 38,000 ha, with 12,289 ha (32%) on top priority land, 11,659 ha (31%) on high priority land, and 14,073 ha on erodible or non-erodible land.
- 4.3.9 At the current rate of progress analysis suggests it will take 75 years to carry out works on all the top priority land that is currently in pasture (based on completing approximately 3,000 ha of work per year with 1,000ha on top priority land and around 500 of that in pasture. The other 500 ha being retirement of existing tree-covered land).

Outcomes for SLUI have been modelled by Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research and this work was reported in the 2019 State of Environment Report. (SOE page 19)

<https://www.horizons.govt.nz/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=a77bc2a4-381f-4660-8ef9-4e2486ac7165>

- 4.3.10 The modelling reports:
- That SLUI works to date are estimated to have reduced sediment load in rivers by 835,000 tonnes (6 percent) with the greatest reductions (up to 19 percent) in the Kai Iwi, East Coast and Lower Rangitikei.
  - That with ongoing implementation of SLUI works at approximately the current pace, the average annual sediment load could be decreased by 27 percent and water clarity improved by 29 percent by 2043.
  - Climate change, however, is likely to alter annual rainfall patterns and impact rates of hillslope erosion and river sedimentation, particularly in the northern and western areas of the region. Modelling suggests that this could result in a potential change to the predicted reduction in sediment load from 27 percent by 2043 to just 19, 12 or 5 percent under minor, moderate and major climate change scenarios with the amounts varying across the region.
  - Modelling also shows that New Zealand's largest hill country erosion programme, SLUI, may not offset the increases in sediment load from climate change in the longer term, as sediment loads in the river could increase by between 40 and 180 percent by 2090. This suggests the long-term effectiveness of work already undertaken through SLUI is expected to reduce under climate change, as heavier rainfall events increase sediment loading in the region's rivers.





**2020 Worktype Locations**

Map prepared by W McKay, NRP Group on 14/02/2020

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

	2019-20			Priority Land Type (ha)				
Worktype	Claims	Farms	Grant \$	Total Ha	Not Erodible	Erodible	High Priority	Top Priority
Afforestation	37	20	419,847.41	500.6	29.0	121.3	148.4	201.9
Retirement	30	28	155,380.09	107.2	8.7	31.4	33.4	33.7
Riparian Retirement	59	41	293,123.79	49.4	10.0	13.2	17.0	9.1
Wetland Retirement	11	9	30,597.98	5.0	1.7	3.3	0.0	
Managed Retirement	3	3	11,360.78	9.6	0.3	0.4	3.5	5.4
Space Planting	80	78	120,298.74	189.9	15.2	88.9	64.8	21.1
Structures/Earthworks	3	3	13,340.45	0.2		0.2		
Other	3	3	10,448.38	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.3	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>1,054,397.62</b>	<b>862.4</b>	<b>65.0</b>	<b>258.8</b>	<b>267.4</b>	<b>271.1</b>

4.4.2 The 862 ha of works completed and claimed is 25% of the full year target.

4.4.3 Hectares completed by land type shows 538 ha (62%) of work claimed to date is on high priority and top priority land. The bulk of this work has been completed on afforestation projects.

4.4.4 There have been 226 claims completed to date on 185 farms and we have allocated 671 jobs.

4.4.5 The 226 claims completed involved planting of 426,000 trees and 68 km of new fencing.



Photo 1: Afforestation planting Whanganui River catchment. Photo courtesy of Phil Hodges.

## 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 5: Proposed work 2019-20 (contract vs forecast vs actual by hectares and dollars)

Work Type	Hectares				Dollars \$ x 1000			
	Contract Target	Forecast	Actual	Actual vs Contract	Contract Target	Forecast	Actual	Actual Vs contract
Afforestation	1,460	3,232	500	-960	1,097	1,484	420	-677
Retirement	850	2,122	107	-743	426	852	174	-252
Riparian Retirement <sup>*A</sup>	220	489	49	-171	358	1,254	298	-60
Wetland Retirement	See above	30	5	-		80	30	-
Managed Retirement	90	75	11	-79	26	51	11	-15
Space Planting & Gully Planting	810	492	190	-620	340	302	137	-203
Structures/Earthworks	10	2	1	-9	30	17	13	-17
Other (inc. blank)	-	14	0	-	60	36	10	-50
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,440</b>	<b>6,459</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>-2,578</b>	<b>2,337</b>	<b>4,076</b>	<b>1,093</b>	<b>-1,244</b>

<sup>\*A</sup> – includes wetland

4.5.2 At this stage the work programme remains significantly over-allocated with \$4,075,938 worth of grant work proposed against a grant budget of \$2,337,000. This is a drop in allocation of \$154,000 since the November report, largely due to a drop in the amount of riparian fencing proposed. The hectares of work proposed for completion has also dropped from 6,601 ha to 6,459 ha.

4.5.3 The additional allocation of approximately \$1,739,000 of budget indicates a potential drawdown of SLUI cash reserves as has been approved by Council, noting allocation exceeds the available reserves. The proposed work programme has allocated \$2,185,779 to fencing programmes (retirement, riparian and wetland). This is the most difficult work to accurately budget for and in the past three years approximately 70% of allocated fencing programmes have actually been completed by June 30. 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.

4.5.4 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. This contact is reflected in the figures above with a slight drop in work proposed to be completed.

- 4.5.5 Staff are informing landowners that we are fully allocated for grant funding this financial year. We have already allocated approximately \$784,000 (up from \$700,000) of spending to the 2020-21 financial year.

## 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 landowners.
- 4.6.2 In early January strong westerly winds caused some concern as we had carried out thinning to waste, and this is a time when forests are particularly vulnerable to wind throw. However, all forests were inspected subsequently and no issues of concern were noted.
- 4.6.3 On Saturday 1 February John Jamieson was notified of a forest fire on Whanganui River Road near our Wickham joint venture forest. Rural fire services were on the scene and helicopters had been called in. Horizons staff (John Jamieson, Sara Mathieson and Josh Penn) were on the scene and assisted Rural Fire with information as the fire was fought over Saturday until Monday. The main effort to control the fire was on Sunday with up to seven heavy lift helicopters, ground crews and a large D8 bulldozer being used. The fire appeared to have started on the river side of the road, jumped the road and spread up the hill with assistance of a strong wind. The fire took hold in a neighbouring forestry block (Parakino) and entered the Wickham block. The bulldozer was used in the Wickham block to upgrade tracks and establish firebreaks. The fire was largely extinguished on Monday, but equipment was kept on site in case of flare ups. Staff couldn't access the block until later in the week to assess damage. Initial estimates suggest the efforts of Rural Fire to contain the fire spread were impressive as damage to the Wickham JV is less than 2 ha with about 0.5 ha of trees badly damaged. Some gateways and fences were damaged and tracks opened by the D8 for firebreaks need repair. This work is currently underway. The block was scheduled for waste thinning in February. This is scheduled to begin on Monday 17 February with tight controls in place, including using a smaller crew, having access to a helicopter for firefighting, early starts and finishes and a maintenance check at the end of each day.





Photo 2: Fire Whanganui River Road on Saturday 1 February. Photo courtesy of Sara Mathieson.



Photo 3: Firebreaks put in using D8 bulldozer. Photo courtesy of Josh Penn.

- 4.6.4 Track maintenance, spraying and trimming of edge trees has been undertaken on blocks for access to allow thinning to be completed.
- 4.6.5 Waste thinning has been completed on Wright's block with 140.9ha thinned to a target crop stocking of 530 stems per ha.

## 4.7 SLUI OPERATIONAL PLAN TARGETS

The SLUI operational plan targets were presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee of Council in the Operational Plan 2019-20 by Natural Resources and Partnerships on 10 September 2019. The SLUI Operational targets made up section 2.2 of that plan.

### COMMENTS ON OPERATIONAL PLAN TARGETS

- 4.7.1 Contract management is on track with the first two Milestone reports for TUR completed. The next report is due at the end of March.
- 4.7.2 Farm Plans are fully allocated for the year. Staff do have the ability to move 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 and staff have a new grant document for making grant allocations. Assisting with One Billion Trees 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 (e.g., already have tree cover, give and take boundaries, paper roads etc). Staff have been proactive in working with 1BT to develop a council approved "greenlane" project. We are keen to be involved with this project because it would help us provide certainty around our SLUI vs 1BT work programmes.
- 4.7.4 Upgrading of the SLUI database is on track and will continue throughout the year. Other work programmes underway include entering the joint venture forests into the AMIS, the new asset management system.
- 4.7.5 Seven forestry appraisal site visits have been completed with SLUI staff on smaller forest blocks. We still have funding for approximately 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 **Whanganui Catchment Strategy** (WCS) grant. Under the WCS, support from **Whanganui River Environmental Trust** (WRET) enables a greater variety of work to be funded and at higher grant rates in some areas.

Table 6: 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	48* <sup>1</sup>	2	3	113,000* <sup>2</sup>	154,979	38,994	35
RL&C	100	154	33	33	80,000	125,341	31,472	39
Total	175	202	35	20	193,000	280,320	70,466	37

Note \*1 - there is data missing in the allocation of hectares to work programmes in the WCS.

\*2 - this is \$50,000 Horizons and \$63,000 WRET

- 5.1.2 A total of 130 projects (107 last reporting period) have been allocated to date (79 in Land and 51 WCS). Both the Land and WCS grant budgets are over-allocated but 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 58 of the 130 projects, riparian retirement 36 and retirement six.
- 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 One Environmental Property Plan has been completed and one is in progress. These plans are a low priority, usually with small holding,s and are completed as and when staff have time. They are a good way of training staff in land mapping and plan writing.

### 5.2 INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

- 5.2.1 The Ballance Farm Environment Awards judging has been completed. The awards evening will be held on 19 March with the winner's field day set for April.
- 5.2.2 Staff met with Trevor Jones, scientist at the **Poplar and Willow Research Trust** (PWRT) to discuss a nursery managers' meeting and pole trials.
- 5.2.3 PWRT and regional council support for a project to investigate the lifecycle of the newly arrived poplar sawfly was approved. This pest is established in the Dunedin area and the initial evaluation to be carried out by SCION (CRI researching forestry, wood products and biomaterials) will try to establish some detail of the likely breeding and spread across New Zealand. Initial communications have been set up in hopes of getting public help to monitor the spread of this pest. <https://inaturalist.nz/projects/tracking-the-poplar-sawfly>



- 5.2.4 SCION have recently announced the release of a biocontrol for the giant willow aphid. The first release of a parasitoid to control the aphid took place at a Bay of Plenty Regional Council site near Whakatane. Further releases are planned in North and South Island regions during the next couple of months, including a release in the willow collection at Massey University in late February or early March. *More information can be found in the media release provided by Scion:*

[https://www.scionresearch.com/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020-news-and-media-releases/biocontrol-for-willow-pest-released/\\_nocache](https://www.scionresearch.com/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020-news-and-media-releases/biocontrol-for-willow-pest-released/_nocache)

- 5.2.5 Staff attended Red Meat Profit Partnership workshops in the Rangitikei District and at Weber in Taranaki District.
- 5.2.6 Staff hosted the annual Coast to Coast trip as part of the annual Whanganui Summer programme.
- 5.2.7 Staff took part in a workshop organised by the Ministry for Primary Industries, looking for tools and ideas that could be put into place to support farmers and growers in delivering sustainable land use outcomes.

## 5.3 SOIL HEALTH

- 5.3.1 The spring sampling programme has been completed. Samples have been sent to the laboratory and we are awaiting the results
- 5.3.2 The autumn programme is planned to commence in May. This will be weather dependent as a reasonable level of soil moisture is required in order to undertake the sampling. Ten sites are planned for this autumn.

## 5.4 WHANGANUI CATCHMENT STRATEGY (WCS) AND WHANGANUI RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST (WRET)

- 5.4.1 Staff have prepared a progress report for the WRET meeting in February.
- 5.4.2 Work programmes in the upper Whanganui/Ruapehu area are on track and staff have approximately 50 WCS/WRET funded projects and another 30-plus jobs to be funded from SLUI (WCS plans).
- 5.4.3 There are continuing discussions with large manuka planting projects. These projects are potentially able to be funded under the One Billion Trees programme.



Photo 4: "Kawa' poplar poles sourced from the local WRET-funded nursery and planted in the Whangamomona catchment – January 202., Photo courtesy of Weston Brown.

## 5.5 SUPPORT FOR CONSENTS AND COMPLIANCE

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

- Two on vegetation clearance;
- One on cultivation where the advice was no consent needed but the landowner was still keen to obtain a consent

## 5.6 GENERAL

5.6.1 The Horizons Land Manager is currently the convener of the **Land Management Group** (LMG) and in this role has had input into a number of other national projects including:

- Trustee of the Poplar and Willow Research Trust , which is involved in finding extra funding and supporting an application to Ministry for Primary Industries' Sustainable Food and Fibres Future Fund to investigate poplar sawfly. This funding has been approved (see 5.2.3) but there were issues in settling the contract document with MPI.
- A Ministry for Primary Industries project developing a national framework for integrated farm planning, which appears to be gathering momentum.
- 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 and tree planting areas.

## 6 NURSERY

### 6.1 WORK PROGRAMME TO DATE

#### 6.1.1 WRET-supported nurseries in the Ruapehu District:

- Ongarue – thinning and pruning, harvest next year (2021);
- Mangapapa – spray programme underway, harvest this winter estimated at 800-1,000 kawa;
- Whio (blue duck) – pruning and thinning completed by American University students, harvest this winter estimated 500 shinsei (NZ-bred poplars) Kawa poles slower and will be harvested next winter;
- NZ Redwood Company – spray programme underway, harvest estimated 500 shinsei poles this winter.

#### 6.1.2 Woodville:

- Nursery very dry after good rain in December;
- Spraying for aphid control;
- Mowing and pruning;
- Met with new contractor to finalise pruning contract for work to begin in mid-February.

#### 6.1.3 Bulls:

- Nursery very dry causing concern for newly established stool beds;
- Some improvements to storage of chemicals and signage.

#### 6.1.4 Contacted commercial grower to check on supply as Matatoa may have fewer poles than indicated at harvest last year.

#### 6.1.5 Horizons is hosting the nursery managers' meeting in March; Regional Council and a small number of commercial nursery managers get together once a year with support from the PWRT.

### 6.2 WORK PROGRAMME OVER SUMMER

#### 6.2.1 Continue maintenance programme of mowing and spraying, and begin pruning programme.

#### 6.2.2 Confirm alternative contract labour supply for summer and winter for both Bulls and Woodville.

#### 6.2.3 Investigate water supply options for irrigation at Woodville nursery.

#### 6.2.4 Confirm pole supply from commercial growers.