

Report No.	21-49
Information Only - No Decision Required	

## LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This report covers work carried out by the Natural Resources and Partnership – Land Management team during the period 1 November 2020 to 28 February 2021. It includes the activity areas of **Sustainable Land Management Initiative** (SLUI), Regional Land and Coast, and Nursery.

### 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. This report focusses on the operational targets of the Annual Plan 2020-21 Land Management Activity for SLUI, Regional and Coast, and Nursery budget activity areas. It also provides updates on the contract targets with **Te Uru Rakau** (TUR), formerly Forestry NZ, regarding delivery of the SLUI programme. The annex provides a more detailed update on progress.
- 2.2. This activity report relates to the period 1 November 2020 to 28 February 2021. Spring conditions were better than normal with mild conditions and consistent rainfall through until Christmas. Since then rainfall has been patchy and temperatures have fluctuated. January and early February provided good rainfall but late February has been hot and dry. By early March most areas were reporting they would like some rain, with stream levels low and pastures drying out.
- 2.3. Tree survival and growth has been very good. Poplar and willow poles have had high 90% establishment and very good growth rates. Pine blocks have established well. Riparian plantings have done well as long as weed control has been diligent.

#### SLUI

- 2.4. The SLUI programme has entered into a new four-year funding contract with TUR. The **Hill Country Erosion Fund** (HCEF) contract provides for more than \$6.4 million in funding over four years. This year is year two with the TUR contribution being \$1.388 million, the Horizons' contribution \$3.677 million, and an estimated landowner contribution of \$4.3 million in cash, and \$0.5 million in-kind providing a total estimated budget of \$9.855 million.
- 2.5. The **Whole Farm Plan** (WFP) programme is contracted to complete 22,500 ha of new plans plus 1,000 ha of one-off paddock maps. At present 57 plans covering 24,553 ha are allocated for the year. The interest in farm plans has increased following Central Government's release of consultation documents about freshwater management. In their current form, SLUI plans will not meet the requirements of the farms plans required by Government.
- 2.6. The environmental works programme is contracted to complete 3,065 ha of "on the ground" works. The programme has 3,350 ha of works allocated for the year (down from 4,625 ha at last report) and experience shows not all of this will be delivered within the year. The expanded budget for grants this year is \$2.337 million with allocation levels indicating just over \$3.0 million of Ministry of Primary Industry and Horizons' funding grants. That could mean a small amount of Horizons SLUI reserves will be used during the year.

**Regional and Coast**

- 2.7. The Regional and Coast programme is funded via general rate targeting advice and grants for erosion control works on a one-off basis within the Whanganui River Catchment. These works will be largely outside of the SLUI contracted area and in funding partnership with the **Whanganui River Enhancement Trust** (WRET). In total 175 ha of land is targeted for erosion control works. At this point in the year 262 ha of works have been allocated between the combined programmes, with 59 ha of work completed within the Whanganui Catchment Strategy programme and 87 ha in the wider environmental grant programme.
- 2.8. The Industry Partnership programme proposes supporting five initiatives promoting sustainable land use and good management practice on farms within the region. Funding partnerships exist with the New Zealand Farm Environmental Trust and the Poplar and Willow Research Trust. Other programmes are supported as funding and opportunities allow.
- 2.9. The Soil Health programme maintains the Regional State of the Environment soil quality monitoring programme through a regional network of soil health assessments, and a general advice programme around soils and soil health.

**Nurseries**

- 2.10. Council operates a number of poplar and willow pole nurseries to produce planting material for erosion control programmes. The aim is to produce and source a total of 30,000 poles per season.
- 2.11. The 2020 winter pole season was completed with final numbers showing 32,600 2.5 to 3.0 m poles distributed to landowners.
- 2.12. The pole production and purchase programme is on track to source between 38,000 and 40,000 poles for winter 2021 planting.

**3. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 21-49 and Annex.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPACT**

- 4.1. There are no direct financial impacts associated with this report. However, it does update members on a number of financial matters associated with SLUI, Regional and Coast, and Nursery activities.

**5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 5.1. Consultation was carried out through the 2012-22 **Long-term Plan** (LTP) submission process and the recent Annual Plan process. Te Uru Rakau has a key role in part-funding and overseeing the SLUI section of this activity.

**6. CLIMATE IMPACT STATEMENT**

- 6.1. This item reports on Horizons' activity in relation to our Annual Plan targets and is not considered to have a climate change impact. The land management activity includes a range of planting programmes, the benefits of which have been reported to council in various items.

14 April 2021

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**7. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT**

- 7.1. There are no significant risks inherent in the adoption of the recommendations contained in this report.

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

- 8.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

Grant Cooper

**LAND & PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER**

Jon Roygard

**GROUP MANAGER NATURAL RESOURCES & PARTNERSHIPS**

**ANNEXES**

- A Land Management Progress Report