

Report No.	19-91
Information Only - No Decision Required	

REGIONAL COAST & LAND

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This report is to update Members on progress with Council's Regional Land and Coastal and Whanganui Catchment Strategy activities from 1 March to 30 April 2019.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. The report updates both the Regional Land and Coastal, and **Whanganui Catchment Strategy** (WCS) work streams as outlined in the Annual Plan and Operational Plan for 2018-19.
- 2.2. The Regional Land and Coastal, and WCS programmes are on track to achieve all five Annual Plan targets, as shown in Table 1.
- 2.3. In addition to the Annual Plan targets there are a number of Operational Plan targets, as shown in Table 2. These targets are more flexible and can change in response to changing work priorities. The majority of these are on track to be achieved. Some have not progressed at this stage due to other priorities, such as the application and contract negotiations for the **Hill Country Erosion Fund** (HCEF).
- 2.4. The WCS programme is supported through funding from the **Whanganui River Enhancement Trust** (WRET). The WCS target of 75 ha of work has already been exceeded with 147 ha of work complete. More work is being enabled through Council's endorsement of use of SLUI funds to do more work on WCS farms. Discussions have taken place with WRET about this new approach.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 19-91.

4. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 4.1. There is no financial impact associated with recommendations in this report.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1. This is a public item and therefore Council may deem this report sufficient to inform the public.

6. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

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

7. OUTPUTS FOR ANNUAL PLAN 2018-19

7.1. All of the Annual Plan targets are expected to be achieved (Table 1).

Table 1: Annual Plan targets and progress Year to Date (YTD)

MEASURE	PROCESS FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD				YTD	TARGET	% YTD	Predicted Result
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th				
Regional Land and Coastal, Industry and Nursery								
Environmental Grant programmes to deliver erosion reduction works (hectares)	0	7	3	30	40	100	40	Expect to achieve target
Support for at least five industry partnership initiatives	2	2	0	4	6	5	120	Achieved target
Operate council nursery and source additional poles to deliver for erosion control	-	36,000 estimate	39,306		39,306	30,000	131	Exceeded target
Whanganui Catchment Strategy								
Environmental Grant programmes to deliver erosion reduction works (hectares)	1	0	143	3	147	75	196	Exceeded target
Deliver programme with WRET	-	On track	meeting		-	1	-	On target

7.2. The next meeting with WRET is programmed for May.

7.3. Annual Plan industry support includes: Beef and Lamb, Poplar and Willow Research Trust, Ballance Farm Environment Awards, Middle District Farm Forestry Association, Fertiliser and Lime Research Workshop and LandWise conference.

8. OPERATIONAL PLAN OUTPUTS 2017-18

8.1. In addition to the Annual Plan targets, a number of supporting work streams have been agreed to in the Operational Plans. These targets are more flexible and can change depending on workload, priorities and demand from the public at this point in the year.

Table 2: Operational Plan outputs and progress YTD

TARGET	QUANTITY	PROGRESS	RESULT
Regional Land and Coastal			
Produce Environmental Property Plans	As required	1 mapped	On track
Manage Environmental Grant projects to commit funding (\$)	80,000	Over-allocated	On track
Industry Partnerships			
Commit funding to the Poplar and Willow Research Trust (P&WRT)	1	Paid	Achieved
Commit funding to support the Ballance Farm Environment Awards (BFEA) in our Region	1	Contract signed and paid	Achieved
Whanganui Catchment			
Manage Environmental Grant projects to commit funding(\$)	103,000	Over-allocated	On track
Deliver demonstration farm including field day	1	Autumn 2019	On hold this year
Soil Health			
Run Soil Health Workshops	As required	3	Achieved
Continue to implement State of Environment (SoE) monitoring programme for soil health and report results of previous year's programme	1	Spring sampling complete. Report still to do.	On track
Set up new SoE monitoring sites	10	10 new sites this spring	Achieved
Nurseries			
Provide technical support to the Poplar and Willow Research Trust (P&WRT)	1	Ongoing	On track
Provide sites suitable for trialling and bulking new varieties as supplied by P&WRT	2	4 planted	Achieved
Finalise and implement pole strategy		Draft completed	On track
Complete capital upgrade project at Woodville nursery		Building complete	On track
Develop a nursery strategy		Meeting held	On track by end of June, in conjunction with neighbouring Councils.
Regulatory Support			
Manage consent process for vegetation clearance, earthworks and cultivation to meet regulatory requirements		nil	
Support Consents and Compliance in implementing the National Environment Standard for Plantation Forestry (NESPF)		Discussion with Consent team	

- Land use consents centralised and reported through the Consents database.
- Erosion and Sediment Control Plans for forestry essentially ceased at 1 May with the introduction of the **National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry** (NES-PF).
- The NES database is centralised through the Consents database.
- Te Uru Rākau (NZ Forestry) are in the process of carrying out a review of implementation of the NES-PF to date.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT FUNDING

9.1. 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 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.

Table 3: Work area and budget expenditure year to date

Grant Type	WORK AREA (ha)				BUDGET (\$)			
	AP Target	Complete	Allocated	AP % Complete	AP Budget	Complete	Allocated	AP % Complete
WCS	75	147	217	196	103,000* ¹	49,915	202,061	50
RL&C	100	40	212	40	80,000	46,248	150,654	58
Total	175	187	429	107	183,000	96,163	352,715	53

Note *1 this is \$50,000 Horizons and \$53,000 WRET

- 72 Regional Environmental Grant projects have been allocated. One project transferred from the 2017-18 year.
- 26 of 72 Regional Environmental Grant claims have been completed.
- 68 WCS Environmental Grant projects have been allocated. Seven projects have been transferred from the 2017-18 year.
- 19 of 68 WCS claims have been completed.
- As these projects are claimed these will be charged to the appropriate programme eg. PGF, SLUI and **Supplementary SLUI programme** (SSP). This is forecast to bring the grant levels within budget.

ACTIVITY

General:

- 9.2. March and April have been reasonably dry and mild throughout the Region. Establishment and survival of seedlings and poles generally has been good. Staff in Ruapehu and Tararua have reported very good survival; however there are areas, such as the Turakina and lower Whangaehu catchments, where drier conditions have been a concern and poles have struggled. Survival rates are expected to be lower than normal at approximately 80% this year.

Soil Health:

- 9.3. All spring soil samples from have been sent to the laboratory.
- 9.4. Last year's autumn laboratory results have been received and a report for the 2017-18 monitoring can now be prepared.
- 9.5. No new autumn sites will be established this year. Staff have been busy with afforestation proposals and mapping within the SLUI work programme.
- 9.6. One additional soil **Visual Soil Assessment** (VSA) field day was held for a deer discussion group.

Ballance Farm Environment Awards (BFEA)

- 9.7. The supreme winner field day was held at Simon and Trudy Hales' farm at Weber in the Tararua District with a good turnout. Topics were retirement of the river system, cropping, drainage and riparian management to intercept nutrients.
- 9.8. Discussion with landowners at the field day resulted in requests for three new SLUI plans.



Photo: Kevin Rooke, Horizons **Land Management Advisor** (LMA) speaking at BFEA Field day in front of retired section of Akitio River (Cara Hesselin).

11 June 2019

Beef + Lamb New Zealand (BLNZ)

- 9.9. BLNZ has been running a number of farming for profit, on-farm greenhouse gasses and understanding ETS seminars and field days. These are generally well attended and Horizons Land staff have been available to speak about SLUI, **One Billion Trees** (1bt), and funding support and advice that we can offer.

Poplar and Willow Research Trust (P&WRT)

- 9.10. The trust has held its Technical Advisory Group AGM.

Other

- 9.11. Staff attended a Middle Districts Farm Forestry Association meeting at Akitio Station.
- 9.12. Staff attended a number of other field days and meetings including:
- A Red Meat Profit Partnership meeting in Taihape, resulting in requests for two new SLUI plans;
 - Meeting with Forest Management NZ;
 - Presentation to Horticulture and Agriculture Teachers Association on the role of regional councils and how land management assists with land use change;
 - Meeting with a Massey University PhD candidate to discuss a research proposal on integrating trees into pastoral landscapes;
 - Staff provided expert assistance to the Massey University Advanced Soil Conservation field trip;
 - Attended a biological farming field day at Makoura Lodge;
 - Attended a deep inversion tillage field day run by Massey University and Plant and Food.
- 9.13. Staff have been involved in farm visits to give advice about carbon opportunities on farm, the 1BT programme (assisting landowners to make applications), shelter plantings, riparian planting, willow pruning and pole planting.
- 9.14. Staff have completed four fencing claims in coordination with the Freshwater Team.
- 9.15. Work with the Land Managers' **Special Interest Group** (SIG) that coordinates land management activities across the regional sector has included:
- Holding a SIG meeting in Wellington in March;
 - Ongoing discussion with **Te Uru Rākau (TUR)** about the potential for a joint council bid to the 1BT programme and linking this to improving the capability and capacity of the land management sector, including potential for funding training;
 - Reporting to the Chief Executives Group;
 - Providing support to a TUR programme aimed at better coordination of native plant supply through plant nurseries;
 - Planning a workshop on afforestation (funding, right tree, programme support, capability and capacity within regions).

Nurseries:

- 9.16. Overall supply and demand for poles is becoming clearer and we are approximately 5,000 “A” grade poles short of requirements once all local supply options are taken into account. This was expected as the lumpy nature of new supply from the nurseries will take some time to even out.
- 9.17. Nursery cutting was planned to start in the northern nurseries in the last week of May. Woodville cutting will commence after Queens Birthday weekend.
- 9.18. Our Woodville nursery capital upgrade is continuing. The build is complete, with finishing touches including signage ongoing. This winter we will embark on planning for possible irrigation.



Photo: new signage at entrance to Woodville Nursery (John Jamieson)

- 9.19. Woodville:
 - Removing old shelter belt trees and tidy up current waste area in preparation for new stool establishment this winter;
 - We hosted Dave Cameron (ex Greater Wellington Regional Council), who is contracted to review current North Island nursery production on behalf of regional councils;
 - Exploring options for using fallow ground along line of gas pipeline on the eastern boundary;
 - Preparation for harvest in early June.

9.20. Bulls:

- Completed pruning.

9.21. Northern:

- Preparation for harvest in late May.

9.22. Weber:

- Pruning and thinning is complete. Small harvest in June.

Whanganui Catchment Strategy (WCS) and Whanganui River Enhancement Trust (WRET):

9.23. Staff have been completing the claim process for environmental works completed to date.

9.24. Staff have maintained contact with WRET regarding the changes to the grant programme, and will formally report progress to their next meeting in May.

9.25. The MOU with the landowner of the demo farm has expired. Normally a field day is held each autumn. The landowner, Horizons staff and WRET will discuss next steps for this programme. There will be no field day this autumn.

Training & Staff:

9.26. Staff training has included Health and Safety training around 4WDs and trailers, radio use and Vault recording.

9.27. Daniel Regtien, newly appointed LMA for Rangiwahia-Pakihikura area (formerly Dave Harrison), will be based in Marton and was due to start on 27 May. Phil Hodges, newly appointed LMA Technical (formerly Bryan McCavana) was on fixed-term maternity leave cover and will be based out of Whanganui. Josh Penn has been appointed to the new position of LMA Forestry; he is an internal appointment from the Freshwater team and will also be based out of Whanganui.

One Plan Implementation:

9.28. Staff are still providing advice and assistance to landowners regarding their Land Use Consents (vegetation clearance and earth disturbance). Most of the advice revolves around whether the proposed activity is permitted or requires a consent. There were three vegetation clearance operations (two were permitted activity), and six land clearance operations requiring application for a consent.

9.29. Advice to landowners about the need for consents, especially around fords, bridges and culverts, continues.

Next Three Months (May - July):

9.30. This is traditionally the busy period for the team and will include:

- Checking on completion and carrying out claims for environmental grant projects;
- Liaison with nurseries around pole harvest and pole delivery;
- Pole delivery;
- Supervision and assessment of planting projects;
- Complete SoE soil monitoring report;
- Continued liaison with TUR over the 1BT programme, assisting with applications and providing advice and shapefiles to TUR to help them inform their decision making;
- Meet with Te Uru Rākau regarding 1BT options for our Region;

10. SIGNIFICANCE

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

Grant Cooper

MANAGER – LAND & PARTNERSHIPS

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ANNEXES

There are no attachments for this report.