

Report No.	21-90
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 March to 30 June 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 March to 30 June 2021. End-of-year targets have been updated but at the time of writing financials had yet to be closed off and reconciled, so figures in this report are provisional to end of year.
- 2.3. Autumn and early winter was dry and mild and, while pasture growth has been adequate in most areas, landowners with winter planting programmes have been concerned about soil moisture levels. Widespread rain in June helped give landowners confidence to proceed with winter tree planting while the drier autumn period helped fencing contractors to continue erecting fences in hill country.
- 2.4. Tree survival from last year's grant works generally has been very good. Poplar and willow poles have had high (85-90%) establishment and very good growth rates, while afforestation blocks have generally established well. However, dry conditions and poor siting resulted in some failures in pockets on the eastern coast and around Taihape.

SLUI

- 2.5. The SLUI programme has entered into a contract with TUR with the **Hill Country Erosion Fund** (HCEF) contract providing for more than \$6.4 million in funding over four years. This report completes the second year of the contract, with the TUR contribution being \$1.388 million, Horizons' contribution \$3.677 million, and an estimated landowner contribution of \$4.3 million in cash and \$500,000 million in-kind. These contributions provide a total estimated budget of \$9.855 million and at this stage the total landowner contribution for 2020-21 is estimated to be \$4.8 million.
- 2.6. The **Whole Farm Plan** (WFP) programme was contracted to complete 22,500 ha of new plans plus 2,000 ha of one-off paddock maps. The WFP contract and **Long-term Plan** (LTP) target has been met with 23,000 ha complete but the contract (not LTP) for one-off paddock maps target has not been met with just 1,004 ha completed.
- 2.7. The environmental works programme was contracted to complete 3,065 ha of "on the ground" works with the LTP target being 3,100 ha. The programme has provisionally met both targets with more than 3,800 ha of work completed.
- 2.8. Over the first two years of the contract, 170% of the 6,505 ha target has been met with more than 11,207 ha of work completed.
- 2.9. The Land Information Team completed a SLUI Quality Control Report in May 2021. Overall the report found areas of work completed were approximately 6 percent larger than originally mapped, while effectiveness of works is 12-20% lower than literature values from

Manaaki Whenua LandCare Research. Other findings are that mapping accuracy has improved over time with increased use of iPads in the field and 67% of works have been targeted to Top priority or highly erodible land.

Regional and Coast

- 2.10. 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 the SLUI contracted area and in funding partnership with the **Whanganui River Enhancement Trust (WRET)**. In total, the 175 ha target of land for erosion control works has been met with 196 ha of work completed between the combined programmes.
- 2.11. The Industry Partnership programme proposed supporting five initiatives promoting sustainable land use and good management practice on farms within the region. Seven projects were supported.
- 2.12. 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

- 2.13. 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.
- 2.14. The 2020-21 winter pole season was completed with final numbers showing 32,600 2.5-3.0 m poles distributed to landowners.
- 2.15. The claim programme (inspections and payments of grants) for the 2020-21 year had only completed 26,592 poles by the end of the financial year with approximately 6,000 poles still to claim. This was due to staff focussing on sale and distribution of additional poles available this winter which resulted in claims being deferred. Staff turnover has also contributed to the delay in some claims being completed. These outstanding claims will be picked up with the 2021-22 pole claims. However, the lower claims total results in fewer active farm plans, fewer hectares of works and lower grant expenditure.
- 2.16. The pole production and purchase programme for winter 2021-22 is on track to deliver around 37,500 poles this winter.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 21-90 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)** and newly approved 2021 LTP. Te Uru Rakau has a key role in part-funding and overseeing the SLUI section of this activity.

11 August 2021

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.

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

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ANNEXES

A Land Management Progress Report