

Report No.	21-61
Information Only - No Decision Required	

LOWER MANAWATU SCHEME (LMS) - RIVER MANAGEMENT UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this item is to inform members of the **Manawatu River Users' Advisory Group (MRUAG)** of **Lower Manawatu Scheme (LMS)** management issues that may have some impact on the recreational use of the river over the period December 2020 to June 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 21-61.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. There is no direct financial impact arising from matters discussed in this item.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. There is no significant business risk impact from matters discussed in this item.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1. It has been business as usual over the last six months, with relatively settled weather conditions throughout summer. Staff have been able to continue concentrating on vegetation and stopbank maintenance and some gravel management activities.
- 6.2. Erosion repairs are easily seen from the river when just completed, but will be covered in vegetation when established. Railway irons are used to anchor tree works and rock or concrete rip-rap to protect the toe of the bank. These assets may be submerged and care should also be taken if approaching banks on the outside of bends.
- 6.3. Contractors will be engaged at various sites on the Manawatū River to undertake vegetation management work. Recent work has been completed along reaches of the Manawatū just below Palmerston North City. Vegetation maintenance works will recommence in the coming months above and throughout Palmerston North City. These works will be undertaken from the river banks. Any disruption to recreational river users should be minor and staff will endeavour to keep any impacts to a minimum.
- 6.4. Railway irons from old river protection works are still being discovered in the Manawatū and the Oroua Rivers. Whenever these are found, they will be removed as soon as conditions allow. River users are urged to remain vigilant for these hazards when using the river. All visible irons have been removed, however there is a chance that some irons may have been missed and care must be taken. Any such hazards observed should be referred to Horizons River Management staff.

01 June 2021

- 6.5. Of particular note are the railway irons that form the river training works adjacent to Hoult's Yard on the Manawatū River. Hoult's Yard is located opposite Te Matai Road, on the true left bank at river distance 90km, with Fitzherbert Bridge at river distance 79km. Previous attempts to remove these irons failed. Irons have been painted to keep them visible and staff encourage contact to be made when these markings need repainting.
- 6.6. There has been no known decision made by the contractor and Waka Kotahi (NZTA) around the removal of the old Manawatu River Bridge at Whirikino. If removal is the chosen outcome, the contractor has not finalised the methodology for removing the existing bridge, but believes it is unlikely that a temporary bridge will be built, preferring the option of working from the river edge.
- 6.7. Access to the Whirikino boat ramp will remain open at all times during the works.
- 6.8. The Foxton Beach Boat Club Wharf repair works will be starting shortly. As per a Horizons media release on the 11 May 2021, various groups have come together to fund the project and Horowhenua District Councils Development Group will manage the project.
- 6.9. Since gravel extraction activities ceased in the Manawatū River above the city due to degradation in the channel, gravel levels are being restored to previous levels. In some locations the gravel beaches have grown so much they are causing a large amount of erosion opposite banks. To try to resolve this issue, planning is continuing to undertake gravel extraction in a selection of locations above the city. This process is looking at how this activity fits in with current resource consent permissions and restrictions and working on agreements with contractors. Works has been undertaken in the meantime at some locations, particularly above the city, to create high flow channels to relieve some of the pressure on outside bends and help retain river alignment. These works should have minimal to no effect on river users.
- 6.10. The works at Ashhurst Domain are establishing well with plantings between the rock groynes stabilising the gravel beach. The upstream rock groyne continues to take the brunt of the Manawatū River flow and will continue to be monitored and repaired when required. The most recent plantings were watered during particularly dry periods over summer and seem to have survived as a result. The bund across the upstream end of the high flow channel of the Pohangina River to reinstate the rivers alignment back to its previous channel continues to be monitored. Concrete blocks were added earlier in the year to bolster the bund and rock has been stockpiled onsite ready to be placed as bed armouring around the rope and rail groynes. This work, and some channel clearing works was planned to be completed concurrently with debris removal from the rail bridge, unfortunately delays have ensued with gaining consent from Kiwi Rail to have plant near their asset. Horizons, and the contractor are still hoping this work can be completed before winter river flows return.
- 6.11. The Manawatū River and Pohangina River banks in this area have been bolstered with rope and rail groynes and rock works in an attempt to stop the top rock groyne from being outflanked. River users should be careful when navigating this reach.
- 6.12. With river access being restored to vehicles from the state highway bridge there has been a significant increase in vehicle use and unfortunately, damage and fly tipping, including dumping and burning of vehicles. The creation of additional access tracks and ramps throughout the area is continuing which can either damage erosion protection assets or put them at significant risk. Staff continue to monitor and repair damage to assets and have attempted to discourage these activities with limited success.
- 6.13. Significant work is continuing by Horizons staff to try to eliminate the invasive pest plant Alligator weed from our waterways. The weed was first seen in a tributary to the Mangaone Stream in Palmerston North City during lockdown last year. Since then significant amounts of work and monitoring has been undertaken in an attempt to remove the species from our waterway system. Alligator weed grew rapidly over the summer months with this growth starting to slow with the onset of colder weather. The Mangaone Stream is waded once a

month with only one plant being found during the last inspection. Another jet boat inspection of the Manawatū River is planned for late May with staff also keeping an eye out for another newly discovered pest plant, Sagittaria.

- 6.14. River users are encouraged to make themselves aware of what these plants look like and to contact Horizons immediately if they think they may have seen them while out enjoying our river environment.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

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

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ACTING GROUP MANAGER RIVER MANAGEMENT

ANNEXES

There are no attachments to this report.