

Notes of the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group meeting held at EastBay REAP, Whakatāne, on Wednesday, 12 September 2018, commencing at 10am

Chair: Councillor Norm Bruning

Advisory Group: Alan Law, Jim Finlay, Peter Askey, Shona Pedersen, Councillor Alison Silcock (Whakatāne District Council)

BOPRC Councillors: Councillor Bill Clark, Councillor Tiipene Marr

BOPRC Staff: Roger Waugh (Rivers and Drainage Assets Manager), Jo Heath (Asset Management Coordinator), Bruce Crabbe (Rivers and Drainage Operations Manager), Tony Dunlop (Flood Restoration Project Engineer), Andy Dixon (Accounting Team Leader), Mark Townsend (Engineering Manager), Chris Ingle (General Manager, Integrated Catchments), Kay Boreham (Marketing and Communications Advisor), Nic Newman (Principal Advisor), Simon Stokes (Eastern Catchments Manager).

Apologies: Chairman Leeder, Maurice Warbrick, Linda Virbickas, Paula Chapman

1 **Welcome**

Councillor Bruning welcomed everyone to the meeting and Councillor Marr opened the meeting with a karakia. Roger Waugh introduced staff members Nic Newman and Kay Boreham.

2 **Apologies**

Apologies were received as recorded above.

3 **Notes of previous meeting held 13 February 2018**

Resolved

That the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

- 1 Confirm the notes of the meeting held 13 February 2018 as a true and correct record.**

**Clark/Marr
CARRIED**

4 **Matters arising from previous meeting**

Roger Waugh ran through the actions from the previous meeting.

- The Long Term Plan has been adopted and the approach taken to manage flood repairs from the April 2017 floods is to carry out identified repairs as soon as possible, resulting in a higher rates increase in years one and two and then smaller increases from year three. A number of options to reduce the rates impact on affected ratepayers will be used.

- Legal opinion on Aniwhenua Hydro Power Station resource consent. This was discussed with Galatea community at a meeting held 31 August 2018. Council sought a legal opinion in 2003 and this opinion was also subsequently relooked at. The opinion is that Regional Council cannot request a review of consent conditions until the current consent expires in 2026. The consent is an old consent and has minimal conditions which are all being met.

Discussion

Observation made that the consent contains strike outs associated with sedimentation and drainage. Roger explained that approximately 15 years ago the consent holder applied for variations to conditions which were approved. He added that the effects of the consent were identified and considered during the original consenting process and the consent was issued so Regional Council has no redress. Modern consents have tighter conditions and contain review clauses that can be used if unforeseen environmental effects occur.

- Bruce Crabbe advised that a Rangitāiki Drainage Scheme meeting scheduled for 31 October 2018.

5 **Integrated Catchments update**

Simon Stokes provided a high level snapshot of the work being undertaken in the Rangitāiki catchment and gave an overview of the Rangitāiki River Forum purpose and objectives. The key points were:

- Kopuriki flooding issues will be raised at next Rangitāiki River Forum meeting.
- Discussed having a River Scheme Advisory Group member attending Rangitāiki River Forum meetings. Membership is legislated but no barriers to Advisory Group members attending as the meetings are open to the public.
- Investigating the feasibility of a multi-year project for a PhD student to study the geomorphology of the Whirinaki catchment and its relationship to flooding and flood management. Whirinaki River provides 40% of the flow into Matahina Dam.

6 **Operations report**

Bruce Crabbe spoke to the Works Programme report provided in the agenda pack highlighting the following:

- Planned maintenance programme is currently under budget because flood repair work ends up achieving some of the maintenance work.
- Catching-up on tree mulching along the Tarawera River. The maintenance area goes up to the Kawerau urban area and want to keep this section of river as natural as possible.
- Rangitāiki Drainage scheme pump stations are getting a telemetry upgrade.
- Three Awaiti floodgates scheduled to be replaced and fish passage provided.
- Stopbank realignment work planned south-west of Edgecumbe on the Smit property to provide additional protection to Edgecumbe urban area.

Discussion

The requirement to provide fish passage was discussed. Under fisheries regulations Regional Council has to provide for fish passage and as structures are being replaced or renewed fish passage is being incorporated. A number of different floodgates are currently being trialled and staff are gathering information on waterways where native fish species are present and identifying barriers to fish passage like floodgates and perched culverts. There is also an issue with pumps causing fish mortality and the national Rivers Managers Group is conducting a study, being led by Waikato Regional Council, trialling different pump station configurations.

7 Flood Repair Project report

Tony Dunlop spoke to the report provided in the agenda pack and delivered a PowerPoint presentation showing progress with the April 2017 Flood Repair Project.

- 224 repair sites in the Rangitāiki-Tarawera scheme (520 sites across the region)
- 85 of the Rangitāiki-Tarawera sites are high priority sites.
- 37 Rangitāiki-Tarawera sites completed as at 30 June 2018.
- For this scheme it will take the full four years of the project to complete repairs. Completion by June 2021.
- In 2018-2019, a further 55 Rangitāiki-Tarawera sites are scheduled for repair. All pump station repairs will be completed, College Road work will be completed, all Rangitāiki Drainage scheme works will be completed and geotechnical work on concrete flood walls and seepage sites will commence.
- Unrepaired sites are being monitored closely and will be reprioritised as required. Some sites are getting worse, some are starting to 'self-heal', and in some situations changes to the initially intended repair method are needed. Sites 'self-heal' when vegetation grows and they stabilise themselves. Often the river can change resulting in reduced pressure on a damaged site enabling it to stabilise.
- Repair work funded through insurance (40% of like for like repairs), central government assistance through the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (60% of existing essential infrastructure repairs), minor funders like NZTA and First Gas where appropriate, targeted rates (80%) and general rates (20%).
- There are a lot of new assets being created and these are not covered by insurance and are not eligible for central government funding.
- Special claim being made to central government for works not covered by insurance that benefit communities and/or the environment.

Discussion

- The cost to Whakatāne District Council for the Edgecumbe cleanup was around \$4.5m and they are unable to claim through insurance because no material damage to an asset.
- Farmers are in the same situation.
- Concern expressed about funding for sites that get further damage from subsequent flood events. If unrepaired sites get worse they are still covered under the April 2017 Flood Repair Project. If the site has been repaired and then gets damaged again it will not be covered under the project. To date none of the repaired sites have failed.

8 Engineering report

Mark Townsend delivered a PowerPoint presentation covering the following key topics:

8.1 Rangitāiki River Scheme Review

- Council delegated the monitoring of review implementation of the 29 recommendations to the Audit and Risk Committee for a period of 12 months to December 2018.
- Implementation updates have been circulated to members.
- Evacuation Planning - flood evacuation protocols for Edgecumbe are now complete and an Evacuation Plan has been consulted on and is ready for adoption.
- Dam Management - communication protocol with TrustPower re Matahina Dam has been updated and their Flood Management Plan is being reviewed.

Attendance

Simon Stokes left the meeting at 11:40am

- Monitoring Network – monitoring network in the Rangitāiki catchment has been reviewed to ensure there is increased spatial coverage. A new rainfall site has been installed on the Whirinaki River at Te Whāiti and two additional sites are to be installed over summer.

8.2 River Scheme Sustainability (RSS)

Have \$100k per annum to look for river scheme management solutions that will be sustainable into the future. It is not an option to continue raising stopbanks so the project is investigating alternate solutions. How the river schemes will cope with climate change, with predicted sea level rise and more intense rainfall, is a key part of the thinking. Possible themes include – retention or detention, ponding areas, flow diversion, making room for the river, pasture to wetlands, land use controls and farm management practices, ecological corridors, sediment management.

8.3 College Road stopbank and catchment flood walls

- Realignment of the College Road stopbank is nearing completion. Design of the realignment was based on the following principals – make room for the river, allow for future work associated with climate change, minimise chance of failure, do not adversely affect other parts of the river.
- Having the ability to see what was happening below the ground surface during removable of the temporary stopbank confirmed what was already know about the original floodwall and foundations – appropriate material was used and construction was appropriate for the time of construction.
- Geotechnical assessment of West Bank Road concrete floodwall showed porosity and permeability issues and stopbank will need to be rebuilt.
- Geotechnical assessment of East Bank Road concrete floodwall showed localised issues that will need remedial work.

8.4 Rangitāiki Floodway

Stage 4 Floodway Widening

- Floodway widening on left bank of the floodway downstream of Thornton Road to the confluence with Rangitāiki River. Contract also includes construction of a new pump stations and replacement of two smaller pump stations.
- Timeline for the work was impacted by April 2017 weather events and work didn't start until the second half of the construction season and was approximately 90% complete before having to stop because of wet weather. Remainder of work will be completed in September/October 2018.

Floodway Bifurcation

- This work requires a change to the existing Resource Consent. An adjacent landowner has objected to the change and now needs to go to a hearing. The portion of the work that is affected has been deferred until 2018-2019 construction season.
- Able to do a lot of the preparation work under the existing consent.
- At the start of the Stage 4 works an archaeological site was located and archaeologists engaged to undertake a dig. A slight change to the bifurcation alignment has been made to reduce impacts on the site.

Spillway Options

- Two options being considered and consulted on – lower level fixed crest weir and a widened inflatable rubber dam. Consultation carried out since May 2018 in the form of information days, 1 on 1 meetings with affected landowners, and meetings with industry and community groups.
- Next information day will be mid-November focusing on which option should be recommended to Council on 13 December 2018.

Rangitāiki River Cross Sections

A series of cross section graphs, representing river bed levels, were shown for the lower Rangitāiki River covering the period 1986 to 2017. Main observation was that there has been very little change. There is a process of overall slight aggradation with scouring when there is a flood. The cross sections are surveyed every 3-5 years. The sites above and below the spillway are surveyed annually.

8.5 **Cardno Report**

Report investigates the effects of fluctuating flows on riverbank erosion below Matahina Dam. Overdue because the consultants (Cardno) are waiting on modelling that the BOPRC Engineering team are doing to support the report. Report needs to be completed before the review of TrustPower's resource consent.

9 **Finance report**

Andy Dixon spoke to the finance report provided in the agenda pack and gave an overview of the scheme's revenue and expenditure for the year ending 30 June 2018. The following points were noted:

- 2017-2018 was a very difficult year for the scheme and this has had an impact on the financials.
- Through the Long Term Plan process it was decided to take the rate increases upfront and this option allows the ability to even out the rate increases where possible.
- First Flood Repair Project insurance claim has been received and working to get future claims pre-funded to reduce the costs of loans.
- Reserve balances as at 30 June 2018 were as follows:
 - Flood Damage Reserve \$696,031 (this is a contingency fund held for flood damage works and is currently on term deposit earning interest for the Scheme). An annual amount is allocated to the fund for it to accumulate a balance in anticipation of a future flood event. A larger allocation is made every five years to allow for larger flood events. The funds can only be activated when a flood event reaches a set threshold.
 - Works Reserve \$128,776 (available to fund operating expenditure)
 - General Reserve \$32,194 (surplus general rates from previous year)
- Outstanding Loans \$31,925,837 – this amount has increased by \$11m in the last year and will create additional financial costs to the scheme.
- Rangitāiki-Tarawera Asset Valuation 1 July 2017 \$86,718,980 (currently being revalued)

12:40pm adjourned for lunch

1:00pm returned from lunch

Attendance

Jim Finlay left the meeting

10 **Communications update**

Kay Boreham spoke about her background, her involvement with the Whakatāne District Council Recovery Office following the April 2017 floods and outlined her new role with Regional Council focusing on the Eastern Bay of Plenty. She emphasised that Council staff want to hear what works best for our communities and to ensure that people are getting the information they want in the style they would like to receive it. Members were encouraged to get in touch if they had any concerns or suggestions.

Discussion

- Website, e-newsletters and facebook communication not always appropriate for the older generation – need to also provide hardcopy newsletters, information brochures.
- Information days have been well received and good to see Regional Council staff in action at the recent Edgecumbe information day – impressed with how information was provided and staff openness to questions and criticisms.
- Still seems to be Edgecumbe community members saying they don't know what's happening with the stopbank realignment. Information can be provided in a number of ways but community members still need to engage with the information – attend info days, read the newspaper/newsletters, look on the website.
- Suggested a regular column in the Beacon might be a good idea. Also quarterly double page spread.
- Upper Rangitāiki communities don't get the Beacon. There is a fortnightly school newsletter and a monthly Community Board newsletter (covers Waiohau to Rautahuna). Galatea community prefer community meetings to drop-in information sessions.

11 **Advisory Group continuous improvement**

Chief Executive tasked Nic Newman to look at the advisory groups and identify any opportunities for improvement. Members discussed and provided feedback to Nic and additional comments can be emailed to nic.newman@boprc.govt.nz. A report of findings will be fed back to members.

Attendance

Nic Newman and Andy Dixon left at the meeting

12 **General business**

12.1 **Gravel management update**

Roger Waugh spoke to the gravel management update provided in the agenda pack. The key points were:

- Significant volumes of gravel have been deposited in catchments across the Galatea plains.
- A programme of bed lowering using commercial extractors and rivers and drainage operations has improved the situation in many instances.
- Nearly half of all commercial gravel extraction activities throughout the year have taken place across the Galatea Plains.
- Horomanga gravel not as good quality as other areas and does not have good market value. Together with Southern Generation looking for ways to make it more attractive and viable for contractors to extract. Also looking for developments that could utilise the resource e.g. Ōpōtiki Harbour development.

12.2 **Galatea flooding issue**

Flooding at Kopuriki discussed with the following key points:

- Water cannot get past Kopuriki Road and is flooding on to farms during rainfall events. Initially impacting two farms, now 6-7 farms affected as the issue moves up the catchment. Farmers have been asking for a solution and no one seems to be doing anything or taking responsibility.
- Concern that farmer's financial and emotional survival is at risk.
- Southern Generation might not be legally required to help but they should have a moral obligation.
- Rural Support involvement is just a sticking plaster, organisations involved need to forget about the legalities and come up with some practical solutions.

- Dredging would be an option but would need to be ongoing every few years. Because it is not required by the consent none of the parties are willing to take any action.
- Because Regional Council has had legal advice that they cannot request a review of consent conditions, until the current consent expires in 2026, it is very difficult for them to take any action. Councillors at the meeting encouraged community members to take the lead and seek help at governmental level – the Parliamentary Commission for the Environment may be an appropriate avenue.

Resolved

That the Rangitāiki-Tarawera Rivers Scheme Advisory Group:

- 1 **Recommend to Council that, because of the severity of regular, uncontrolled, flooding around Kopuriki, the Chair of the Regional Council approach the directors of Southern Generation to find a practical solution for affected Galatea farmers.**

Askey/Silcock
CARRIED

12.3 Other general business

- Rivers and Drainage Asset Management Plan 2018-2068 was adopted through the Long Term Plan process and copies of the updated Executive Summary were handed out to replace the previous version in the members' information folders.
- The Chair acknowledged Tony Dunlop's 40 years of service.
- Alan Law advised that communal pump scheme rates have recently been an issue with invoices being sent out without any detail or explanation of increased rates. He asked for the process to be outlined. Bruce Crabbe explained that inspections for the communal pump schemes are undertaken annually and from this work is forecast and a draft budget prepared. The draft budget goes out for consultation and at that time there is an opportunity to make a submission. The budget is adopted by Council, during the Annual Plan process, and invoices are sent out in July/August. This year inspections showed quite a number of pump stations were not up to electrical regulations and required new switch boards. This has significantly increased the pump scheme rates for approximately a quarter of the schemes.

Councillor Marr closed the meeting with a karakia.

Meeting ended: 2:10pm