

New Study out on West Coast Renewable Energy Resources

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) has recently completed a study on renewable energy potential in the West Coast Region. One of the key findings of the study is that apart from hydroelectricity, the West Coast has limited renewable energy potential from other sources. This report is available on the Council website.



Are you ready to Get Thru?

Disasters happen, quickly, and without compassion. We can't prevent them, but there are steps we can take to reduce the impact and be better prepared to recover quickly. In the last month you will have received a copy of the Get Ready Get Thru booklet in the West Coast Messenger. This will help you to take the easy steps to look after yourself, and your family, should the worst occur. To recap, these are:

1. Develop a household emergency plan - does your family know where to meet, or who will pick up the kids?
2. Put together an emergency survival kit to include:
 - Food and water for at least 3 days
 - Radio, torches, batteries
 - Alternative cooking if power and/or gas is affected
 - Emergency clothing
 - Essential medicines/first aid kit
 - Supplies for babies

If you did not receive a copy of the **Get Ready Get Thru** booklet, copies are available at all West Coast Councils. For more information visit www.getthru.govt.nz

Greymouth Floodwall Upgrade

All objections to the resource consent application for an upgrade to the Greymouth Floodwall infrastructure have been resolved.

There has been a substantial amount of work in getting to this point including liaising with the parties who had submitted on the application and working through their concerns. We are pleased that an independent commissioner has now been appointed to hear the application.

The commissioner will hear the application and will then make a final ruling on either approving or declining of the application. It is anticipated that the commissioner's decision will be known by the end of September 2008.

If the resource consent is granted we will prepare a detailed design and call for tenders from contractors to undertake the necessary work. We have not set a start date for the upgrade at this time but work will be underway in 2009.



After 15 years Greymouth's floodwall is in need of maintenance. The first major flood it withstood was in 1997 but high river levels in June 2006 showed that it needs raising in places and repair in others. (Photo: M Trayes WCRC)

Dealing with small amounts of hazardous waste

Ratepayers wishing to safely dispose of small (i.e. non-commercial) amounts of hazardous waste should take them along to their District Council's main landfill at either Westport, Greymouth (McLeans Pit) or Hokitika where the items can be placed in a secure hazardous waste (Chem) shed.

Ensure "past use by date" materials such as herbicides, pesticides, chemicals or solvents are safe for transit, e.g. by putting into another lidded container and/or transport on the back of a utility.

The main landfill sites and some transfer stations also have drop-off points for non-commercial amounts of old paint, oil, batteries and gas cylinders.

If you have any queries about whether or not your local landfill will accept the item you wish to dispose of, call your District Council first. Currently PCP's, Dioxin, radioactive material and some types of medical waste cannot be disposed of on the West Coast other than by paid arrangement with a company approved for handling such waste.

If you have commercial quantities of any hazardous waste items please call the Regional Council for advice. Recycling of waste oil is available on the West Coast for businesses generating regular amounts of waste oil.



McLeans Pit Chem Waste Shed (Photo: M Trayes WCRC)

Contacting Council

To contact a staff member in relation to an article in this newsletter or to make an enquiry:

- Visit council's offices during business hours (8.30am – 5.00pm) at 388 Main Road South Paroa
- Telephone during business hours (8.30am – 5.00pm) on 768 0466 (Greymouth calling area) or 0508 800 118 (Westland & Buller calling areas). Reception will link you with the appropriate staff member
- Telephone after business hours (as per the numbers above) and your call will be redirected by Council's After Hours Service to the appropriate staff member
- Fax (03) 768 7133 anytime
- Email info@wcrc.govt.nz anytime



Council's receptionist, Denise Cassidy, will be pleased to help deal with your enquiries (Photo: M Trayes WCRC)



REGIONAL REPORT

NEWSLETTER September 2008



THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

Message from the Chair...



There have been some fundamental changes in recent months at the West Coast Regional Council.

The Animal Health Board (AHB) has now assumed direct control of its Vector Management function, previously administered by the Regional Council. Mr Chris Pullen, our Vector Programme Manager, has now transferred to the Animal Health Board and is

no longer a Council employee. Remaining Vector Management staff have all been seconded to the AHB.

The AHB continue to operate out of the Council offices, and for many landowners and contractors the changes will be barely noticeable. You might notice the Vector Management staff are now using the white "TB Free" vehicles, and no longer using council letterhead in correspondence.

Council continues to fund 10% of the Vector Management spend on the West Coast. This is funded by a targeted rate on all ratepayers with properties greater than 2 hectares in size. Council is very supportive of the West Coast achieving TB free status, which is very important for marketing our export products. Being TB Free is a key economic development outcome for the West Coast.

Council also continues to operate its VCS business unit, which tenders for AHB ground control and aerial contracts. Any financial surpluses made by VCS will help to offset possible future regional rates rises.

Ross Scarlett
Chairman
West Coast Regional Council



Chris Pullen, AHB Vector Programme Manager stands by a new AHB vehicle (Photo: M Trayes WCRC)

Inside this month

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Whitebait Stands:

The West Coast Regional Council administers over 600 resource consents authorising the construction and maintenance of whitebait stands during the period 15 August to 30 November (ie, 15 days before and after the commencement and conclusion of the season respectively).

Each stand owner must comply with all conditions of their resource consents, as well as relevant requirements of the West Coast Regional Council Policy on the Management of Whitebait Stands.

If you would like more information about this policy please call the council for a copy to be sent to you or look at our website under Environmental Management. For all other information about whitebait fishing regulations please check with your nearest Department of Conservation Area Office.



Whitebait Stands Okuru, South Westland (Photo: Te Ara website)

Paying Your Rates?

Council now operates a **direct debit** system for payment of its rates accounts.

This means:

- ✓ No more forgetting to pay your rates before the due date.
- ✓ No more penalties to pay on late payments.
- ✓ No need to post date cheques.
- ✓ Payments can be made to suit your budget.

We can offer a number of different payment options, e.g. weekly, fortnightly, monthly or per instalment.

If you would like to use **Ratepay** as a method of payment or would like more information please phone our office on:

0508 800 118

or call into our office and pick up a form.

Other payment options include:

- ✓ Posting in our prepaid envelope enclosed with your rates account.
- ✓ Over the counter at any Westpac branch on the West Coast.
- ✓ Paying via internet or telephone banking. (Our details are lodged with all major banks.)

Our bank account details can be found on the back of the invoice.

The Regional Floodwarning System

The council maintains a network of river level and rainfall sites around the region. Data collected at these sites is telemetered back to Council where staff are continuously on-call to monitor any events which trigger preliminary flood warning alarm levels on five of those rivers. These are the Karamea, Buller, Grey, Hokitika and Waiho Rivers.

The public can access this data on Council's website at www.wcrc.govt.nz under Rivers/Rainfall

An Information Hotline is also available for those who do not have access to our website. This is not a toll service, however a nominal charge of 12 cents per minute, will be made to the caller. The Infoline service can take up to 200 calls at once.

- Dial 0832 25493 for Buller sites
- Dial 0832 25494 for Grey sites
- Dial 0832 25495 for Westland sites



WCRC's Technical Officer, Jack Grinstead, at work in the lab testing new floodwarning site radios with a datalogger (Photo: M Traves WCRC)

State of the Environment Report

The West Coast Regional Council is about to release the latest State of the Environment report for Surface Water Quality on the West Coast. The previous report was released in August 2005 and set an important benchmark for water quality in the many rivers the Council resource science team regularly samples. This 2008 report builds on the 2005 report with a further three years of data collected from the same rivers.

The positive news is that the bathing beach results from the past 2 – 3 years have been improving, at the 21 sites sampled, partly due to the new Westport water treatment scheme. When data from all sites were combined, significant improving trends were apparent for turbidity, faecal coliforms, and *E. coli*. Water clarity and ammoniacal nitrogen levels were also tending toward improvement. To look at the sampling results and analysis in more detail please check our website under 'State of the Environment'.

Water Quality Sampling at Lake Brunner

Council's resource science team is currently preparing to change the way we monitor Lake Brunner. A new deep water 'Sonde' will be used to take readings of temperature, pH, conductivity and turbidity at depths of up to 100m.

Staff will also be using an Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) which measures the river flow of the main tributaries flowing into Lake Brunner. Once data collection at Lake Brunner has been concluded the project will look at other lakes and rivers in the region.



WCRC Technical Officer Emma Chaney takes river flow recordings with an Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) on the Crooked River at Te Kinga. (Photo: J. Grinstead, WCRC)

Pike River Coal Ltd - Mine Development Progress

Progress continues on the development of the Pike River Coal Mine near Atarau. Recent works include the developing of pit bottom, tunneling through the Hawera Fault, the construction of the coal preparation plant (CPP) and surrounding infrastructure including bathhouse, coal stockpile area and water treatment ponds, and the laying of coal pipeline between the mine portal and the CPP. Construction has also recently commenced on the coal load out facility at Ikamatua.

Pike River Coal Ltd holds a number of consents for various activities including take and discharge to water, land use (earthworks and land disturbances) and discharge to air (dust).

Pike River Coal Ltd provides the WCRC with a Monthly Compliance Report; this includes various water sample results, complaint notification, non-compliance summaries and other consent requirements. Council Compliance staff carry out site inspections of the operation on a quarterly basis.

To date Pike River Coal has achieved a high level of compliance with their resource consents.



The coal processing plant at Pike River is almost complete (Photo: M McEnaney WCRC)

Lake Brunner Compliance

During the 2007-2008-season Regional Council compliance staff have undertaken visits to assess compliance on farms in the Lake Brunner area. This included an assessment of effluent systems, and a flight over the catchment to ensure stock grazing was compliant with the relevant rules.

Over 90% of the farms surveyed were complying with effluent management requirements. Those farms identified as non-compliant had minor non-compliance issues only and these have been remedied since their identification by Council.

The aerial fly-over did not identify any stock grazing non-compliances. It confirmed that further bridging and fencing work has been undertaken, which is very good.

This work is essential for ensuring farm nutrient runoff does not affect Lake Brunner's water quality.



Overlooking farmland at the mouth of the Crooked River as it flows into Lake Brunner. (Photo: P. McKinnel, WCRC)

Changes to Transport Committee

New legislation has meant that Regional Land Transport Committee has become the Regional Transport Committee from the 1st of August 2008.

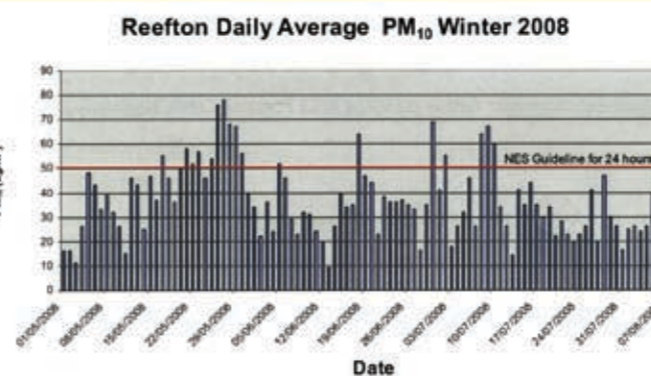
The new Committee will still have Councillors representing each of the three Districts, and the Region, but there will be new appointees for the other five transport objectives and cultural interests.

The Committee will be responsible for the development of the Regional Land Transport Strategy, and prioritising transport funding on the West Coast. One of the biggest changes of the new legislation will be the merging of Transit New Zealand and Land Transport New Zealand into the New Zealand Transport Agency.

Reefton Air Quality for Winter 2008

So far this winter Reefton has recorded 19 exceedences of the National Environmental Standard for PM₁₀ air particulates. An exceedence of the standard is any recording of 50ug/m³ PM₁₀ or more averaged over a 24 hour period. So far this winter the highest recorded value was 78ug/m³ recorded on the 28th of May.

Exceedences typically occur during fine calm periods with frosty mornings which create a smoggy inversion layer over the town. However as a result of more windy and unstable weather patterns than usual in July, there were only four exceedences for that month.



Please contact Stefan Beaumont at the council if you would like more information about air quality in the region, or check the council's website under 'State of the Environment - Air Quality.' A pamphlet explaining more about PM₁₀ air particulates is also available.

Updates on progress of Arnold & Mokihinui Energy Proposals

The hearing for TrustPower Ltd's consent applications for its proposed Arnold River Hydroelectricity Power Scheme was reconvened in June 2008 to hear the last submitter and TrustPower's closing submissions. The Hearing Committee has required TrustPower to provide some further information before the hearing is closed and decisions on the applications are made.

The hearing for Meridian Energy Ltd's consent applications for its proposed Mokihinui River Hydroelectricity Power Scheme commenced in Westport on Monday 25th August 2008 and will run through until approximately the end of October 2008.

Hearing details are available on our website at www.wcrc.govt.nz/mokihinui

Planning Update

Plan Merge

Preparatory work has begun on merging the Discharge to Land Plan, the Water Plan, and the Land and Riverbed Plan. Staff have been assessing parts of the three plans where there is duplication and repetition, so these sections can be combined more efficiently into one in the merged Plan.

Coastal Plan Change

Council has notified a proposed new rule to the Coastal Plan that once operative will permit the opening of blocked creek and river mouths in the coastal marine area. The rule will only apply where the rivermouth is blocked and causing a backwater flooding hazard or erosion of adjoining land or infrastructure. The earthworks required to unblock the rivermouth will have to comply with all the conditions of the rule.

This proposed rule was publicly notified on 10 April, and fourteen submissions were received. A Summary of the Submissions is being prepared. When this is ready it will be publicly advertised asking for further submissions.

Successful contenders for this year's Honda Tree Fund.

Council are pleased to announce that there were ten successful contenders for this year's funding round. Sales by Coastwide Honda in Greymouth over the past year generated a pool of \$5000 for allocation to community groups wishing to carry out planting of native trees. This year the pool has been evenly divided so the following projects will each benefit from the planting of 100 trees, shrubs or grasses over the coming months.

Honda TreeFund grant recipients this year are:

Karamea Estuary Enhancement Project: Year II of this already successful project

Tauranga Bay Working Party: stabilization of coastal erosion with spinifex plantings

Lake Brunner Community Association: roadside beautification around Moana

Paroa School: to replenish and further beautify existing gardens at the school

Kidsfirst Kindergartens Hokitika: for beautification and enhancement of their outdoor learning area

Hokitika Primary School: creating a native plant garden within the school

Rotary Club of Hokitika: for beautification around the Plane Table area at Hokitika Airport

Westland District Council: beautification at the Hokitika Refuse & Recycling Centre

Kokatahi – Kowhitirangi School: to replace trees lost in the big wind storm of July 30th 2008

La Fontaine Bank Enhancement: further plantings at La Fontaine Creek, Hari Hari



The Karamea Estuary Enhancement Group (KEEP) were successful contenders for Honda TreeFunding this year. Volunteers have already carried out weed control, made paths and planted many trees and flax beside the Karamea River. (Photo: M McBeth KEEP)