

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 us or call in 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.) The West Coast Regional Council's bank account number is 03-0846-0121500-00

Honda Tree Funds Allocations 2009



Shinae Johnston, & Zara Wyatt discuss "what's next" by the wheelbarrow at the La Fontaine Stream Enhancement Project's planting day at Hari Hari on June 17th 2009. Plants were funded by Honda TreeFund. [Photo: M Trayes]

Fourteen West Coast projects will benefit from this year's Honda TreeFund. Sales by Coastwide Honda in Greymouth generated a pool of almost \$5000 which the Regional Council has allocated to applicants wishing to carry out planting of native trees. Nine schools will benefit from funds to plant 50 trees each whilst a number of bigger projects, for urban beautification, coastal erosion control and riparian planting have been allocated funding for 75 to 200 plants each depending on the scale of the project.

Schools with plans to increase the amount of native plantings within their boundaries are Greymouth Kidsfirst Kindergarten, Runanga, Cobden, Grey Main, Karoro, Paroa, Hokitika and Kaniere Primary Schools, and Greymouth High School.

The larger projects are Tauranga Bay Working Party (coastal plantings), South Keith Road Planting (Paroa), De Phillip Creek Riparian Revegetation (Kowhitirangi), Kakapotahi Ecological Area Replanting and La Fontaine Stream Enhancement Project (Hari Hari).

If you are interested in applying for next year's funding round, please contact the Environmental Information Officer at the West Coast Regional Council.

Vector Control Services



VCS is involved with Possum control contracts, possum population monitoring and TB research contracts.

Vector Control Services offers the following services to the West Coast region:

Agricultural Pest control

Possums, Rabbits, Stoats, Wasps, Goats, Pigs

Agricultural Weed control

Gorse, Blackberry, Ragwort, Thistles

Call 03 768 9674 for a competitive quote today.

Collection of Farm Agrichemicals

A safe and simple nationwide system for the collection and disposal of unwanted and expired agri-chemicals now exists.

The Chemicals programme takes over from the Council-run programmes which have been undertaken in recent years.

Your agri-chemicals can be booked for disposal online at www.agrecovery.co.nz, on freephone 0800 AGRECOVERY (0800 247 326), or by emailing chemicals@agrecovery.co.nz.

Once a certain volume of bookings have been received for a region, a collection event will be scheduled and users who have booked will be advised of collection details. Specialised contractors will safely handle the chemicals booked for disposal.

Disposal of Balage Wrap

The first pickup of nine tons of plastic balage wrap was made from West Coast farms by contractors for Agpac Limited on August 10th.

Collection will be made on a regular basis from now on and should relieve any need for the less satisfactory methods of disposing of balage wrap.

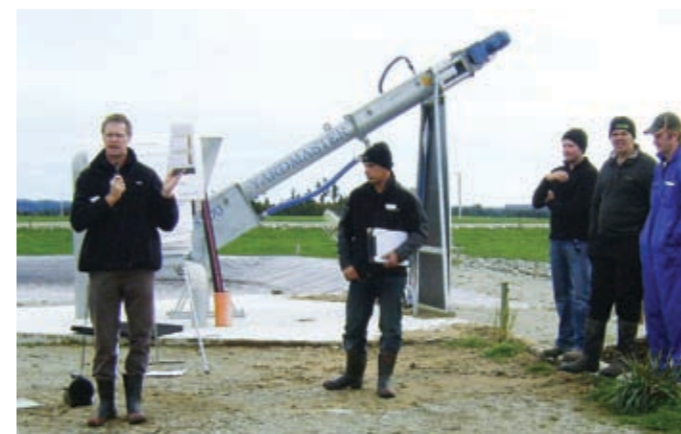
Find out more about how you can recycle your used balage wrap by contacting the WCRC Environmental Information Officer or check out the AgPac website at www.Agpac.co.nz

New newsletter format

Our newsletter is in a new format thanks to the assistance of students at the Karoro Learning Centre, Greymouth, contracted under the E4E (Education for Enterprise) programme, which is co-ordinated by Development West Coast. The E4E programme aims to link education providers with community groups, businesses and local agencies wanting tasks done, with the aim of students carrying out meaningful 'real-world' learning.



Farm Dairy Effluent - we're here to help Attention Dairy farm owners, sharemilkers & farm workers



Mike Bramley (left) and Alex Perez (right), from Dairy NZ, address local farmers at a Farm Field Day held on May 12th this year at Cranley Farms Ltd's new farm at Kawhaka. The solid separator behind them is designed to compact the dairy effluent, separating solids from liquid waste. [Photo: M Meehan]

Please remember that our rivers and lakes belong to all New Zealanders. We seek your help in maintaining water quality in our West Coast water bodies. It is your responsibility to ensure your on-farm effluent management systems comply with the regional rules. If in doubt, phone us on our toll free number 0508 800 118.



Those present also inspected this dairy effluent sump and holding pond. Effluent irrigators can be seen working in the background. [Photo: M Meehan]

If you are in any doubt regarding effluent management matters on your farm, whether it be for a resource consent, or question regarding land application of effluent, please contact a member of the Compliance Team at the West Coast Regional Council.

Compliance staff are happy to discuss with you what is required by the RMA and provide information as to how this can be achieved. Council staff are here to help you do the right thing with farm effluent.

There is also useful information regarding pond maintenance and best practice guidelines available through www.dairynz.co.nz. The photos show some local examples of best practice.

It is important that **all** persons working on farm whether they are worker, owner or contractor are aware of the relevant regulations and comply with them. Where effluent systems require upgrading, those upgrades need to be done promptly without unnecessary delay.

New Resource Monitoring Officer



Gary Hilton leaves Council on his way to a quarry inspection. [Photo: M Trayes]

Gary Hilton is the new Resource Monitoring Officer with the Council and he is the person to contact if you are extracting gravel, wanting to work in one of the Council's quarries, or want to know about whitebait stands.

Having been in the job for nine months he believes the most important message for people is that whether you are working under a permitted activity or a resource consent it is really important that you read and understand the conditions that apply.

A couple of the conditions that you should be aware of are:

- Before any gravel extraction takes place from a river, the Regional Council must be notified 24 hours beforehand.
- All whitebait stands must have their stand numbers displayed at all times.

When it comes to whitebait issues there can be some confusion over who does what - what issues are dealt with by the Council and what is done by the Department of Conservation.

The answer is:

The Council deals only with whitebait stand Resource Consents. For anything regarding

the fishery or the fishery regulations, contact the Department of Conservation.

One of Gary's projects this year is to complete GPS readings of the Whitebait stands so that we can make the river maps available on our website.

What's inside...

- Water Quality. Lake Brunner
- Hydro Power Proposals
- Update on Council Plans
- Reefton Air Quality
- Rating Districts
- Exercise Ru Whenua
- West Coast Shakeout
- Waste Initiatives

Water Quality at Lake Brunner

Lake Brunner, the largest lake on the West Coast, is a very important area ecologically. It also has fishery and tourism values, as well as being highly valued by tangata whenua. With swimming and boating being popular recreational activities with both locals and visitors, the lake also benefits the local economy.

The Lake Brunner catchment is identified in the Council's Proposed Regional Water Management Plan as a Special Management Area.

The Council's objective in the Water Plan is to "maintain, and where practicable enhance, the quality of water in the Lake Brunner catchment". However, despite significant efforts by a number of local farmers, including the building of substantial bridges and fencing off of riparian margins to keep

stock out of waterways, monitoring of the lake has shown lake nutrients are increasing and the resulting algal growth is slowly but steadily reducing water clarity.

The nutrient responsible for increasing algal growth and consequent reduction of water clarity is phosphorous. Algae will use up all the available soluble phosphorous. In the past, with only a limited amount of phosphorous coming into the lake from natural sources, the growth of the algae remained quite low and water clarity was very good.

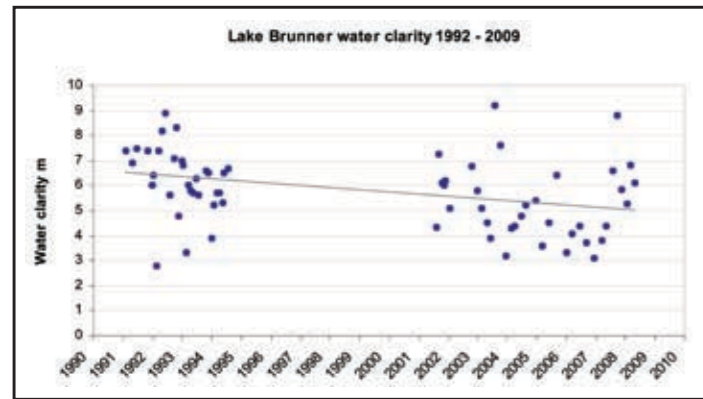
The changes seem to be caused by increasing use of highly soluble phosphorous fertilizers (such as Super-Phosphate), which combined with our high rainfall, lead to leaching of the phosphorous into waterways which then drain to the lake. With more phosphorous entering, algal growth at the surface of the

lake has increased, resulting in a gradual reduction in water clarity.

If phosphorus inputs can be reduced, then the amount of algae will also reduce, which will have a positive effect on water quality. To this end Council is considering options for reducing phosphorus loss from agricultural land in the Lake Brunner catchment.

Control of nutrient loss from the farmed land around Lake Brunner will not be easy, because of our high rainfall, but there are some options around careful soil nutrient management that have the potential to both reduce phosphorus inputs into the lake, and improve on-farm cost effectiveness.

Council intends to notify a Plan Variation to amend the Lake Brunner chapter of the Water Plan to target these issues.



The graph shows declining water quality (clarity) at Lake Brunner. Whilst the scatter of blue dots (individual monitoring results) show that water clarity has been good at times right through the period 1992 - 2009, the mean clarity levels, indicated by the line, actually show steady deterioration from around 6.5m visibility in 1992 to just on 5m this year.

Planning Update

Council's planning team has another busy year ahead with the team working on the following key projects:

- Proposed Land & Riverbed Management Plan Variation 1 (Wetlands) : The Council's decisions have been appealed by the Department of Conservation, Friends of Shearer Swamp Inc., and Forest & Bird. The Environment Court has directed that mediation takes place to try and resolve the appeals.
- Proposed Land & Riverbed Management Plan Variation 2 (Wetlands) : The Variation proposes to add two new wetland areas to Proposed Land & Riverbed Management Plan, and extend two wetland areas already in the schedule. The Variation has been publicly notified and the first round of submissions has closed.
- Coastal Plan Change 2: The change proposes to permit clearing of blocked coastal river and creek mouths where the blockage is causing a flooding or erosion hazard, subject to conditions. Fourteen submissions and four further submissions were received. Staff are preparing a report which makes recommendations on the submissions for the Council's Hearing Committee.
- Merging the Discharge to Land Plan with the Proposed Water Management and Land & Riverbed Management Plans: Staff are preparing a draft merged plan for the Council's consideration. When the draft is completed, it will be circulated to key stakeholders for consultation.
- Staff will also begin working on a full review of the Regional Policy Statement in the second half of this year.

Council encourages everyone to get involved when these plans are notified for public submissions. It is important to have your say so that these plans reflect the values of the West Coast community.

Rating Districts

Property susceptible to flooding or erosion from either the river or the sea?

If you think your community may be interested in setting up a rating district to deal with a flooding or erosion problem you should contact either Simon Moran or Wayne Moen at the Council.

The main benefit of a rating district is that owners of all properties identified as benefiting from the work are required to pay for it. This means that agreed work whether it is a rock wall, stopbank, drain, or creek clean out gets done. The Council currently administers twenty-three rating districts, including two coastal erosion schemes, two drainage schemes and nineteen river flooding and erosion control schemes.

If there are only one or two properties affected then generally the landowners will sort out what needs to be done in terms of engineering and resource consents then get a contractor in to do the work. However, if a larger group of properties



In 1998 ratepayers at Okuru became concerned by increasing erosion near their properties on the landward side of the Okuru River estuary. After advice from the Regional Council a Rating District was formed and this rock protection work was erected in 2000 to help prevent further erosion. [Photo: M Traves]

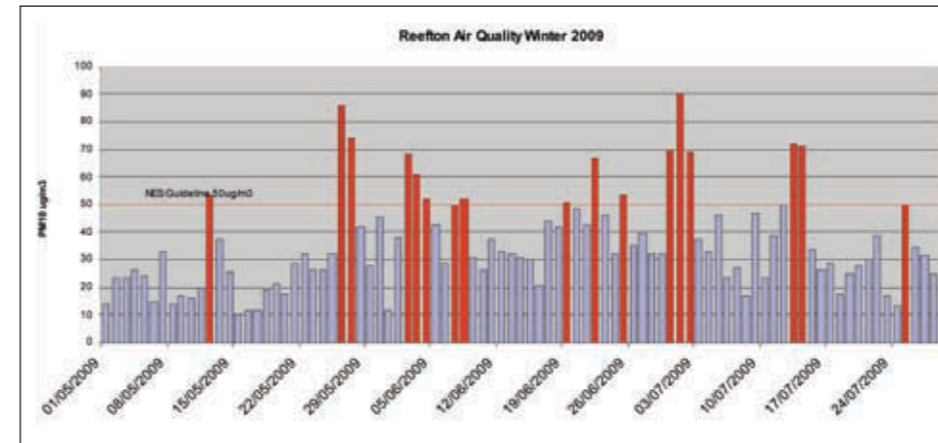
is affected, or potentially affected, then Council staff are usually asked to come out and meet with the community to discuss options. Staff are more than happy to come to these meetings but it is important that people realise that any work required will need to be funded by those who benefit from it ('user pays') and this is often done most efficiently by creating a Special Rating District.

Reefton Air Quality

Cold stable conditions in Reefton this winter have resulted in exceedences of the National Environmental Standard for PM10 (PM10 is smoke particles less than 10 microns in size). The National Air Quality Standards require that the average concentration should not exceed 50 micrograms per cubic metre more than once each year.

There were 17 exceedences of the National Environmental Standard for PM10, this winter, the highest of these being on July 1st when 91 micrograms/m³ was recorded in a 24 hour period.

For further information regarding monitoring of air quality at Reefton contact Stefan Beaumont, Resource Scientist.



Exercise Ru Whenua - 18th September 2009



Our number one hazard on the West Coast is an earthquake on the Alpine Fault. When this next happens it is expected that it will cause significant damage to the region, and the scientists say that it is overdue.

It is not just communities we urge to Get Ready. Exercise Ru Whenua (Shaking of the Earth) is based on a 8.2 magnitude

earthquake occurring on the fault line near Whataroa. The four councils, the emergency services, health, welfare agencies, and utility suppliers, are planning an 18 hour exercise on 18th September to practice responding to such an event. It will test communication systems between agencies by having periods of time where normal systems such as phones and email are out. This will test use of HF and VHF radios, and satellite phones.



What YOU can do in conjunction with Ru Whenua

ShakeOut is a public exercise which will run alongside the September 18th Ru Whenua Civil Defence Exercise. It has been designed to raise the awareness amongst West Coasters of the very real threat to the region and encourage them to better understand and prepare for the risks surrounding a major earthquake.

If you have not already registered to take part in the Great West Coast ShakeOut visit www.shakeout.org.nz and become a participant in the biggest earthquake drill that New Zealand has yet hosted. Thousands of people have already enrolled.

Join in the Shakeout drill at 10.10am on September 18th



Drop, cover and hold! The Shakeout organizer, Chris Manuel, and his son Caden, show us how it's done. [Photo: Lynda Murphy]

The impact on our infrastructure following an earthquake on the Alpine Fault will be significant. During the exercise, our utility operators will work on how to get our power, sewage and roading systems back up and running. Best of all, the exercise will help train staff to support our communities in the aftermath of such an event.

How can you get involved – register your family and/or workplace for West Coast Shake Out (see above) and practice your response to a major earthquake.