

Porarari River, Punakaiki

Message from the Deputy Chair

With four new Councillors elected in October 2022 work is continuing at pace across all areas of Council. Our new Council is focused on working collaboratively with our Iwi partners and local councils, as well as Government.

I want to take a moment and acknowledge the impact on those affected by Cyclone Gabrielle in the North Island. As a country, we are seeing an increasing number of events of this nature, making what we do to prepare individually, as communities, and as businesses, even more important. I encourage everyone to take time and consider how you can get better prepared.

We have a significant programme of work ahead of us in this term including the construction of the IRG projects in Franz Josef, Hokitika and Greymouth, and once the outcomes of the Kawatiri Business Case for Westport Flood protection are received, Westport.

Currently standing in for Chair Birchfield while he is on a leave of absence, I want to acknowledge the work of Council Staff and their dedication to the job. This is a team that works incredibly hard on the behalf of our community. Alongside Staff, we will be continuing to work and advocate in the best interest of our region particularly as we are faced with the continuous stream of legislation coming through from Central Government forcing additional restrictions around how we work, live and play.

Managing water resources across the region is another core function of Council. Our State of Environment Summary 2022 sets out the current state of the West



Peter Haddock
DEPUTY CHAIR
WESTLAND CONSTITUENCY

Coast's water and air resources. We can be proud of much of what is being done around the region with our water quality, but we still have work to do in some areas. The summary report is written for the everyday person so it's a good opportunity to check this out to understand what is happening in our environment.

Council is encouraging ratepayers to move to receive invoices by email as opposed to relying on the postal system. We all know there can be delays so this takes this risk out of the equation as well as assisting with reducing costs.

Find out more about what Council is up to in the following newsletter.

Managing water resources across the West Coast is a key role of Council

Find out more about what we are doing here:

State of Environment Summary 2022

The West Coast natural environment is generally in good shape. While the majority of our land, water, air and ecosystems are healthy compared to other parts of the country, there is still plenty of work to be done to improve aspects of water quality in some catchments. The Council is constantly collecting information on the quality of our natural resources. Better data allows us to make more informed decisions when setting appropriate limits on resource use.

The State of Environment Summary provides easy to understand information on:

- Water quantity including rainfall and river flows
- Changes in land cover
- Water quality (E. coli, clarity, turbidity and suspended sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus levels, water temperature and dissolved oxygen, freshwater invertebrates and periphyton)
- Water quality of Lake Brunner and lake Haupiri
- Groundwater quality
- Air quality



The State of Environment Summary is available from the front page of Council's website www.wcrc.govt.nz

In the 2022/23 year

704

samples were taken at 84 sites for water quality



New sites added for swim spot monitoring

It has been a great summer to get out and about and enjoy the various swim spots across the region. Two new sites have been included in Council's monitoring programme, Punakaiki River and Fox River, recognising the popularity of these spots for swimming. Staff will have also been seen sampling two of the old Lake Kaniere sites at Hans Bay Jetty and Sunny Bight. Monitoring will no longer be undertaken at the Hokitika and Blaketown beaches due to safety concerns when sampling.

For more information on our swim spot water quality go to www.lawa.org.nz

Fish passage assessments completed

In September, we reported on the one-year project funded by the Department of Conservation to check culverts, fords and bridges to determine if fish can migrate past them upstream.

At the time, Staff had inspected 854 structures. Inspections have now been undertaken of 1,800 structures across the region.

What happens next?

Council is required to develop a Fish Passage Action Plan to prioritise structures requiring remediation.

QUICK FACTS

1800

structures inspected since May 2022

Of the structures inspected

1238 Low risk

155 Medium risk

407 High risk

Instream structures that are considered high-risk include features such as:

- Shallow or fast flowing water
- Structural overhangs
- Undercuts and drops

These factors can impede the movement of fish

Freshwater Plan change

Work is progressing on the Freshwater Plan Change to the Regional Land and Water Plan. This includes:

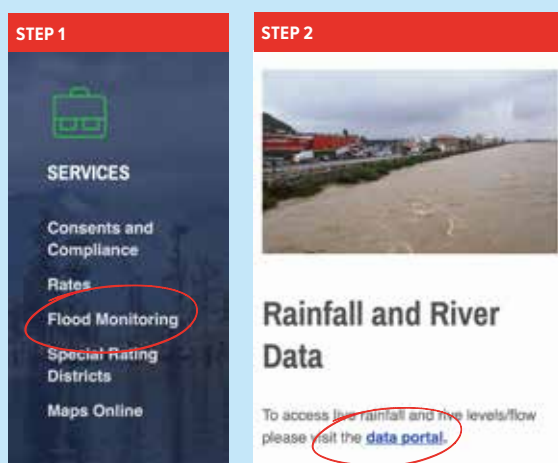
ACTION	WHAT'S NEXT
The South Westland Freshwater Management Unit (FMU) Group presented their recommendations to Council's Resource Management Committee in March 2022. This completes all four FMU Community Group processes	Recommendations from each of the FMU's will feed into the Freshwater Plan Change
A public survey inviting nominations for Outstanding Water Body status was held in December 2021	A draft report is being prepared on assessing nominations of water bodies for outstanding status
Review of the Habitats of Threatened Species completed (Schedule 7A of the Land and Water Plan)	The reviewed schedule will be incorporated into the Freshwater Plan Change
Water quality staff are working through the Government's requirements for identifying baseline states for rivers and lakes	Baseline data to be included in the Freshwater Plan Change
Review of the Inanga - Whitebait Spawning sites completed (Schedule 11 of the Land and Water Plan)	The reviewed schedule will be incorporated into the Freshwater Plan Change
Fish passage barrier assessment completed	A Fish Passage Action Plan to prioritise structures requiring remediation will now be developed

Other freshwater work underway:

- Staff are feeding into the Government's development of regulations for **freshwater farm plans**
- Building science capacity to undertake **wetland assessments** in the field to meet requirements of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management
- The focus for 2023 is drafting the **Freshwater Plan Change**.

Keeping up to date with rain fall and river levels

Have you checked out the new and improved hydrology data webpages? These provide up to date data on rain fall and the flows in our key rivers across the region. These can be accessed from the 'Flood Monitoring' (step 1) link on the front page of our website and then click on the 'data portal' (step 2).



New appointment

Shanti Morgan has joined Council as the new Operations Manager for Vector Control Services (VCS). Shanti has ten years' experience in biodiversity management working in New Zealand and abroad. Her most recent role was based on Great Barrier Island managing landscape scale pest suppression and eradication projects. With skills in project and contract management, Shanti is looking forward to building on the success of VCS and working with the experienced crew to deliver conservation outcomes and manage vector transmitted diseases across the region.



Biosecurity threats – Old Man's Beard

Old Man's Beard is a scrambling vine which smothers trees, blocks out light, stops the regeneration of plants below and seeds prolifically. It's quite distinctive at this time of the year due to both the flowers and the seeds (the "beards").

TO CONTROL

- ▶ Cut the stems as close to the ground as possible
- ▶ Paint the stumps with herbicide.
- ▶ Leave cut hanging vines in the tree until they die before pulling out – there is less chance of resprouting, or damage to the tree beneath
- ▶ Small seedlings can be pulled out by hand. Check each spring for re-growth and new seedlings

Contact the Department of Conservation or Council for help controlling infestations on your property.

For more information
www.weedbusters.org.nz

Infrastructure update

Mawhera Quay Flood Protection Wall Upgrade (Stage 2)

Updated designs were received early February following review, and feedback received from Grey District Council. Further information has been supplied to complete the consenting process. Tendering will commence once the resource consent has been approved and design finalised.

Kawatiri Farm erosion repair

Repair work is underway by Contractors, Avery Bros Ltd, on the erosion of the Buller River adjacent to Kawatiri Farm. Damaged in the floods of July 2021, the work undertaken includes topping up an existing rock wall and rebuilding sections of this part of the riverbank.



Franz Josef (Waiho River Stopbank Protection)

Resolution of a submission by Scenic Hotel Group under a Limited Notified application, and the processing of a river diversion/training consent application which is integral to the main consent application, are nearing completion. Once these are finalised, construction can commence.

Council undertook river training and clearing of the main channel using a D11 bulldozer in February to relieve some of the flows down the true right bank of the river, particularly the Havill Bank area and the Waiho/Tartare Loop.

Design work is underway on a stopbank to be located in the Waiho/Tartare Loop stretch of the river to provide protection and reduce risk against intrusion of the Waiho River into that area and on into the Tataru River system.

Hokitika Flood and Coastal Erosion Protection

River Wall - The river wall project is made up of three stages. Priority has been given to Stage 1, particularly Stage 1A - the river front area in proximity to Westland Milk Products, as this has been identified as the highest risk area. The preliminary site investigations for Stage 1A, including survey, were undertaken in January, and a concept design was received early February. Further design is currently being completed.

Sea Wall - Work has been focused on providing the additional information required in support of the Resource Consent application.

GET READY

Emergencies can happen anytime, anywhere. You can take steps to be prepared. The Get Ready website has information about hazards in New Zealand and advice about how to get prepared for an emergency. Go to www.getready.govt.nz

Want to make paying rates easier?

Council has a number of options for paying rates, however we do encourage ratepayers to consider setting up a direct debit payment.

This assists with ensuring your rate payments are never late and gives you the option as to how you want to spread the payments – weekly, fortnightly or monthly. Contact our Rates Officer to find out more on **0508 800 118**; or go to our website www.wcrc.govt.nz and search 'direct debit', fill in the form and return it to Council.



Are you experiencing issues with paying rates?

Check out Council's Rates Remissions and postponement Policy. Go to www.wcrc.govt.nz and search 'rates remissions'.

See if you are eligible for a rebate under the Government's Rates Rebate Scheme – www.govt.nz/getting-a-rates-rebate

Don't want to rely on the postal system to receive your invoice?

We all know that things are taking longer to get from A to B in the mail. Did you know that you can receive your rates invoice by email? Go to our website www.wcrc.govt.nz and search 'rates invoice by email', fill in the form and submit.



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