

West Coast Regional Council news

MARCH 2016

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West Coast Economic
Development Manager

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Pictured above: Environment Minister Nick Smith, West Coast Regional Council Chairman Andrew Robb and Matt O'Regan, Chairman Westland Milk Products, at Lake Brunner. Photo Steve Attwood

Message from the Chairman

In early December, Environment Minister Nick Smith visited the region to help celebrate the achievements made with improving the water quality of Lake Brunner.

While our last newsletter detailed the achievements made in this catchment, I would like to congratulate the landowners again for the hard work they have done to halt the decline in water quality and make positive change.

I am pleased to report that this was not a short term change. Recent sampling results continue to confirm an improvement in the water quality of Lake Brunner and this is expected to continue as the changes landowners have put in place take effect.

This collaborative approach out in the field is also being applied back in the office.

As a member of the West Coast Mayoral

Forum, we have been meeting with the Local Government Commission to identify and address local government issues and opportunities for the region. The Local Government Commission has identified two areas where they have committed to investigating how we can do this: regional roading infrastructure and joint RMA planning.

All four Councils are keen to find ways that improve the way we do business to provide our communities with better services. I look forward to hearing the Commission's findings on the above, and other future opportunities that the Mayoral Forum identifies.



THE WEST COAST
REGIONAL COUNCIL

New Gravel Extraction Compliance Fees

The new compliance fees for gravel extraction commence on 1 July 2016. These new fees were consulted on during the Long Term Plan consultation process last year, but their implementation was deferred until this year.

The new charge is structured as an annual fee based on the amount of gravel allowed to be taken in any current resource consent. Some consent holders may not be using their gravel consent and if so, they may wish to consider surrendering their consent to avoid being charged the new annual fee.

The previous approach was to charge individuals for site visits undertaken, but this approach was not recovering sufficient funds to cover the costs of monitoring the region's gravel resource.

The new schedule of charges is reflected in the table below.

Gravel Extraction Compliance Fees

Commencing on 1 July 2016

Volume of consented take (m ³)	Annual monitoring fee
Less than 2,000	\$300
2,000 – 3,999	\$600
4,000 – 7,999	\$1,200
8,000 – 15,000	\$2,200
Over 15,000	\$3,000



New West Coast Economic Development Manager Kevin Stratful.

West Coast Economic Development Manager

Kevin Stratful has been appointed as the West Coast's Economic Development Manager.

Economic development across the region has been at the forefront of our minds for several years now", said Chris Ingle, West Coast Regional Council Chief Executive.

The Regional Economic Summit held in 2013 led to the development of a Regional Economic Development Plan signed up to by the four West Coast Councils and Development West Coast. In order to progress the actions identified in the Plan the new Economic Development Manager role was created.

"With a corporate background as a former managing director of Lion Nathan, managing director at Freightways and chief operating officer at Telecom, Kevin's level of experience will stand the region in good stead as it looks to diversify and move forward into the future."

Kevin has been meeting with

individuals and business owners up and down the Coast since he started in February. "I have found the people to be very forthright and honest. They understand the situation we're in and this creates a climate for positive discussions on many fronts for the betterment of their business, and the community as a whole."

With the Regional Growth Study to kick off this month, there is a lot happening to help the West Coast identify opportunities to help grow investment, jobs and incomes. A core part of Kevin's role is to foster a coordinated effort between the various agencies and business leaders to explore avenues of growth.

Family is really important to Kevin, and the move from Keri Keri in the Bay of Islands has meant that more time can be spent with both his daughter and grandchildren. "Bringing the family together again has been a real positive for us in the shift to the West Coast. I hope that the work I do here can help achieve positive outcomes for other West Coasters."

Pasture Weed Serious Threat to Coast Farmers

In its second season since discovery on the West Coast, Yellow Bristle Grass is currently seeding and is at its most recognisable. A serious pest throughout the central North Island, it is proving very hard to control.

As an extremely aggressive annual plant, once established in a pasture it will spread rapidly reducing pasture quality. When Yellow Bristle Grass sets seed (around Christmas - January depending on the season) stock will avoid grazing it unless no other feed is available. Seed heads will persist until the first frosts in autumn, leading to lower pasture utilisation during this period, and a cost for supplementary feed required to maintain milk production. These costs are estimated to be around \$350/ha/year for infested pasture where Yellow Bristle Grass makes up 13% of total dry matter.

On the West Coast, Yellow Bristle Grass has been found infesting around 40km of roadside through the Buller Gorge. Fortunately, the infestations have only

been found around marker pegs on the roadside which provides an early opportunity to try and prevent further spread into pasture.

In order to know the full extent of Yellow Bristle Grass spread on the West Coast, it is important that farmers ensure they are familiar with the plant, and actively look for it on their property and the adjoining roadside. It is likely that Yellow Bristle Grass was brought into the region in feed purchased from another Region, so checking around hay sheds and anywhere else feed has been stored is a good starting point. To reduce any potential roadside distribution, mowing contractors have been shown the plant and will be keeping an eye out while they complete their work programme



➡ Paddock infested with Yellow Bristle Grass.



➡ Close up of the Yellow Bristle Grass.

throughout the districts, as well as local Weedbusters staff and other regional contractors.

The Council has high resolution Ute guides available to the public to assist with identifying this pest. Anyone who thinks they may have seen Yellow Bristle Grass on their property or the roadside, or is interested in receiving a Ute guide, should get in touch with the Council's Biosecurity Officer, Cameron Doake on freephone 0508 800 118 or email camerond@wrcr.govt.nz



Mokihinui River Flood Warning

The resource science team have installed two new monitoring sites in the Mokihinui catchment to keep an eye on river levels during heavy rain events. The Mokihinui River at Welcome Bay site measures water level approximately 4km upstream from the Seddonville Township. The Mokihinui River at Stoney Creek site measures rainfall in the Matiri Range at an altitude of approximately 800m.

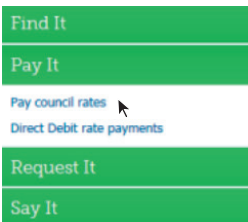


Data from both of these sites is now available on the Council's website <http://data.wrcr.govt.nz/cgi-bin/HydWebServer.cgi>

PAYING RATES



Want to pay your rates online? You can pay any West Coast Regional Rates invoice using our online service if you have a Visa or Mastercard.



For full details – as well as application charges, check out our website www.wcrc.govt.nz and click on the 'pay it' tab.



Council also offers the Direct Debit option for the payment of rates. This option means that your rates are paid on time ensuring that late payment penalties will be a thing of the past.

To download a Direct Debit form, check out our website www.wcrc.govt.nz and click on the 'pay it' tab.

Twitter Flood Alert Service



The Council is now offering flood alerts via Twitter. The rivers linked to provide this information are: Karamea, Mokihinui, Buller, Grey, Hokitika and Waiho. The flood alerts are another tool that will share updates with the public when a river goes through its alarm levels. This information does not replace the data currently provided on the Council's website or other flood warning procedures already in place.

To register to receive a Twitter flood alert visit www.wcrc.govt.nz/floodalerts

www.wcrc.govt.nz

Help to Protect Your Water Resource

Do you take surface or groundwater using the permitted activity rules in the Regional Land and Water Plan?

Whilst resource consent is not required, the Council does need to be informed in writing of the location, expected rate and frequency of the take prior to the take occurring, as well as the contact details of the person taking the water.

Why do we need this information? If the Council knows where your take is, we are then able to better manage this

water resource to protect against over-allocation and ensure that water quality is not compromised. For example, if you have a bore and we are not aware of it, Council is limited in being able to protect your water quality from any new septic tank installed within close proximity, or other discharge.

If you need to update your information for a permitted bore or surface take, please contact Karen Glover on freephone 0508 800 118 or email karen.glover@wrc.govt.nz

UPDATE



Connecting with the Local Community

The focus for Civil Defence West Coast is ensuring that we connect with our local communities and have local people who are trained to respond, within each community.

Each community volunteer (sector post warden) needs to have the ability to communicate with their district council emergency operations centre, even during a power outage.

Community Response Plans are being developed in each West Coast

community to strengthen local resilience and connectedness. This is a great way for individuals to get involved in helping their local community to become stronger. If you could see yourself being a local civil defence volunteer for your community, please call Chris Raine on 03 768 0466, extension 202.

The West Coast Group Plan is also under review at the moment. This is a region-wide plan that sets the broad direction for civil defence on the West Coast. This Plan will be released in draft form in May, for public feedback.



THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

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