

West Coast Regional Council news

MARCH 2017

What's Inside

PAGE 2



Managing Risk at
Karamea

PAGE 3



Coastal Erosion
at Neils Beach

PAGE 4



Hydro Site Upgrade



New Web Mapping Site
for the West Coast

Message from the Chairman

The results from the local election in September 2016 saw the return of the sitting Council. As a result we have been able to carry on seamlessly with our governance and direction for the future.

A lot is happening at the moment, not just for us, but the West Coast in general. Over the coming months the Local Government Commission will be reviewing the alternative arrangements that members of the public have submitted. I am interested to see the various options put forward on how services can be better delivered throughout the region.

We will also see the launch of the Economic Action Plan from the Regional Growth Study soon. The opportunities highlighted in the Plan and the support from local business, iwi, local and central government, including the Department of Conservation and the New Zealand Transport Agency, is unprecedented. This is a once in a generation opportunity for the West Coast, one I am both very proud of being involved in, as well as excited to see the outcomes for our communities in the coming years.

I am also pleased to report that we have had a strong turnaround in the Council finances during 2016/17, with an unaudited surplus of \$1.189 million achieved in the first six months, compared to the budgeted annual surplus of \$428,000. As a result, we have



been able to pay off our short term bank borrowing which puts us in a stronger financial position moving forward.

If you have any questions, or want to find out anything more about the work the Regional Council is doing, I would encourage you to pick up the phone and call me, one of your other elected members or staff at the office. We are here to help.



Andrew Robb
Chairman

Coastal Erosion and River Management

A number of our communities are facing coastal erosion issues. These include Neils Beach, Hokitika, Cobden, Rapahoe, Punakaiki, Carters Beach, Granity, Hector, Ngakawau and Karamea, as well as many other non-populated areas in between. This is not a new issue as beaches come and go over the decades, however as sea levels rise, and we get more frequent storm events, the problems are unlikely to go away.

Coastal erosion is a natural process which affects sand beaches and areas with soft cliffs, and is caused by waves, tidal currents and wind wearing away the land. The sand and gravel stripped away is then deposited on other beaches through ocean currents, which is known as accretion.

Read on to find out how we are managing coastal erosion, and that tricky space between our rivers and the coast, in some of our local communities.



Hokitika foreshore before

What are we doing?

Coastal erosion is a significant issue Council has been managing for many years. We have been using the knowledge of NIWA who undertake investigations into the various localised areas affected and provide us with recommendations on how to mitigate, or manage, the risks. Fortunately we have been able to undertake a lot of this investigation using Envirolink funding which has resulted in limited, or no cost, to our ratepayers.

Managing Risk at Karamea

Between 2013 and 2015, the Karamea river mouth migrated over 2km to the south leading to additional flooding in some areas. The local community also raised concerns that the continued southerly migration of the river would begin to eat away at private property.

Council engineer Paulette Birchfield, implemented one of NIWA's recommended options immediately prior to the flood event in January 2017. Using a local contractor to create two breaches at the northern end of the sand spit allowed the river to flow directly out to sea.

It is likely that intervention will be required again at some point in the future to maintain the position of the river mouth, but this work was very effective and cost efficient in mitigating the current flood risk.



New cuts in place during January 2017 storm event.



New river channel 10 days after flood event.

How does the funding work?

The Council operates 26 Rating Districts throughout the region. These Rating Districts are set up to fund protection works that benefit the properties paying into the scheme. Council consults with the affected community and provides options and costs.



Hokitika foreshore after

In brief

Whitebait Consents

This year, holders of resource consents for whitebait stands are required to apply to renew their consent before the season starts. To date only 20% of consents have been renewed. We would encourage those that haven't to get their applications in as soon as they can. You don't want paperwork getting between you and next season's catch, so please get this sorted.

Gravel Extraction

Compliance officers are continuing to pro-actively monitor gravel extraction sites across the region. Following recent visits, contractors have been sent letters reminding them of their resource consent conditions and the need to ensure they are complying with these. If you are in any doubt, please call Colin Helem on 0508 800 118 ext 223.

Annual Plan

Keep an eye out for the draft Annual Plan which will be released for submissions in April. Setting out what the Council intends to do for the next 12 months and how activities and services will be paid for, the Annual Plan is an important document for the region. We encourage all West Coasters to take the opportunity to have their say.

Have Your Say

New Staff

Cassidy Rae has joined the Consents and Compliance team as a trainee administrator. As part of her traineeship Cassidy will be undertaking a Business Administration course 1 day a week at the polytechnic. Rebecca Armstrong (hydro technician) and Jasmin Robb (surface water quality technician) joined the Resource Science team at the end of 2016. The appointments are to build capacity in the team to assist with the new hydro installation project, and as we move forward with an increase in our water sampling programme.

Coastal Erosion at Neils Beach

Over the last four years the sea has eroded approximately 30m of beach frontage in the small coastal community of Neils Beach at the southern end of our region. The erosion was so bad that during storm events waves were entering the front of coastal properties, and even under one of the houses.

The community at Neils Beach raised their concerns with Council and asked us to come up with some potential protection options. With funding from Envirolink, we had NIWA investigate what could be done. The findings highlighted that the position of the river mouth to the east was responsible for the beach not receiving any nourishment, or build up, from the river. This combined with a strong coastal wave event in July 2011, followed by relatively gentle river flows and low sediment delivery to the beach, had led to the quite severe erosion on Neil's Beach.



Neils Beach seawater inundation

Council engineer Brendon Russ, implemented one of NIWA's immediate management options, using a local contractor to construct a sacrificial bund (a 1.5m high wall, 100m long made out of material from nearby slips) in front of the immediate properties under threat.

Since the bund was put in place, the river mouth has returned to the west and is again providing nourishment to the

beach. This is now helping to build the beach back up to a level where it will provide more protection to the properties. The position of the river mouth will be monitored and if it begins to travel east again, consideration will be given to implementing another NIWA management option of mechanically repositioning the river mouth back to the west.



Building the bund at Neils Beach

PAYING RATES

Pay it Online

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.

Direct Debit Rate Payments

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, Mokihiui, 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

New Web Mapping Site for the West Coast

WestMaps are a suite of user friendly, dynamic maps designed to provide website visitors with fast access to information. They are easy to print and can be viewed on smartphones and tablets, as well as laptops and PC's, making them practical for most situations.



Our IT team have created a number of different maps already depending on your interests and more are planned. Access to the maps is from the portal at <http://gis.wcrc.govt.nz>



New telemetry system (left) and rain gauge (right) on the Brunner Ranges

Hydro Site Upgrade

Work is under way on the installation of the four new hydrometric sites planned for the 2016/2017 financial year. This year three rainfall sites, and one water level site, are being installed in the Inangahua area. This is part of a seven year programme to install 20 new hydrometric monitoring stations at 17 locations across the West Coast to increase our understanding of rainfall and river flows and providing better information for the community. The information will be used for flood warning, resource management and planning.

Members of the community can access data from the new sites on our website as soon as the installations are completed. Data from rainfall and flow sites is available on the Council's website www.wcrc.govt.nz/hydro



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