

SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT COUNCIL

20 FEBRUARY 2013

AGENDA ITEM C10

WHAKARUA FLOODING REMOVAL OF WILLOW TREES FROM THE STREAM

Purpose of Report

To seek advice from Councilors and recommendations to consider contributing to the costs of removal of willow trees from Whakarua Road.

Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Council:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Consider the contribution costs.*
3. *Council considers the longer term implications of further claims from other landowners.*

1. Executive Summary

The residents of Whakarua Road has requested Council's contribution towards costs for removal of the Willow trees that are blocking the creek and causing major flooding. Council officers have reviewed the site and agree it seems reasonable to contribute to the cost of the willow removal as it is essential to the function of the road.

2. Background

Whakarua Road is an unsealed rural road off the Martinborough-Masterton Road near our boundary with Carterton District Council. Whakarua Road is approximately 4km long with a bridge about one kilometer from the end of the road.

Whakarua Road often floods at the bridge and upstream of the bridge, preventing road access to properties at the end of the road. The stream is so blocked with silt and willow trees that even modest rainfall floods the road at the bridge.

While it is the farmer's responsibility to keep the stream bed clear of willows and silt, the GWRC are prepared to contribute 30% of the total costs of removing the willow trees. The farmers and those affected are asking SWDC to also contribute 30% of the cost of removing the willows.

However, there are risks and possible ongoing costs and potential claims from other landowners.

The cost may exceed the \$26,000.00 estimate.

Contributing to the cost will set a precedent and other farmers may also seek and expect assistance in removing willows from their streams.

For example the bridge on Oystershell Road is also affected by flooding caused by willows and silt downstream of the bridge.

There is no guarantee that once the work is done the farmer will continue to keep the stream clear of willows.

There is probably a case that can be made around the special circumstances for Whakarua Road and the relatively minor cost to SWDC.

3. Discussion

3.1 Consultation

At a meeting on 28 September 2012 attended by GWRC, SWDC and several farmers, it was agreed that willows had to be removed from the stream bed that it was the landowner's responsibility and that the farmer/landowner could not afford to do the work.

Subsequent to the above meeting the GWRC flood protection staff and the farmers have identified 1.2km of stream bed that needs to be cleared of willow trees to prevent regular flooding.

3.2 Financial Considerations

The estimated cost of this work is \$26,000.00. If approved Council's share of costs will equate to \$8,500.00, this will be financed from the general roading maintenance.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Letter from David Boone, Greater Wellington Regional Council dated 18 October 2012.

Appendix 2 – Letter from Guy McGregor, Director Taharoa Farming Ltd dated 6 December 2012.

Appendix 3 – Photos taken of Whakarua Road where the flooding takes place.

Contact Officer: Ian Richards, Roothing and Reserves Manager

Reviewed By: Mark Allingham, Group Manager Infrastructure and Services

**Appendix 1 – Letter from
David Boone, Greater
Wellington Regional Council
dated 18 October 2012**

Subject: Road flooding at Whakarua Road
From: David Boone (David.Boone@gw.govt.nz)
To: wharepsku@xtra.co.nz;
Cc: Scott.Andrew@gw.govt.nz;
Date: Thursday, 18 October 2012 3:53 PM

Guy,

This email is meant to summarise our discussion earlier today.

The willow clearance work in the Whakarua stream will be eligible for up to a 30% subsidy of the total cost involved with the work. GW Flood Protection does have some Isolated Works funding available at present, however there is some uncertainty if and when other community projects will proceed and consume the available funds.

In order to receive the subsidy someone within the community must take a leadership role and develop a brief proposal including:

- A summary of the work detailing the location, extent, and methodology to be used
- An estimate of the total cost involved with the proposed work, including some information of how this estimate has been derived
- An assessment of the beneficiaries of the work
- Written approval of the landowner(s) where the work will occur

GW staff consider that it is appropriate for SWDC to contribute some funds for the project. The individual contributions of the landowners involved, and/or SWDC, will be a matter for the community to resolve.

In order for GW to subsidise the work we must have some assurance that the work proposed complies with Regional rules for working in the bed of a water course. Based on our discussions and my observations of the site on 28 September 2012 the work intended will meet the applicable permitted activity rule which means no resource consent is required. See the GW website for the details of this rule; <http://www.gw.govt.nz/Rule-40-Removal-of-vegetation/>

Once the details of the proposal are provided I will confirm whether there is isolated works funds remaining. The work should then be undertaken within a month of confirming the subsidy is available. Following the work the subsidy will be reimbursed to the contractor(s) involved or directly to the landowner.

I am happy to offer advice at anytime, however my available time for this project is very limited due to the location of the site being outside of a Flood Protection managed scheme. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Regards

David Boone | Flood Protection Area Engineer - Northern Wairarapa
GREATER WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Pane Matua Taiao
34 Chapel Street | PO Box 41, Masterton 5840
T: 06 826 1549 | M: 0274 583 947 | www.gw.govt.nz

**Appendix 2 – Letter from
Guy McGregor, Director
Taharoa Farming Ltd dated 6
December 2012**

Taharoa Farming LTD
Wharepaku
RD4
Masterton
6.12.2012



Hand delivered 4.05 pm.

Mayor Adrienne Staples

Dear Adrienne

On the 28th September a meeting was held at Whakarua Road to discuss the ongoing problems with flooding of this road. Those present:

Ian Richards- South Wairarapa District Council
David Boone- Greater Wellington Regional Council
Scott Andrews- Greater Wellington Regional Council
Stu Nicol- farm owner
Guy and Lachie McGregor - effected farm owner
David McLaren- effective farm owner

Proposal- To clear willows on Stu Nicols property at Whakarua Road. These willows are blocking the creek and causing major and frequent flooding of the road.

All agreed that something had to be done, however the big question was who is going to pay. David Boone said he would see if GWRC could subsidise the project. On the 18th October David confirmed that GWRC would subsidise the project for up to 30% of the total cost with certain provisos (copy of David's email included). On the 19th October I organised another meeting at the site with Stu and Peter Nicol, Graham Reidy (Ex GWRC river engineer) and myself.

We agreed that there are three sections of the creek that need to be cleared in order to alleviate the flooding.

Section 1- approx 400m below the road bridge. Graham estimated that there is about 1.5m of fall over the length.

Section 2- approx 500m above the road bridge. It is necessary to go this far in order to stop water flowing onto the road 100m above the bridge.

Section 3- Approx 300m from just above the tight bend in the road down to Stu Nicols farm bridge.

We hope the digger will be able to extract the willow roots and all, however any trees that prove difficult to extract and are not impeding the flow of the creek may need to be cut off at ground level and killed.

Most contractors charge \$140 per hour for a 20 tonne digger. However Dave Hooper is available at \$130 per hour and Tony Burden (the chainsaw operator) at \$38 per hour.

Graham estimated 15 x 10 hour days= 150hrs at \$170 per hour= \$25,500 + \$500 cartage= \$26,000

The people who will benefit from this are the McGregor's and McLaren's who own the farms at the end of the road along with all other contractors be it, trucking, postal, shearing, emergency services.etc.

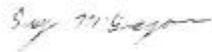
The Nicols will gain immensely as all flooding is occurring on their land. They will have better access to their farming operations, less chance of livestock being caught in flooding and they will be able to fix their road fences so that stock aren't always on the road as they are now. In the last year they have used our woolshed to keep sheep dry for shearing. It would be a major concern if we were stuck with 900 of Nicols sheep in our shed and the road was flooded. In the past we have lent Stu a horse because he was unable to access his farm with a 4WD motorbike.

The SWDC is another that will gain. David McLaren said he use to be able to walk under the road bridge. As you can see by the photos, the water level has not dropped below the bridge beams. It is fair to assume that if the silt build up is allowed to continue the road bridge will be engulfed.

While we don't expect to stop all flooding if we can get the normal water level back to 1-1.5m below the bridge beams we should still have access in all but a major flood.

I urge the SWDC to see that the removal of the willows is the most cost effective solution to what may become a health and safety issue if nothing is done. I ask that the council seriously consider a 30% contribution to this project. I am prepared to meet with Council if and when required.

Yours Sincerely,



Guy McGregor
Director Taharoa Farming LTD

Appendix 3 – Photos Taken of Whakarua Road Where the Flooding Takes Place



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