



Inangahua River at Landing site. The monitoring tower can just be seen poking its head above the water. Photo Rachel Silcock



In comparison the Inangahua River on a typical day.

Message from the Chair

After an exceptionally dry January we were hit by two severe weather events within a period of ten days, and were lucky to dodge a further event just days later.

Prior to, and during a severe weather event, Council Staff drop their business as usual activities and lead, inform and assist our partner agencies with preparing for, responding and recovering from such events.

Engineers are deployed across the region to keep an eye on rivers. Hydrology and Water Quality Staff activate flood response plans, monitor rainfall and rivers and provide advice to decision-makers and communities. Natural hazard Staff assist in determining the impact of such events with Staff from consents, compliance, planning and comms filling roles in the Emergency Coordination Centre. It's all hands on deck.

This response takes a toll on our work programmes, particularly where damage may be sustained to our flood and erosion protection assets, or our river monitoring devices. The response also provides learning opportunities and allows us to review gaps in our preparedness.

Work continues at pace to progress with the infrastructure resilience projects in Franz, Hokitika and Greymouth. Westport will benefit from having the last piece of the Advanced Flood Warning telemetry system in place to capture data to make much more informed decisions on evacuation planning. The final surveys and river modelling have been completed to confirm the alignment and design of the floodwall and stopbanks for Westport, with resource consent to be submitted shortly and works starting on those parts that do not require consent.

On behalf of the Councillors, I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our Staff throughout the organisation who are determined to do the best for our communities, particularly during such significant weather events.



Allan Birchfield
 CHAIRMAN



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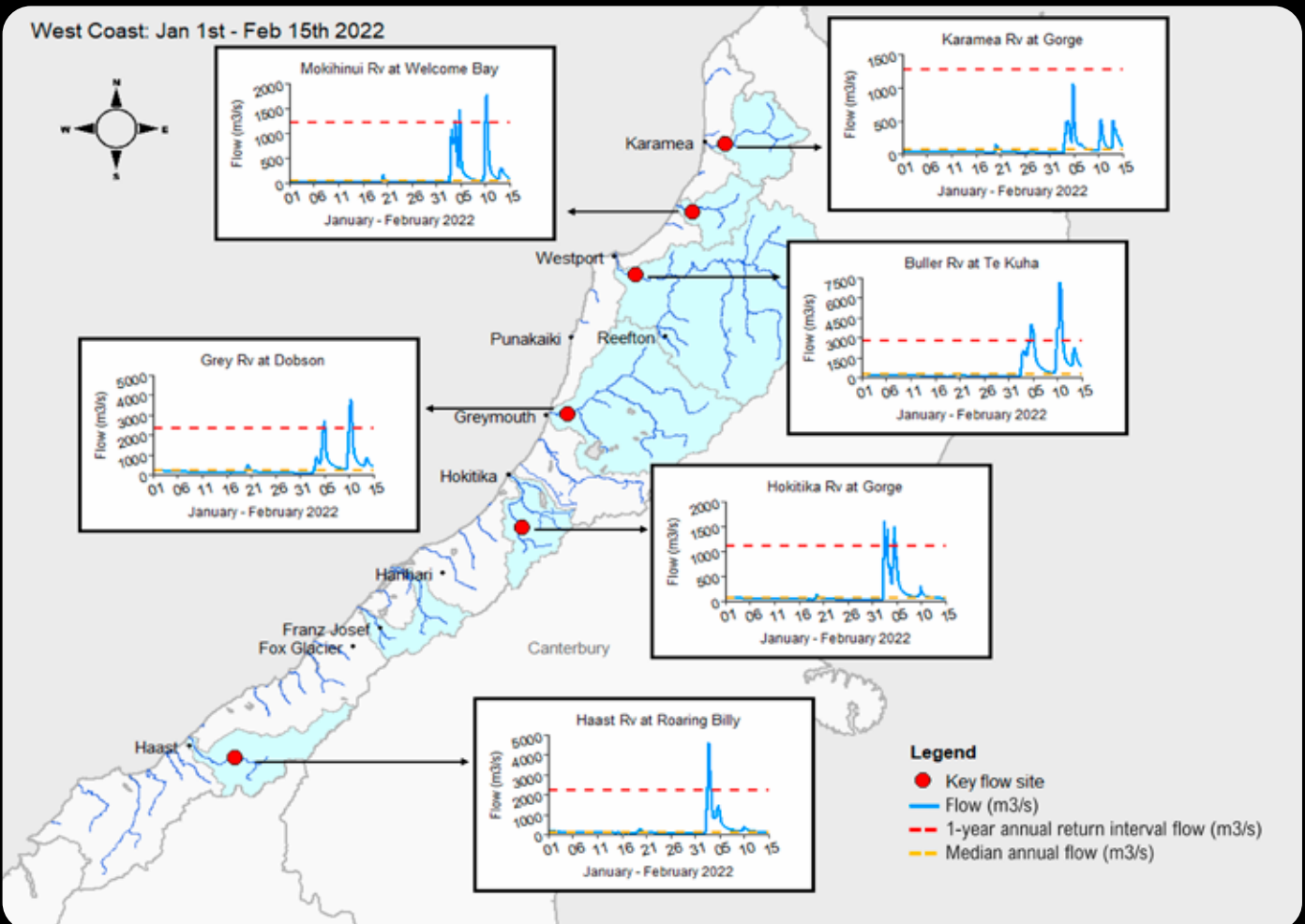
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Team at the Buckland Peak site.

The highs and lows of our rivers

The new year has brought with it an incredible range of river flows, with both an abundance and lack of, rainfall. The months of January and February 2022 could not have been more different. In January, very little rainfall saw many of our rivers fall below their 7-day mean annual low flows, whilst so far, this February has had two significant rainfall events, both resulting in high flows well above our rivers' mean annual flood flows.





Te Tai o Poutini PLAN

A combined district plan for the West Coast

An Exposure Draft of Te Tai o Poutini Plan, the combined district plan for the West Coast, was released for feedback on 26 January 2022. The exposure draft was the first chance for communities and stakeholders to see how the Plan had been brought together. This first stage of feedback closed on 11 March 2022 with comments on a variety of topics including hazards, zoning and landscapes received online, by mail, and at the meetings, stakeholder workshops, and drop-in sessions held across the region.

Te Tai o Poutini Committee is considering the feedback received and will be making the required changes before notifying the Proposed Plan in mid-July for submissions.

Advanced Flood Warning Project

The last piece of the Buller River Flood monitoring system, Ohikanui River at Buckland Peak rainfall site, was installed in January. This system is required to start gathering data for the new forecasting model. It will take at least 5 years of data gathered across the system to be able to provide accurate and reliable evacuation warnings, though every year provides more robust information to assist decision-making.

Hokitika River monitoring

The newly installed Hokitika River monitoring site provides council with water level data to assist with flood monitoring for the Hokitika area. The data will allow us to better understand what water levels on the Hokitika River correspond with flooding in the town as well as surrounding properties and roads. In addition, by comparing peak level times at this site and the upstream Hokitika Rv at Gorge site, we can roughly calculate how long it will take for the peak recorded upstream at the gorge to reach Hokitika.

Want to know how much rain falls or what the river levels are like across the region?

We now have new and improved hydrology data webpages. These provide up-to-date data on rainfall and river flows. These can be accessed at <https://www.wcrc.govt.nz/environment/water/river-levels-rainfall>

Environmental monitoring increasing

Council has increased the amount of routine environmental quality monitoring, with new sites and new measures added, including habitat and algal cover assessments. A wider survey of West Coast lakes has also been undertaken, helping us better understand how they function. A number of research studies were completed, including studies on: groundwater hydrochemistry, Reefton air quality, Lake Brunner health, and wider West Coast environmental condition.

Coastal community drop-in sessions

Not all of the hazard information was available at the time of the release of the Exposure Draft. Additional drop-in sessions will be held on coastal and land instability hazard provisions at some coastal communities from 11 – 13 April 2022. More information on the dates and times will be released shortly.

Want to find out more? Go to www.ttpn.nz



PREDATOR FREE TE KINGA

A five-year project, Predator Free Te Kinga aims to transform more than 3,800 hectares of forested land into a predator free conservation area. The project is gathering pace as information from 259 motion-detection cameras and accompanying motolures ringing the mountain is collected. Several predator clusters have been identified, including a stoat cluster near Lake Brunner. This data helps to inform where traps and devices can be best deployed.



Predator Free Te Kinga has provided the perfect learning environment with the appointment of two full time apprentices as part of the Predator Free Apprenticeship and Conservation and Earthcare students involved from Greymouth High School. Students have been assisting pest control experts to manage 60 monitoring stations over a 5km section of the inner monitoring ring around the Inchbonnie Area.

Want to find out more?

Check out the Predator Free Te Kinga Newsletter at www.wcrc.govt.nz

New appointment

Many of you will know Colin Helem and we are pleased to be able to announce his appointment as Council's Consents and Compliance Manager. Having joined Council in 2008 Colin has been an integral part of the Compliance Team, taking on the Acting Manager role off and on since the start of 2021.



Infrastructure Resilience, and Westport Flood Protection, Projects

During the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020 central government announced an economic stimulus package which included funding for resilience projects that were “shovel ready”. Council applied for a number of infrastructure works across the region.

Franz Josef Resilience Project

Raising the existing stopbanks on both sides of the Waiho River by 2m to provide an additional 15-years resilience for the existing community. This includes extending the stopbanks downstream and building a new wall from the heliport wall to the 55km corner wall.

UPDATE PHASE 1

Further modelling has been undertaken resulting in an amended alignment of the final design of the northside stopbank. This was approved by Council in December 2021. The alignment has taken into account protection of the Tatare River Tributary. This work will provide greater protection to a wider area on the north side. A contract to undertake this work was approved in February with works to commence in March.

UPDATE PHASE 2

At this stage central government has approved funds for Phase 1 only. Council is waiting on an outcome regarding funding the final long-term solution for the Southside and have been advised that officials are actively seeking to secure funding for what this may be.

Greymouth Resilience Project

Council completed stage one of increasing the floodwalls to a 1:150 AEP flood event in 2010. Stage two was scheduled to commence once funding was available following the loan repayment for stage 1 one in 2030. However, the Government’s funding has enabled Council to advance stage two without increasing the financial burden on the rating district. This upgrade will provide a greater level of service and protection to the Greymouth CBD, property owners and the community.

UPDATE

Geotechnical investigations have been completed for stage 2 of the project which will inform the design and construction plans.

Hokitika and Kaniere Resilience Project

Extension of the sea wall to Richards Drive, and the construction of a river flood protection scheme to provide far greater resilience and protection between Kaniere and Sunset Point from a 1% AEP flood event*.

UPDATE

Emergency works were undertaken on the seawall in August 2021 to address erosion issues and provide protection to the asset already in place. Final designs for the seawall and stopbank have been identified. Resource consent for construction is expected to be submitted in March 2022. Council has approached EnviroSchools to link students into the project with the germination of seedlings, and planting out, around Wadestone Island.

Westport

Development of an extensive flood protection scheme.

UPDATE

Since the project was adopted as part of Council’s Long-term Plan in October 2021, river modelling undertaken by Land River Sea Consulting has been peer reviewed, final survey and design work has been completed and the Westport Joint Committee met on 3 March 2022. Council adopted recommendations as to the final alignment and design of the proposed stopbanks and floodwall as well as work that can commence immediately while resource consent is sought for the bigger parts of the project.

Changes coming for freshwater

Our Freshwater Management Unit Community Groups have been working hard assessing how best to meet the demands on the waterbodies within their areas. Recommendations have been made to Council, and Staff can now start drafting the Freshwater Plan Change (for inclusion in the Land and Water Plan) later this year. Further feedback from iwi, stakeholders and our communities can be made through the submissions process, likely to be in 2023.

Heads up...

Central Government has indicated that it will release the Natural and Built Environments Bill in the next few months. When the Bill becomes law, it will be the first of three Acts intended to replace the Resource Management Act 1991. The other Acts proposed are the Strategic Planning Act and the Climate Adaption Act. This will have a significant impact on individuals, communities and businesses right across New Zealand and you may be interested in making a submission on the Proposed Bill when it is notified.



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 to Council.**



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