

Flood Recovery

News and community updates following flood events on 4 and 12 June



Drone surveying of debris at Kaiaua Beach

Clean-up on beaches

From drone footage we're assessing the volume of debris on the beaches. We know it's a significant amount and there's no quick or easy solution to clean-up and dispose of the wood.

We are looking at prioritising clean-up of Tolaga Bay, Kaiaua and Gisborne beaches, focusing on popular well-used areas in time for summer. We expect the total clean-up and disposal to continue over a number of months into next year depending on affordability. We'll communicate the programme of work when we've firmed up the plan.

Debris is spread across multiple locations and each area needs to be dealt with individually. At Tikapa Beach there's pine but also a lot of native wood among the debris, whereas Tolaga Bay Beach is predominantly forestry slash. In environmentally sensitive areas where there's lots of wildlife, bringing heavy equipment onto the beach may cause more harm.

In past years the debris has been pushed up on the sand dunes to help stabilise them. But this may not be appropriate in some areas due to the amount of wood. Considerable resources would also be required if there was an option to transport it elsewhere. In 2015 around 45,000 cubic metres of wood washed up on Waikanae Beach after the storm, it cost around \$100k to clean up and dispose. The amount of debris we're looking at now is likely to be hundreds of thousands of cubic meters.

Burning is an option for some of the wood, but given the scale of debris, it's unlikely we can burn all of it. Burning driftwood releases toxins – namely dioxins – as the wood is infused by salt. This is the reason why it shouldn't be burnt in a fireplace, as it's corrosive and will rust the firebox and chimney.

We're considering the option of shredding wood into mulch. The wood generally needs to be dry to reduce the amount of sand on it. Council and Uawanui are planning to do a trial to get an idea of how much time and cost would be involved.

What we're doing round-up

- Worked completed on three farms by Enhanced Taskforce Green crews.
- Investigating a trial of mulching wood piled on Tolaga Bay Beach.
- Drafting recovery plan actions with stakeholder groups to get it ready for input by the community.
- Assessing areas for the risk of further debris and how to manage or safely remove material.
- Engaging independent experts to undertake coastal/estuary and social/economic impact assessments.
- Continuing investigation into forestry consents.
- Updating the community via newsletters, emails, social media.

Assessing debris

Drone footage is also being analysed to determine where slash and debris has accumulated in upper catchments. We are assessing the risk of further mobilisation of debris from forests in the Waimata and Mangapoike catchments, and at Waiomatatini and Tikapa. (MT)

Science experts from GNS flew across the region on 11 July looking at where land slides and damage has occurred more widely. Footage from this is being analysed to identify areas where further assessments are needed on the ground.

Those responsible for debris still left in the forests will need to determine how risks can be managed and material safely removed. The priority should be to ensure any work to mitigate risks can be undertaken safely. If there's instability in some areas or if rain has saturated the ground, some work won't be able to happen until it's drier and safer.

Actions Key



Short Term 1 - 3 months



Medium Term 3 - 9 months



Long Term 9 - 18+ months

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Taskforce Green workers Arapeta Te Rauna and Honore Marsh

TASKFORCE CREWS START

Enhanced Taskforce Green crews began clearing debris by hand from fences and paddocks last week. Farmers have been very happy with the work teams have completed on the first three farms.

A total of 30 properties have registered for assistance, if you would like to register, please get in touch with us.

Contact

David Scott, Rural Recovery Coordinator
027 211 9941 | (06) 8684840
Email: treescapfarm@xtra.co.nz

Patrick Willock, Agriculture Recovery Facilitator
021 240 6534 | (06) 867 6902
Email: pwillock@xtra.co.nz

Have you checked your septic tank?



If flood water or silt has entered your septic tank, we recommend you get it serviced.

Contact a septic tank cleaning specialist. Make sure they dig down and open the lid of the septic tank. It should be cleaned out through the lid, not the mushroom vent. It's important the contractor opens and checks the main chamber, any secondary chambers and any pump chamber.

When it's cleaned out, the solids at the bottom of the tank and the scum layer at the top should be removed, not just the liquids. Your septic tank cleaner should also clean the filter on the tank outlet. If the tank doesn't have a filter, you should get one installed. Also if you don't have a lid above ground level, we advise to get one installed.

Ask your septic tank cleaner for a report that states:

- the date the tank was cleaned out
- that the tank filter was cleaned and replaced correctly
- if there's anything obviously broken in the tank or if the tank is cracked.

If you have any questions about septic tank cleaning or you have concerns about your system, get in touch with Council.

Contact

Judith Robertson | 0800 653 800
Email: Judith.Robertson@gdc.govt.nz

Bus running to Arikahi and Kiore

Go Bus resumed their school bus run on Arakahi and Kiore roads at the start of last week.

We remind all motorists to continue to take care on these roads and follow speed restrictions in place.

Rainfall and hydrology data analysed



The flood event in Tolaga Bay over Queen's Birthday weekend (3-4 June) was recorded as a one in 5.7 year event, hydrology data has revealed.

Although the event resulted in significant damage, the rainfall was centered in a narrow band that mainly affected the Uawa and Pakarae catchments. At Willowbank and Panikau, the highest intensity falls were 55mm and 60mm in one hour but these do not represent the overall storm size, with other gauges in the area recording much lower rainfall.

A one in 5.7 year event equates to an 18 percent chance that a flood of that size could happen every year. In comparison, the water levels in the Waipaoa River at Te Karaka in the second rain event over 11-12 June were the second highest on record.

River levels in the Waihora, Mangatu and upper Waipaoa rivers were all exceedingly high and combined to form a very significant, one in 70-year event. The preceding storm event contributed significantly to the size of the flood as catchments were already wet and rivers running high.

The river peaked above the 9metre mark at Kanakanaia for 7 hours, compared to Cyclone Bola where it held above 9metres for 40 hours.

Data shows the flood control scheme worked as designed with the water held within the scheme to prevent widespread flooding across the Poverty Bay flats. Rainfall intensity was moderate to high at a range of sites in the foothills of the Waioeka / Raukumara Range, the Waipaoa headwaters and in the Wharerata ranges.

A more detailed report on the hydrology data for both storms will be presented at a Council meeting on 16 August.

