

OIR: 2425/1284

4 March 2025

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

**Request for Information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) (the LGOIMA)**

Thank you for your email of **21 February 2025** requesting the following information regarding Kawakahia Wetland Complex:

***It would be really useful to be clear on when each of the many critical events happened, specifically:***

***We don't need the exact date, We would like to know the approximate date. The order in which things occurred is significant to help us understand how this came about?***

***1. Were both Black and Ngarara Drains put in at the same time?***

No.

***2. When were the drains put through (decades ago)?***

The Black Drain was created as part of the oxidation ponds which were built sometime between 1973 and 1977 according to aerial photography. The Black Drain traces the edge of the previous Kawakahia Lagoon.

Drains in this general area are mentioned in a deed referenced in the 1968 Paetawa Drainage agreement. The earlier deed was between Horowhenua County Council and Isabel Jane Field and dated 13 June 1903.

***3. The sewage treatment ponds were built when?***

The oxidation ponds were built sometime between 1973 and 1977 according to aerial photography.

***Please note that any information provided in response to your request may be published on the Council website, with your personal details removed.***

**4. What date was the agreement made between KCDC and the landowner (of ?Ngarara Block?John XX) to clear the drain from time to time to prevent flooding.**

The Paetawa Drainage Easement was signed 10 July 1968.

We are aware of an earlier deed from 1903 as mentioned above but do not have a copy of this.

**4. When did the landowner ask KCDC to no longer access his land for this purpose?**

This was around 2010 maintenance season.

**5. Is that the same date KCDC stopped clearing the drain and weeds built up raising the water level?**

Yes, it was at this time as Council staff were trying to obtain access to do the regular maintenance.

**7. When did the treatment ponds stop operating? (until that time treated effluent would have been coming from the treatment plant adding to the total water quantity - is that correct?).**

The treatment ponds stopped operating no later than 31 March 2002.

The Waikanae Wastewater Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan March 2002 says the following:

#### *5.7 Groundwater*

*5.7.1 The wastewater treatment plant currently discharges an average volume of 3,400m<sup>3</sup>/day (6500m<sup>3</sup> peak daily flow) of treated sewage into the oxidation ponds, where it either evaporates, leaks/discharges into the Black Drain or is pumped into the irrigation area for soakage into the ground. The net effect of this discharge has been to raise or "mound" the groundwater levels in the immediately adjacent area to the ponds. The effects are not apparent within a short distance of the wastewater treatment plant site. When the discharge to the ponds ceases (mid March 2002), the groundwater level is expected to drop approximately 800mm, close to the existing water levels in the Black Drain. This drop in water levels means that the top of the sludge layer will be an average of 500-600mm beneath the surface of the pond.*

**8. Following serious storm events (dates please) flooding occurred in properties backing onto the northern wetland, causing septic tanks to flood.**

Greater Wellington Rainfall - Waikanae River at Water Treatment Plant:

- 6 December 2021 – 105 mls
- 7 December 2021, 61 mls
- 14 December 2021, 57 mls
- 5 February 2022, 81 mls
- 12 June 2022, 90 mls

**9. When did residents start lobbying KCDC to solve their problem? (by clearing the drain) but KCDC refused because they could not access the land.**

19 October 2020 was the earliest one found, with the majority of the residents' complaints started escalating in early December 2021. It is also noted that First Gas formally raised their serious concerns on 11 July 2022.

**10. When did the landowner write to KCDC saying they needed to honour the agreement and could access the land.?**

7 April 2022.

**11. When did KCDC act under the emergency legislation to bring in a digger and remove the weed build up for the length of the drain?**

The week beginning Monday 29 August 2022.

**12. Was both Black Drain and the Ngarara drain on the landowners property, and were they both cleared at the same time?**

No. The Black Drain is entirely on Council owned property. The Black Drain was cleared as part of Open Channel Maintenance late June 2022.

The Ngarara Stream works began the week beginning Monday 29 August 2022.

**13. When did residents near the southern part of the wetland first complain to KCDC that the wetlands were drying out, changing their character and biodiversity?**

27 January 2023.

Ngā mihi,



**Sean Mallon**

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Kaiwhakahaere Rōpū Anga me te Whakahaere Rawa